

Climate Across Generations Toolkit



Conversation Prompts on
Climate Change and Ageism

Climate Across Generations: Conversation Prompts on Climate Change and Ageism
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The Prairie Climate Centre (PCC) is an internal research centre at the University of Winnipeg committed to making climate change meaningful and relevant to Canadians of all walks of life. We bring an evidence-based perspective to communicating the science, impacts, and risks of climate change through maps, documentary video, research reports, and plain-language training, writing, and outreach.

The PCC team is made up of climate scientists, social science researchers, filmmakers, and communication specialists. Our transdisciplinary, community-based approach connects rigorous climate science with human stories grounded in local experience on the landscape. We honour the diverse experiences, voices and insights of communities and help them tell their climate change stories.

Our team has high-level expertise and many years of experience in climate change science and storytelling; we are “meaning makers” who work with diverse forms of data and can connect with various audiences including the general public, policymakers, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous communities, scientists, and technical experts.

Our goal is to inspire citizen participation, to support communities in making meaningful and effective adaptation and mitigation decisions for current and future generations, and to help Canadian society move from risk to resilience.

Overview

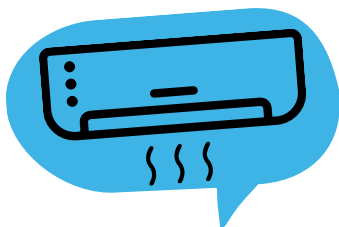
Climate change affects all generations. Older adults may face greater health risks during extreme weather, while younger people are more likely to live with its long-term impacts. Yet, both groups are often left out of climate conversations due to ageism, which refers to the ways we think, feel, and act toward people based on age. This can cause misunderstandings, division, or blame.

Intergenerational conversation cafés create a space for people from different generations to come together, share experiences, and learn from each another. These conversations can help build understanding, strengthen relationships between generations, challenge age-related assumptions, and support working together on climate action.

This section offers several discussion prompts to help guide your conversation on climate change and ageism. The prompts are grouped by theme, with a general flow that starts with getting to know one another, moving to sharing experiences, exploring barriers to action, and finishing with ideas for how younger and older people can work together to promote climate action.



The conversation prompts in this document are **only a guide:** you are free to skip questions, add your own, or follow topics that participants raise during conversation.



Opening Activity / Icebreaker

Purpose: To help participants feel comfortable, build connection, and ease into the conversation, especially if they don't know each other yet.

You might begin with a question below, a short reflection, or even a video or image to spark conversation.

Main Question

Additional Prompts

What is a memory you have of weather, nature, or the environment that has stayed with you and why?

Is there a place outdoors you like to go to or used to go?

Have you experienced really hot, cold, rainy, or smoky weather?

Is there a place in nature that is special to you?

When you hear the term *climate change*, what does it mean to you?

What comes to mind first when you hear those words?

Do you think it has something to do with the weather, seasons, or something else?

What's something you recently learned about climate change?

Did you learn something from school, work, the news, or online?

Is there something you learned that surprised you or confused you?

Round 1: Addressing Climate Assumptions Across Generations

Purpose: To uncover and move past common assumptions or misunderstandings between age groups about climate change, so people can listen to each other with more openness.

Main Question

What do people sometimes say about your age group and climate change?

How do you feel about what people say about your age group?

What do you wish people of other ages understood about you or your generation when it comes to climate change?

Additional Prompts

Do people expect your generation to care more or less about climate change?

What kinds of messages do you see online or in media?

Do people think your generation is doing enough to address climate change?

Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

Does it feel fair or unfair?

Does it affect how you talk about climate change?

What do people get wrong about your generation when it comes to climate change?

What do you care about that others might not see?

What would help them understand you better?

Round 2: Understanding Generational Experiences with Climate Change

Purpose: To understand how climate change shows up differently in people's lives. This can help build empathy and realistic expectations for addressing climate change.

Main Question

Additional Prompts

How have you noticed changes in weather or the environment where you live?

Have summers or winters felt different than before?

Have you seen more smoke, heat, storms, or less snow?

How has these changes impacted you or the people you know?

Have they impacted your health or how you feel?

*Has it made your daily life harder for you or someone you know?
How?*

*Have you noticed older adults, children, or others being affected differently by these changes?
How?*

What worries you or feels stressful when you think about climate change?

Are you worried about the future, your health, or your community?

Does it ever feel too big to fix?

What parts feel the hardest to think about?

Round 3: Highlighting Shared Values, Learning, and Strengths

Purpose: To highlight common ground and recognize the strengths that people of different ages bring to climate conversations and action.

Main Question

Additional Prompts

What do we all share in common when it comes to caring about the climate and the earth?

What do you think everyone wants to protect or cares about?

What shared concerns bring us all together?

What strengths do you think your generation brings or can bring to climate action?

What do you think your generation is good at doing?

What ideas or skills does your generation bring to this topic?

What strengths do you see in other generations?

What have you seen people from other generations do well?

What can they do that is different from your generation?

What could you learn from them?

Round 4: Identifying Challenges and Opportunities for Climate Action

Purpose: To understand the factors that make climate action difficult and explore small actions that feel possible at every stage of life.

Main Question

Additional Prompts

What factors make it hard for you to take action on climate change?

Is it hard because of money, time, energy, or other responsibilities?

Do you feel like your actions won't make a difference?

Do you feel unsure about what actions to take?

What would make it easier for you to take action on climate change?

Would more time, money, or support help you?

Would having more knowledge on climate change or how to get involved make a difference?

Would doing it with others make it easier?

What are some small or simple things you feel you're able to do right now to help the environment?

What feels easy or realistic for you?

What's something you could try this week or next month?

Have you already made any changes? Would you do anything differently to make it easier for you to continue taking action?

Round 5: Learning How to Work Together on Climate Action

Purpose: To explore ways that people from different generations can support each other and take action on climate change together.

Main Question

Additional Prompts

How can younger and older generations work together to help the environment?

What could teamwork look like?

How should sharing ideas or experiences help?

What could a shared project or activity look like?

What would make it easier for people of different ages to talk and work together?

What would help people from different generations feel comfortable speaking about climate change?

What would help people from different generations listen to each other or feel respected?

What kind of space or setting would help to work together?

What is one thing younger and older generations could start doing together after this conversation?

Is there a small action you could do as a group?

Would you continue having conversations across generations with the people in your own life?

What feels easy to start with?

Closing & Final Reflection

Purpose: To summarize the key themes from the discussion and give participants a chance to reflect on what they've learned, heard, or felt. This can help bring the conversation together and leave people with something meaningful to take with them.

Main Question

What is one thing you learned today from someone from a different generation?

Additional Prompts

Did anything surprise you?

Did your thinking about climate change or other generations change in any way?

Did this conversation give you any new hope or inspiration?

Conclusion

Talking about climate change across generations is important because it helps people understand each other's experiences, challenge stereotypes, and find ways to work together. The conversation prompts in this document can help you start and guide these conversations. You do not have to use all of them. Choose the ones that fit your group and adapt them as needed. You may not be get through every question in one session, and that's okay. You can always organize more sessions to keep the conversation going. Even one conversation can help build understanding, strengthen connections, and spark ideas for taking action on climate change together.