

How to host a Fostering Kindness in Science breakout group

PRE-BREAKOUT INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOSTS:

These instructions have been compiled following the highly successful session at the EMCR Forum Science Pathways conference ‘Diversify your Thinking’ in 2018. They provide a framework for EMCRs to run their own breakouts or other groups to discuss how to foster Kindness in Science. It is intended to be a guide only—we encourage you to add your own components based on specific objectives you might have for your workplace or professional society.

We suggest allowing two hours to complete the breakout. These instructions are designed to accompany our [Powerpoint slide deck](#). Each participant will need a pen and paper for the values exercise. At the Science Pathways session, we used [Poll Everywhere](#) to record answers from participants. If you’re running a small group and don’t already have access to Poll Everywhere, you might find that one of its free account options will work well for your session. You could also consider setting up your session on [Slack](#). While not essential, these formats will allow you to capture unfiltered answers in real time. You will then be able to access them later to help summarise the session outcomes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Review the [Nature Career Feature](#), which provides background for the Kindness in Science movement. We recommend asking all participants to read this article before coming to the session.

Keep the following in mind to ensure your participants have an enjoyable experience:

- The Code of Conduct from Science Pathways 2018 is provided as an appendix at the end of this document. You are welcome to use it as a guide to develop a policy for events and activities that you are hosting, such as this breakout session.
- Create a safe space for an open and honest discussion. Support participants to raise issues and concerns. Encourage the group to see different perspectives and practise active listening. Be sympathetic. Keep an open mind and be aware of biases—we all have them.
- There should be no wrong answers, provided all comments are constructive and delivered in a way that aligns with the theme of the session. There should be a zero tolerance policy on bullying and harassment. It is the responsibility of all participants to call out any behaviour they feel is unacceptable.
- Ensure the session continues to flow. Avoid dominance by one or two voices by asking if others have anything to add before moving on. Make eye contact with the participants to see if anyone is wanting to speak but isn't getting an opportunity. Actively shift the conversation onto a new aspect of the topic if the conversation is dragging on for too long. An effective strategy is to think ahead about where you could take the discussion next.
- Keep an eye on the clock. Allow enough time to summarise the discussion as a group, and emphasise the importance of reaching a consensus.
- Encourage the use of Twitter. We would love to receive updates from your breakout session! Our handle is @EMCRForum. By using the hashtag #kindnessinscience, your tweets will be visible to others monitoring the movement.
- When communicating using Twitter, remember that it may be better to attribute comments to the group rather than to a specific individual.

Finally, give yourself a pat on the back. You've shown great leadership to organise this session on behalf of your colleagues. The EMCR Forum Executive thanks you in advance for adding the voices from your breakout group to the national discussion. Please feel free to get in touch with us at emcr@science.org.au at any time prior to the breakout if you have questions or concerns, and we welcome your feedback after the event.

SESSION RUNSHEET

Phase 1 Session briefing (5 min)

- Remind participants of the Code of Conduct.
- Give a brief overview of the session and what you're hoping to achieve, including approach to recording output (we suggest: Poll Everywhere, Slack or traditional note taking)
- We suggest groups for discussions should contain no more than 8-10 people. If your session is larger than this, split people into smaller groups before getting started. This will help to ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute and be heard

Phase 2 Introductions (20 min)

- Go around the group and introduce yourselves. Give your full name and field of study or a brief description of your current role.
- Discuss why you chose to attend the session and what you are hoping to get out of it.

Phase 3 Kindness in science values exercise (30 min)

- Each person to write down their top 10 values from the list (this takes approx. 5 minutes)
- Each person quickly chooses their top three most important values. This should be based on first instincts about which values each person can't possibly do without. Record these using your chosen recording method and present as wordcloud if you have this feature (Poll Everywhere does, and there are free online tools)
- Aggregate values as a group
- Determine how many unique values there are in total for each group to highlight diversity
- Determine how each value represents kindness in science, beginning with discussing unique values and HOW they differ before converging on values that are shared. Encourage participants to record key discussion points
- Kindness will come from acknowledging different people's values more than acknowledging shared ones

Phase 4 What does kindness in science look like? (15 min)

- Discuss examples of when someone else's kindness made a difference to you or a colleague. You might know the kind person or it could be someone anonymous. Why was this act of kindness significant? What can we learn from it? Encourage participants to record key discussion points

Quick break: Time to reset before the final phases (5 min)

- Optional—take a photo of your group and upload it to Twitter. Include @EMCRForum and #kindnessinscience to let everyone know what you've been up to
- Before re-commencing—if your session has more than one group, encourage people to redistribute themselves so they can talk to some new people after the break

Phase 5 Challenges and opportunities for fostering kindness in science (15 min)

- Whenever we encounter a challenge, the EMCR Forum Executive advocates for an open discussion of the problems in conjunction with potential solutions
- Discuss barriers that may impact on your ability to foster kindness in science, and proactive strategies to help overcome them. Encourage participants to record key discussion points

Phase 6 Five simple hacks to foster kindness in science (15 min)

- As a group, come up with five suggestions to challenge the status quo and move towards a culture of fostering kindness in science. What can you do to make a positive difference for others? What kind of support would you like to receive? Think about everything that has been discussed and how you can translate it into tangible outcomes, either as individuals or as a group. Encourage each group to record their #fivesimplehacks

Phase 7 What next? (15 min)

- Bring all participants together for a discussion about the next steps. The outcomes should encompass the shared perspectives of the group around what can be done to foster kindness in science at your workplace or professional society
- Ask for volunteers to form a working group to coordinate the next steps

After the session

The EMCR Forum Executive values your feedback. How do you think your session went? Was it valuable? Do you have any comments about the instructions or format? What are the next steps likely to be at your workplace or professional society? Please send us an email at emcr@science.org.au

Hints from kindness in science breakout hosted remotely at UTS during Science Pathways (provided by Catherine Burke)

- I invited our head of school to talk for some of the session, which was great because she is very behind the idea of creating a culture of kindness. We talked about what is not kind about doing science in the current climate, then focused on what could be done at a personal level as well as at a higher structural level to make changes. A lot of what we talked about came back to communication, as well as how to publicly value and promote a kind culture
- We came up with a list of recommendations to take to the Dean—including funding for workshops for all staff and PhD students on effective communication and listening, a mission statement from the faculty on the kind of culture that is expected and valued, and expanding KPIs to reward good supervisors and managers based on feedback from students and staff—currently our only KPIs are papers and grant funding
- Someone is going to champion a Random Acts of Kindness at UTS initiative, where people can submit anonymous posts about kind things people have done for them at work, which would go on the UTS science page

Appendix 1

EMCR Forum Code of Conduct for Science Pathways 2018

The EMCR Forum has a mission to be the voice of Australia's early- and mid- career researchers (EMCRs), championing improvement in the national research environment through advocacy. The EMCR Forum has a strong commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

At Science Pathways we aim to create a welcoming, inclusive environment where everyone feels secure to participate fully. This includes the conference venue, remote conference sites, networking functions, Twitter, the Conference App and online media associated with the conference.

To enable this, all delegates, attendees, sponsors, volunteers, and speakers (conference participants) are required to abide by the following code of conduct. Your attendance at the conference or your involvement in a remote site constitutes acceptance of this code of conduct. The code of conduct will be available to all delegates through the conference app.

We ask all conference participants to maintain an awareness of their own conduct and interaction with others at all times. Furthermore, we ask all conference participants to maintain an awareness of the conduct of others and, where such conduct is violating this code to alert conference staff in order to promptly address the situation.

Conference participants should refrain from using insulting, harassing, or otherwise offensive language in their interactions. Disruptive, harassing or inappropriate behaviour toward others is unacceptable. Harassment of any kind, including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical harassment will not be tolerated.

If a participant engages in behaviour which contravenes this code, the conference organisers may take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender or expulsion from the conference with no refund.

If you are affected by a breach of this code, notice that someone else is breaching this code, or have any other concerns, please contact the conference staff promptly. Conference staff can be identified by orange lanyards with 'staff' on their conference badges.