

Facilitation Guide: Using Reflective Prompts in Community-Centred Research

Purpose of the guide

This guide supports researchers and communities to:

- Co-define research priorities and questions
- Surface expectations, needs, and concerns early
- Reflect on power, trust, and reciprocity during the project
- Evaluate processes and impacts collaboratively

The prompts are **conversation starters**, not a checklist or requirements. Not all prompts need to be used, and they may be revisited iteratively.

Before the session: facilitator preparation

1. Clarify intent

- Why are you using the prompts now?
 - Co-design?
 - Relationship-building?
 - Mid-project reflection?
 - Evaluation or closure?
- Be explicit about *what can and cannot change*.

2. Consider who is (and isn't) in the room

- Who is invited and why?
- Who might be missing?
- Are there trusted intermediaries who should co-facilitate?

3. Customise the activity

- Choose 2–3 *prompts only* for any single session
- Use plain language and community-preferred terms
- Consider language needs (including languages other than English)

Power-aware facilitation tips

- Invite small group(s) to reduce hierarchy and support safer, more inclusive dialogue
- Hold activities in locations that are familiar, accessible, and close to communities, rather than defaulting to institutional spaces.
- Create welcoming and comfortable environments that encourage informal interaction (e.g., by sharing food)
- Allow multiple forms of expression (e.g., writing, drawing, storytelling)
- Avoid rushing to agreement; allow time for reflection, disagreement, and unresolved questions.

Ethical considerations

- Build in breaks and opt-out options
- Be alert to trauma, fatigue, or over-exposure
- Remember the balance between the input collected and actionable points
- Treat facilitation itself as an **intervention**, not a neutral activity

Facilitation structure (90–120 minutes)

1. Introduction (10–15 minutes)

Purpose: establish safety, transparency, and boundaries

The questions are here to help us think together. There are no right answers. Some things you can change, and some things you cannot, and you will be clear about that as you go.

- Agree on:
 - How people want to participate (talking, writing, drawing)
 - Whether feedback is attributed or anonymous
 - Breaks and pacing

2. Core activity: working with the prompts

Below are **three ways** to use the prompts, depending on purpose.

Option	A: Co-designing a research initiative	B: Understanding needs and expectations	C: Reflecting or evaluating the work
When	Early stage / before research questions are fixed	Early/mid project	Mid/end project
Related prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundational questions Prompt 4 (Power & co-driving) Prompt 5 (Dialogue & flexibility) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt 2 (Transparency & limits) Prompt 3 (Reciprocity & trust) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt 6 (Support & sustainability) Prompt 7 (Impact & endings)
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants (in small groups): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What issues matter most to you now? What feels over-asked or ignored? Introduce the prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “What would a useful research question look like for you?” Capture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What communities want asked/explored What they <i>don't</i> want asked What benefits or risks they think 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to write on two sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “What we hope this research can do” “What might limit this research” Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What feels fair? What feels unclear or risky? Ask explicitly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would feel mutually beneficial? How should communication and contact work? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What worked well? What felt extractive, exhausting, or unhelpful? Use the prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “How has this project affected you or your community?” “What happens after this end?” Invite suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What should be done differently next time? What support or recognition is still needed?
Outputs	A shared set of priorities, concerns, and conditions for engagement.	Shared expectations, clearer boundaries, reduced risk of future harm or disappointment.	Process-based evaluation, not just outcome reporting.



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3. Closing the session (10–15 minutes)

- Summarise what was discussed (capturing participants' words)
- Be explicit about:
 - What will happen with the feedback
 - Expectations of change
 - When and how participants will hear back
- Acknowledge contributions:
 - Time, emotional supports, expertise
 - Remuneration if applicable