

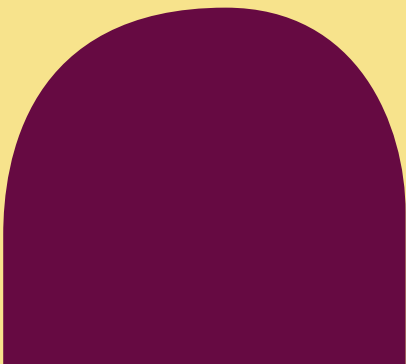
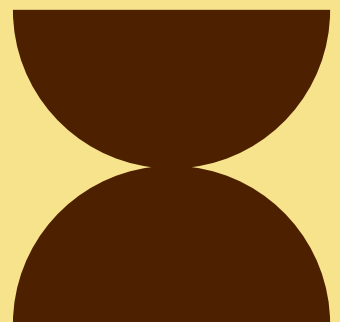


**ALTERNATIVE
FIRST RESPONDERS**



KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATION TOOLKIT

A guide to host group discussions on alternative first responders and community safety



ABOUT US

We acknowledge that the National Justice Project works on unceded First Nations land. We acknowledge all Elders past and present.

National Justice Project is an independent, not for profit, human rights organisation fearlessly fighting to end discrimination through strategic litigation, advocacy, education and innovation.

The Alternative First Responders campaign is a national campaign focused on increasing public and policy support for alternative first responders to police. The campaign has a national coalition, is growing public support through pledges and fights to ensure that the call for alternative first responders is heard.

Alternative first response models aim to achieve outcomes that connect individuals with their communities, treat people with care and respect, and recognise people as whole beings.

You can follow our work:

w. www.alternativefirstresponders.com.au

w. www.justice.org.au

e. afr@justice.org.au

i. [@nationaljusticeproject_au](https://www.instagram.com/nationaljusticeproject_au)



The logo for Alternative First Responders consists of the text "ALTERNATIVE FIRST RESPONDERS" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font, stacked in two lines. The text is set against a solid dark brown rectangular background.

WELCOME



Context

In Australia, the default response to many calls for support is police. Too often, this default police-led response causes harm to individuals, families and communities.

What if there was another option? There is. Alternative first responders already exist here and overseas and growing evidence proves they reduce harms caused by policing. Alternative first responders are separate to law enforcement. They are trained health, social and community workers who respond with care, not force.

To read more about alternative first responders and alternative first responder models you can visit the following links:

- [Alternative First Responder Position Paper](#)
- [Alternative First Responder FAQ Section](#)

SO, WHAT NOW? LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

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WHAT'S NEXT

WHY HOST?

Advocacy.

Kitchen table conversations create meaningful change. By hosting, you are supporting the Alternative First Responders campaign.

Community-based

Doing the vital work of bringing community members together, to move from insight, to ideas, to impact.

Inclusive Spaces

Taking on the role of host means that you can create a safe and respectful environment for everyone to share their thoughts and experiences and be heard.

Values Based Work

Lead conversations that can inspire fellow community members. Create spaces that invite hard questions, differing opinions and meaningful discussion.

Curious Conversations

Sometimes we can accept things the way they are, because we feel they've always been that way. Asking questions, thinking critically and imagining a different way of being is how we begin to create a more just and equitable world.

Here are resources to support you as host and to share with your wider group:

RESOURCES

- [Alternative First Responders Website](#)
- [Alternative First Responders Position Paper](#)
- [Easy Inclusive English Guide](#)
- [Talking Justice](#)
- [What is Justice Reinvestment](#)
- [Acknowledgement of Country](#)
- [Video about Kitchen Table Conversations](#)
- [Guide to visual scribing](#)



ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

HOST

As host you are responsible for facilitating and guiding the group, creating a safe space, and managing event logistics.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Choose a time & place to meet, a cafe, university, online or someone's kitchen. Consider accessibility needs and availability of small snacks and drinks (always helps to stimulate a robust discussion)! Invite a group of community folk, friends and/or family along.
2. Welcome everyone and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land you are meeting on. Share the guidelines of the conversations (provided here, feel free to customise for your group).
3. Ask for a volunteer scribe and hand out participant forms to be filled out before the discussion begins.
4. Facilitate the conversation using the guides provided, remember to ask each of the participants to share their thoughts and experience and thank them for being there!
5. Close by inviting everyone to continue the conversations in their wider circle and to pledge support online. Host meets with the scribe afterwards to debrief and consolidate notes.

SCRIBE

As scribe you are responsible for recording the conversation through written notes and/or visuals.

- Record the meeting in written notes or through visual scribing
- Scribing includes a summary of what is shared
 - Record common themes
 - Make note of different opinions
 - If notes are handwritten, leave space to go back and annotate or clarify
 - Use visuals if applicable
 - Capture all points, not just what you view as important
 - Revisit your notes once the conversation has ended to revise, expand, and clarify with the host
- Share your contact details and scribing notes with the AFR campaign - afr@justice.org.au

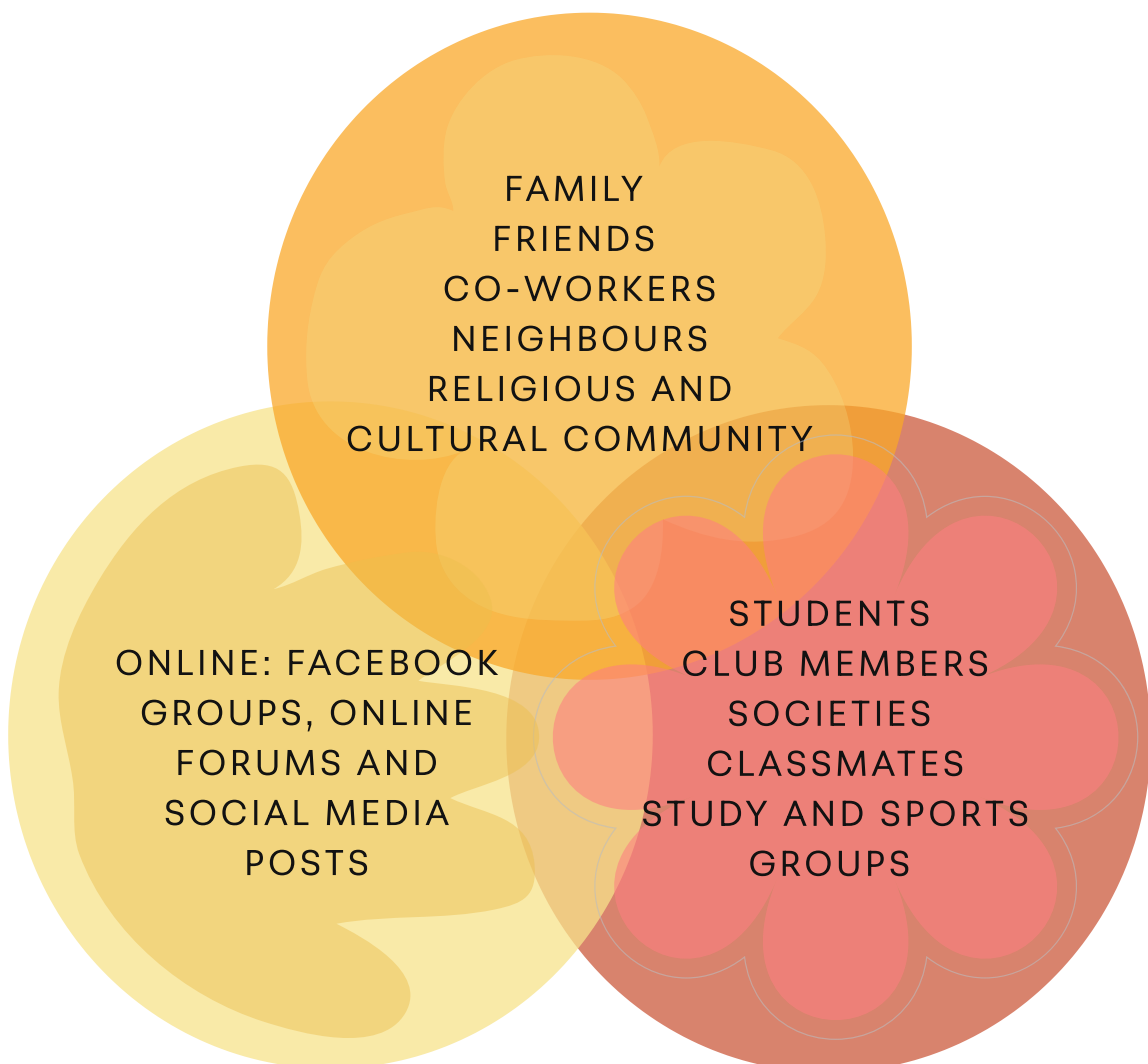
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

PLACES TO CONNECT WITH NEW PEOPLE:

Libraries, community centers, places of worship, community events and workshops, sports clubs, cafes, playgroups, neighbourhood meet-ups and strata meetings, rotary club events, parent groups, religious gatherings, cultural centres and classrooms.

If you are having trouble finding people:

- Create a simple flyer to spread the word to your community
- Make a post about a meet up on social media or online university and/or community groups



SCHEDULE



First Conversation

Introduce the group to the concept of alternative first responders

Discussion topics include why alternative first responders are needed, as well as community safety, care, and support. Consider how your conversation influences the work of the Alternative First Responders campaign. Refer to the discussion guidelines on page 7.

Location : Host to choose



Further Development

Follow up Conversation

Deep dive into interest areas and ideas that were sparked from the first conversation. Hold space for ideas to be revisited and new points to be brought to the group. This conversation can continue with another meet up or an agreed upon set of actions the group wants to take. You can visit the [Take Action Page](#) or [Pledge your support](#) on the Alternative First Responders website!

Location : Host to choose

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

It is beneficial to share these rules with the group before you meet to discuss or to provide a printout at the beginning. See how they feel about the guidelines and what could be added. Feel free to customise for your group, ensuring everyone agrees to the final list.

- **We will not accept racism, discrimination or offensive language**
- **We respect people's right to their opinions even if we disagree**
- **We will make space for everyone to be heard**
- **We will stay present and listen deeply to each other**
- **We will strive to be constructive and curious at all times**
- **We keep discussions focused and on topic**

It's important that even if opinions differ and there are disagreements, continuing to listen to each other keeps the dialogue open and flowing. If you want to change someone's mind, try to understand their point of view first.

Conversations that include any discrimination, racism or offensive language will be shut down by the host and the groups attention will be directed back to the community guidelines set at the beginning.

REMINDERS

- Your groups can expand or alter questions and guidelines to be more community specific
- Plan the conversation to allow for discussion on each theme
- Read the AFR position paper to provide your group with some background knowledge
- The guidelines help ensure conversations are respectful and productive
- Productive, insightful conversations can occur between just a few people



DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Theme: Do We Need Alternative First Responders?

1. What is a first responder? What should their role be in community safety? Are the current 000 options working?
2. Does the current first response include de-escalation and care practices?
3. Should governments fund more community programs instead of investing in police and prisons?

Theme: Community, Care and Support

1. What does responding with care rather than control mean? Do you think police are capable of this?
2. What situations would benefit from an alternative community-led response rather than police?
3. What methods of care and de-escalation can be utilised to diffuse situations?
4. What are other ways to keep community supported and safe?

Scenario A: What would you do?

Your friend or family member is going through a tough time with their mental health and you begin to feel like they need extra help but it is after 5.00pm. What do you do next?

Scenario B: What would you do?

On the walk home you notice someone in the park, it's dark, they're alone and they are in distress and visibly anxious. They aren't threatening anyone and it looks like they need support. What do you do next?

REMINDER

This is a guide and we encourage further questions and conversations. If you would like any support contact the campaign at afr@justice.org.au

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SESSION



Spaces to host could be:

- At your home
- For students: Study rooms or common spaces on campus
- Cafes
- Park picnics
- Community centres
- Places of worship



As scribe you must multi-task between contributing and recording the details of the conversation



Ask people why they have chosen to join the conversation - personal stories can help everyone feel more comfortable

Intimate groups can be more effective, we suggest max.9 people

If hosting at home or outdoors, suggest a potluck, where everyone brings their favourite snack or refreshment

Bringing up current events related to the topic can keep the conversation relevant

Accessibility and inclusivity
Wheelchair access, dates and times that can fit into people's busy schedules, accessible language and considering any additional needs for your group



Making small asks of your conversation group is not an imposition - people are there because they want to be involved in their community



Creating a rough timed outline for the meet up



Set aside an hour after the meeting to debrief and consolidate notes with the scribe



Students, can you relate this topic to a class you are taking?

Good facilitation involves deep listening, making people feel heard by summarising back to them and managing the group dynamics to ensure everyone has an opportunity to share

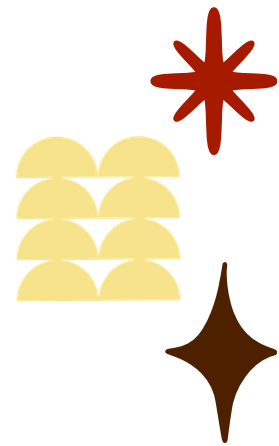
A genuine thanks at the end of the meet up can go a long way for continued engagement

POST-EVENT

1. After the first conversation, revisit the schedule on page 5 to help plan the next meet-up.
2. Share your conversation notes and feedback with the Alternative First Responder campaign by emailing afr@justice.org.au
3. Stay connected with new friends and continue your advocacy!

YOU NOW HAVE THE TOOLS TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE! HOW WILL YOU TAKE ACTION OR CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION?

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE CALL FOR CARE, NOT FORCE.



**ALTERNATIVE
FIRST RESPONDERS**

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www.alternativefirstresponders.com.au