

How do to each about change?



we talk other climate

While there is greater recognition that Earth's climate is changing and weather patterns are becoming less reliable and more extreme, it is still true that this topic can be hard to talk about and even provoke real tensions within families and between friends.

About 1/3 of the UK population are now voicing concern about climate change. There is also still a percentage of people who feel certain that there is no need to engage with it. This handout is about raising the subject in ways which may produce constructive discussion with the group of people in the middle, who feel unsure and may also be worried for many different reasons. With climate change, it is not only the factual information that matters, but also how everyone feels about it; this plays perhaps the most crucial role in how much engagement with our families and friends becomes possible.

Starting out

There are some general attitudes that can help create positive conversations:

R espect	Assume that every person has very good reasons for thinking and feeling the way they do and for what concerns them, even if you don't yet understand them or agree
A ttunement	Help the person you're speaking with to feel relaxed with you, by tuning in to where they are starting from, their mood and the topics they think are important
C uriosity	Desire to learn genuinely what their perspectives are and how they arrived at them - not in order to change them but to really understand
E mpathy	Come to an understanding of their feelings, even if these differ from yours
R apport	Aim to build warmth and trust between you

The foundation for the R-A-C-E-R acronym above is a suggestion that what is important at the start is to focus on the other person, not the information that you want to make sure they 'get'. All of these attitudes overlap with and feed into each other and help to establish a relationship where a dialogue can start and progress.

It is also important not to embarrass, humiliate or shame the other person, whatever your opinions are about what they think and how they feel. Keep Respect in mind at all times. And being patient will help you handle the frustration you may well sometimes feel.

Given the urgency of change needed, maintaining these attitudes can be hard, so reach out for support and talk regularly about your experiences with people you trust.



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Even if you've tried before and failed to have a positive conversation with someone, it may be possible to start afresh by approaching them and the topic with RACER attitudes. It may help to acknowledge that your previous discussions have not gone well and, if you think you may have been too forceful or insensitive to them, you may even want to apologise. It is worth trying everything you can to get your relationship around this topic on to a new footing.

Developing the conversation

Once you have a basis for further discussion, it is important that you continue to attune yourself to the other person so that you can progress at their pace. Overwhelming people with too much information too soon can be very counter-productive. A good indicator of when someone is ready for more is when they start asking new questions - perhaps about different topics or wanting more detail about things you've talked about before.

On our website (www.hacc-herts.org) we will post a longer version of this which also suggests a range of approaches to take your discussions further.

What are we all aiming for?

Depending on how you look at the drawing below, it is possible to see either a very young or a very old woman. This drawing expresses something about our situation now - we each can see things in very different ways. Equally, we can all see something new and unexpected at any moment, when we stay open and don't come to a final judgement too soon. This is as true in our attitudes towards each other as it is for this picture.



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RACER attitudes may over time create the conditions for meaningful dialogue that can lead to strong relationships based on mutual understanding and trust. Multiplied up, these can only strengthen us as communities, and build resilience and resourcefulness. There are no guarantees. Equally, there is no doubt that designing a bright future is much more likely when we work well together!



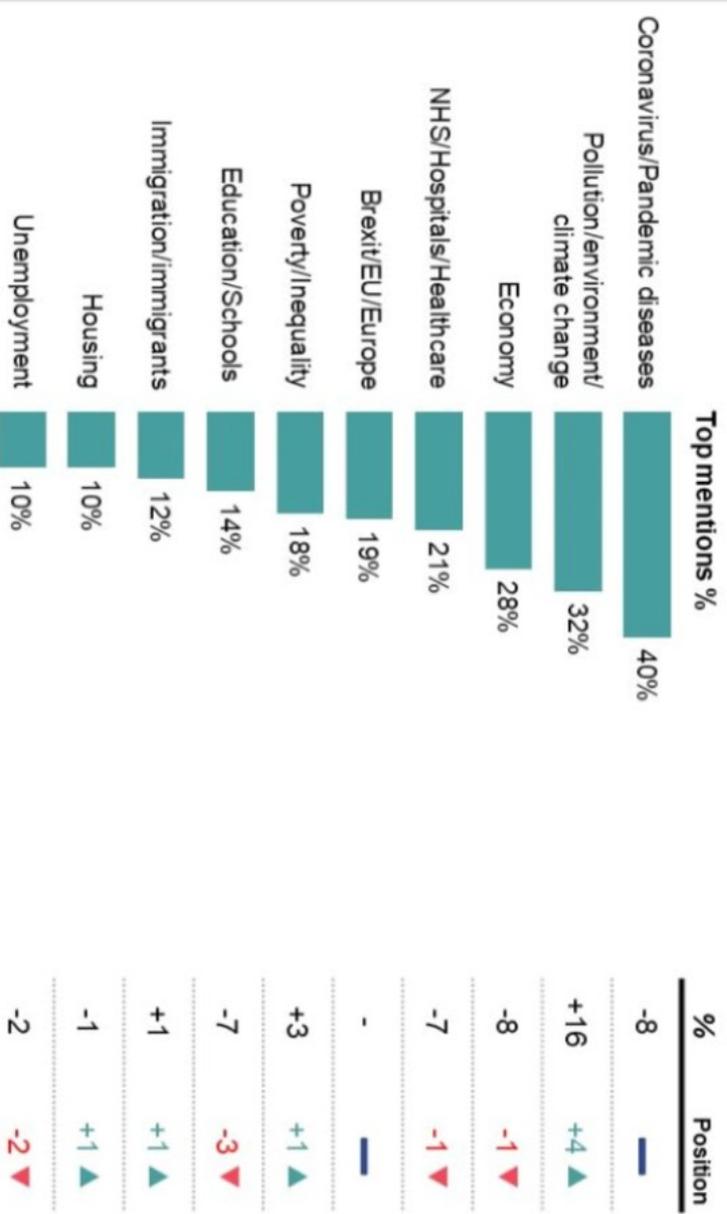
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What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?



Base: 1,013 British adults 18+, 6 – 13 August 2021

Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index