

**Resource: *Pause for Breath* by Amanda Ridings**

This is a hybrid of a book club/action learning set and is intended to offer a relatively safe framework for exploring ways to change your conversations in a small self-directed group. The approach is centred on my book, *Pause for Breath*, which is structured in 6 big 'parts'. Each part has 6-7 chapters and each chapter concludes with fieldwork (or practice) to support inquiry and learning.

***How it might work...***

A group of 4-6 people agrees to meet every month for seven months. The aim is to read and fieldwork. You don't need to defend the book, or the ideas, just let everyone have their say and see what emerges.

***Session one: getting started***

Meet and agree the tone for your sessions and how you're going to conduct yourselves. You might use the four dialogue practices (respecting, listening, suspending judgement, authentic voice) and any other qualities that seem relevant. Avoid rules – eg being on time is covered by respect for others.

Aim to balance advocacy with inquiry (see chapter 4) and ensure everyone gets a chance to speak. Then commit to reading 'Part one' and allocate one practice or piece of field-work to each person. It doesn't matter if two people do the same thing, but try and cover all aspects if you can.

***Session two to seven***

Check-in briefly – how are you today? You can try reading the centring practice (practice 6) to 'arrive' if people are unsettled.

Remind each other of the tone you agreed in the first session and monitor how well your conversation matches your aspirations and agreements.

Explore what you've read and share any learning from the practices/fieldwork. You might agree some standard inquiry questions for the 'book-club' aspect, such as:

- What challenged me from this section? Why?
- What attracted me? Why?
- What might I try out and what support would I need to do that?

Agree to read the next 'part' and share out the fieldwork.

***Remember:*** people run book clubs all over the country – have confidence that this will work out OK. Have fun!