

PRESENCE OF MIND

A conversation-based card game about everyday life, feelings and getting to know one another

The aim of the game

PRESENCE OF MIND is a conversation-based card game designed to encourage players to talk to one another in an accepting and safe environment about topics related to their everyday wellbeing.

For pupils, the deck contains cards in three colours: the orange cards feature questions relating to stress and mental wellbeing; the blue cards cover topics concerning the future and environmental protection; and the green cards deal with physical wellbeing and social relationships.

The burgundy-background cards are specifically aimed at teachers: they deal with teaching work and the atmosphere within the teaching staff.

There are no right or wrong answers in the game. The aim is not to see who knows more or who gives the best answer, but for players to get to know each other's thoughts, experiences and perspectives.

Number of players

6–12 players

The game can be played under the guidance of a teacher, form tutor, school psychologist or other support professional, but a small group of friends can also play it independently.

Duration of the game

One round lasts approximately 20–45 minutes, depending on the chosen game mode and the length of the discussions.

Important rules

You can always pass. If someone does not wish to answer a question, they can simply say 'Pass' and draw another card.

We respect whatever anyone shares. We do not laugh at it, judge it or use it against them later.

Every opinion counts. We may have different answers to the same question.

You don't have to share a personal story. Players can decide how much they want to share about themselves.

We listen to one another. We don't interrupt each other, and everyone gets a chance to speak.

How to play – general rules

1. Shuffle the question cards, then place them face down in a pile in the middle of the table.
2. Players take turns drawing one card at a time.
3. The player who has drawn a card reads out the question and then answers it.
4. The other players listen carefully to the answer.
5. After the answer, the others may ask questions or comment on the topic, provided the person who answered is happy to do so, or if the chosen game mode requires it.
6. The next player then draws a card.

Game Mode 1 – One question, many perspectives

The simplest game mode

In this version, everyone discusses the same question.

Turn

1. The first player draws a card.
2. They read out the question.
3. They answer first.
4. Then the others take turns to share their thoughts on the question.
5. Once everyone has answered, the next player draws a new card.

The aim of the game

To show, that in the same situation, everyone may need different kinds of help, experience different feelings, and use different strategies. Based on this, we learn to pay closer attention to each other's needs.

Game Mode 2 – Keep Asking!

The game mode that keeps the conversation going

In this version, players not only have to answer, but also have the chance to respond to each other's thoughts.

Turn

1. The player draws a card and reads it out.
2. They answer the question.
3. They then choose someone from the group who can ask them a follow-up question.
4. The person asking the question doesn't have to agree with the answer – the aim is to better understand the other person's thoughts.

5. In the next round, a new player draws a card.

Examples of follow-up questions

- “Why do you feel that way?”
- “Have you ever been in a situation where this helped?”
- “What would change this?”
- “How would you like others to react to this?”
- “Do you think others feel the same way about this?”

The aim of the game

To practise active listening and empathetic communication.

Game Mode 3 – Choose one!

A faster, more playful version

In this game mode, each question comes with two options:

I’LL ANSWER – I’ll answer the question.

I’LL PASS IT ON – I’ll choose someone else to answer for me.

Of course, ‘Pass it on’ can only be used if the chosen player agrees to answer.

Turn

1. The player draws a card.
2. They decide whether to SHARE or PASS IT ON.
3. If they share, they answer the question.
4. If they pass it on, they choose someone who can decide whether to answer.
5. At the end of the round, the next player draws a card.

Special rule

If a player chooses ‘SHARE’ twice in a row, they must choose the ‘PASS IT ON’ option in the next round.

If a player chooses ‘PASS IT ON’ twice in a row, they must choose the ‘SHARE’ option in the next round.

Aim of the game

To ease tension and give players the chance to decide for themselves how much they want to delve into personal topics.

Game Mode 4 – Shared Story

A creative, team-building game mode

In this version, the players create a shared story.

1. The first player draws a question and answers it.
2. The next player draws a new card and answers in a way that ties in with the previous player's idea.
3. The third player also links their answer to the previous one.
4. The game continues until everyone has had at least one turn.

The aim of the game

To recognise the connections between players and to show that we can share common feelings and experiences even in different life situations.

Wrapping up the game

It is a good idea to round off the game with a short group discussion.

Some possible closing questions:

- What was the most interesting thought you heard today?
- Was there an answer that surprised you?
- Was there a question that you will continue to think about later?
- What did you learn about someone that you didn't know before?
- What is the one thing you'll take away from this discussion?

It isn't necessary for everyone to answer during the wrap-up. The aim is for players to finish the game with a positive experience and a greater understanding of one another.

The game's key message

There are no compulsory answers, no wrong answers, and no obligation to share.

The game works best when everyone feels safe enough to reveal as much or as little about themselves as they wish.

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