

# The Sphere Handbook Activity Cards

The Sphere Handbook presents a principled approach to quality and accountability in humanitarian response. It is a practical translation of Sphere's two core beliefs that all people affected by disaster or conflict have the **right to life with dignity** and the **right to receive humanitarian assistance**.

The set of cards is a portable learning tool which supports Sphere training sessions. Each card represents an element from, or related to, the Sphere Handbook such as a standard, commitment, principle, programme cycle phase, or theme.

The resource you have just downloaded includes the files you need to print a set of cards professionally<sup>1</sup> or on your own printer.

For any questions, comments, ideas and feedback regarding these cards, or if you would like to create a translated or localised version of this resource, please contact Sphere at [learning@spherestandards.org](mailto:learning@spherestandards.org).

## Card list: Version 2 (2021)

- Sphere philosophy (1)
- Programme cycle activities (4)
- Vulnerabilities and capacities (8)
- Operational settings (6)
- Humanitarian Charter cartoons (7)
- Protection Principles (4)
- CHS Commitments (9)
- Standards vs targets cartoons (12)
- Technical standards (28)
- Handbook diagrams (4)
- HSP members (9)

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<sup>1</sup> The files provided are ready for upload to [makeplayingcards.com](https://makeplayingcards.com): 92 cards per deck, custom front and back, 5.75" x 3.5" (large), full colour print, MPC card finish, custom tuck box (gloss, full colour print). Other vendors/formats are available but may require the files to be adjusted/reexported with Photoshop.

## Activities

Here are 3 ideas to get you started. Please share yours with us: keep the instructions concise and include a photo of the activity in action!

### CHS Charades

**Number of players:** 4 to 10 (per set of cards)

**Cards used:** CHS Commitments only

**Method (per table):** Form 2 teams. Shuffle the 9 CHS cards and place them face down (CHS flower facing up) in a single pile. The first team takes the top card and reads it without the other team seeing. The first team improvises a short scene based on the selected CHS Commitment. The other team must guess which Commitment is being acted out. Play continues until all 9 cards have been used.

**Learning objective:** General familiarisation with the CHS.



**Credit:** Participants of the Sphere ToT in Nairobi, September 2019

## CHS Most Wanted

**Number of players:** 2 to 6 (per set of cards)

**Cards used:** CHS Commitments only



**Method (per table):** Players must place the 9 CHS Commitments in order of perceived difficulty to achieve. In general, two or three Commitments may be given equal status, but the group must reach a consensus on the single most wanted Commitment. This is the one that players agree is the most difficult for an organisation to achieve.

**Debriefing (larger groups):** Compare the layout of cards between tables. Ask each group to name their most wanted Commitment and ask other groups to suggest actions to help them (or their organisation) to meet it. Draw attention to page 11 of the CHS Alliance [Humanitarian Accountability Report](#) which shows which Commitments CHS Alliance members find most difficult to meet in practice.

**Learning objective:** Explore the practical difficulties of meeting the CHS at an organisational level.

**Credit:** Tristan Hale (Sphere)

## Principles to Action

**Number of players:** Any (one set of cards per table)

**Cards used:** Protection Principles (PP) and Technical standards (TS)

**Method (per table):** Step 1) Assign each table a technical sector. Place the 4 PP cards face up on the table. Deal one corresponding TS card to each player. Without referring to the Handbook, each player suggests an action (general or contextual) to attain their TS. Step 2) Each player looks up their assigned TS in the Handbook and reviews the actions.

**Debriefing:** Ask players to share their findings. Ask players which approach to identifying possible actions was most effective. (The answer is that both approaches are valid.)



**Learning objective:** Reinforce the message on page 6 of the Sphere Handbook that “Key actions ... are suggestions and may not be applicable in all contexts. The practitioner should select the most relevant for the situation.” It is correct to devise actions which are not in the Handbook, but they must be consistent with the Protection Principles.

**Credit:** Tristan Hale (Sphere)