

8.2 Respectful inquiry tools

Objective:

To build a deeper and richer understanding of our different perspectives.

- This activity follows on from our previous 'Find our Question';
- We start by making visible our burning questions by posting them up on the wall or sharing appropriately;
- We then use the questioning process shown below to help build a deeper and richer understanding of all our different perspectives;
- Our key task is to listen and explore to improve and extend our understanding of our team's understanding of our issue, opportunity or dilemma.

Activity

This activity works best if we work in small groups.

Each person selects a couple of questions that they think might help expand their thinking and understanding of what others have shared.

We can use the list below as prompts to generate our own questions.

We can also think about using questions that we may not ordinarily ask.

We then take turns to ask questions of members of our group to build clarity and understanding.

Questions for clarification

- "What does this mean...?"
- "Can you put that another way?"
- "Could you give me an example of what you mean"
- "Could you expand on that point further?"

Question to test assumptions

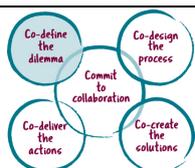
- "You seem to be assuming...., can I check that?"
- "What would happen if.....?"
- "Can you explain why/how?"
- "What could we assume instead...?"

Questions about reasoning and evidence

- "How do you know this?"
- "Can you show me an example?"
- "Can you explain your reasoning for that?"
- "What led you to think that way?"

Question to explore viewpoints

- "Is there another way to look at this?"
- "How might other groups respond to that question?"
- "What is the difference between.....and"
- "What wouldsay about this?"



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Questions about implications

- “What are the consequences of that assumption?”
- “What is an alternative?”
- “Why is important?”
- “What are the implications of?”

Once we have exhausted our inquiry, it is useful to reflect on what we have learned together. Our expanded understanding and insights will be invaluable in the next steps of setting the contexts and co-defining the dilemma

Some tips for the questioning process:

- It’s obviously important for each member of the team to hold onto their own individual views during this exploration. However, this activity provides each of us an opportunity to hold our own views aside while we explore others across our whole team, at the same time inviting our colleagues to question us.
- The list above gives us an opportunity to plan questions that provide meaning and direction to the team’s dialogue.
- We all need to listen. in this case much more than we speak.
- It’s important to avoid defending our own views or trying to convince others to change theirs.
- Allowing others time to respond helps the exploration. Staying silent is valuable!
- Focus on drawing everyone into the conversation.
- Allow team members an opportunity to review their own thinking while we explore others.
- As we review what has been learned through the conversation, it’s helpful to jot down key points discussed.

