

Appreciative Inquiry Resource Pack

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1. Introduction

Who is it for?

This pack is for anyone who wishes to use an Appreciative Inquiry approach to support service improvement or redesign.

What does it include?

It offers a programme structure and supporting materials for a cycle of Appreciative Inquiry carried out over three sessions.

How can you use it?

You can use the whole resource to facilitate a cycle of Appreciative Inquiry or you can pick the materials to suit your learning, planning or service improvement activity.

Where has it come from?

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) have developed it as part of our partnership work to support health and social care integration. We had valuable contributions from the groups who worked with us and took part in Appreciative Inquiry in 2015-16.

For more information about our Appreciative Inquiry offer or other partnership work to support integration contact: sdsandintegration@sssc.uk.com or enquiries@nes.scot.nhs.uk

About Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a way of looking at organisational change that focuses on doing more of what is already working. So instead of starting with 'what's the problem' and looking for fixes it starts with 'what's already working' and how can we build on that?

This doesn't mean we ignore problems; it just looks at it in a different way. It is based on the principle that a group or organisation will grow in the direction of whatever its people focus their attention on. By creating a space for people to share experiences of when they worked at their best, not only does it stimulate energy for change; it also builds relationships and a shared understanding of everyone's contribution.

How Appreciative Inquiry supports integrated working

Health and social care integration is about improving people's lives, caring for the whole person and making sure people working in health and social care are equipped to make best use of their collective skills and resources to improve individual outcomes.

At its heart, it is about relating to and working with people in a different way to achieve the outcomes that matter to them. To build our capacity for this different way of working it is important we work together across health and social care in a way that models and mirrors this difference.

The experience of Appreciative Inquiry supports this changing relationship. Skills and behaviours developed through Appreciative Inquiry translate to the outcomes-focused conversations with individuals that best support them to be active participants in their care and support, exercising choice and control about what matters to them.

Things people have said about Appreciative Inquiry

'Using positive questions and being more focused on how we listen to each other, we came up with ideas and solutions that we weren't expecting.'

'It was the most positive I have felt leaving an event or workshop.'

'I would encourage people to become involved, learn more and use the approach more.'

'It is hard work, challenging at times, but from it we have agreed clear actions to take away and test.'

'It is hard to look at the positives without also looking at the negatives, but this means I can see how negatives can be changed.'

Facilitating Appreciative Inquiry

If you are not familiar with Appreciative Inquiry approaches, using the materials in this pack can help you try it out and give you a taste of Appreciative Inquiry and action-based approaches. Making the most of Appreciative Inquiry needs a sense of curiosity but also discipline with the process.

As you consider how you want to use the pack there are four things you could think about.

1. Who is involved in the inquiry group? What are they concerned about? Who can they influence?

To make sure everyone in the group engages and contributes to the process, it is important that they are involved in and have ownership of decision making about focus and pace.

2. What is the focus of inquiry?

Keeping the Appreciative Inquiry close to practice allows the group to identify specific changes and take ownership of these.

3. What are the relationships in

the room? How familiar are the group with each other's roles and contribution?

Creating as many opportunities as possible for active listening, inclusive conversation and collaboration within Appreciative Inquiry, helps everyone in the group develop as inquirers and gain new knowledge. It can go against the norm of usual conversation and test existing dynamics and relationships so it's helpful to acknowledge this.

4. What is the ownership beyond the group to support or take actions forward?

Making strong links to other local change or improvement initiatives will help embed actions and supports sustainability. Identifying places of influence and opportunities will help the group decide what will change here and now and what they need to continue learning and improving.

Other resources

There are lots of free resources available online if you search for Appreciative Inquiry. Two useful websites to help you get started are:

- Center for Appreciative Inquiry
www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net
- Appreciative Inquiry Commons
<https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>

2. Invitation to take part in Appreciative Inquiry to support health and social care integration

What is this about?

You are invited to be part of Appreciative Inquiry sessions in your health and social care partnership. The Appreciative Inquiry sessions are one of the ways to support you to be actively engaged in shaping and influencing the changes associated with integration.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

It's an approach for creating and sustaining organisational change. It focuses on what's working well and seeks to build on this, instead of a more traditional focus on problems and weaknesses. This approach doesn't pretend there are no real or challenging problems, but it asks you to look at them and redefine them in a way that generates a number of positive possibilities.

Appreciative Inquiry assumptions

- That in every group or organisation something works well.
- That what we focus on and the language we use to describe it becomes our reality and we filter out much of the rest.
- Reality is created in the moment and multiple realities are possible.
- The types of questions we ask influence the direction of travel of groups and organisations in some way.
- People have more confidence or comfort in the future when they take parts of the past with them.
- What is carried forward should be the best bits of the past.
- It's important to value difference.

What will it involve?

- Taking part in a series of three half-day Appreciative Inquiry workshops in your area which focus on a particular theme related to your work (see next page for a brief description of each session).
- Taking forward actions agreed within the inquiry and identifying evidence of impact.

What does it hope to achieve?

- For supported people? The opportunity to influence workforce development, share experience to shape practice, learn together and ultimately, to achieve better personal outcomes.
- For you the worker? Space to think, opportunity to learn, opportunity to share learning and influence future practice and service redesign.
- For your partnership? Learning around what is working, insights around outcome-focused working, learning from other partnerships and playing a role in shaping national guidance.

Who will be involved?

- People from across the sector who have experience and interest in the area of practice or theme and people within your partnership will support and facilitate the day.

Session 1

Initial event with an introduction to Appreciative Inquiry and a message from partnership leads introducing broad focus of inquiry and commitment to progress actions developed by group. Focus of session is to identify the enabling factors when things are working well and what would contribute to improvement.

Session 2

Two to three weeks after session 1. Group members give feedback to further inquiry they have undertaken since session 1. Group confirms the consolidated picture of the positive and potential future, identifies a future timeframe (one year from now) and works back from this to identify what needs to have been achieved in six months and agree next step actions (tests of change).

Session 3

Four to six weeks after session 2. Group members (and potentially partnership leads) report back on next step actions, share reflection and refine. Confirm agreement with partnership leads as to how refined actions will now be progressed.

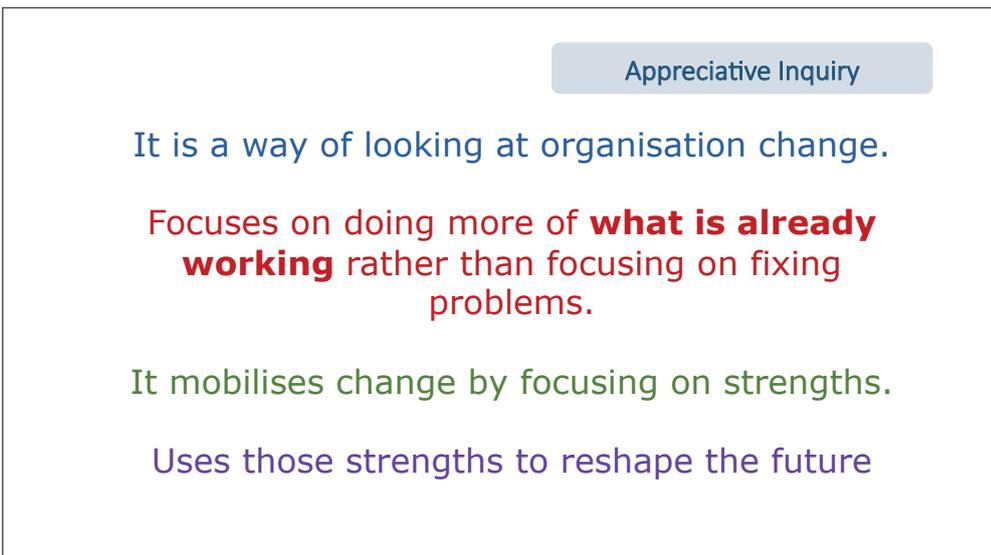
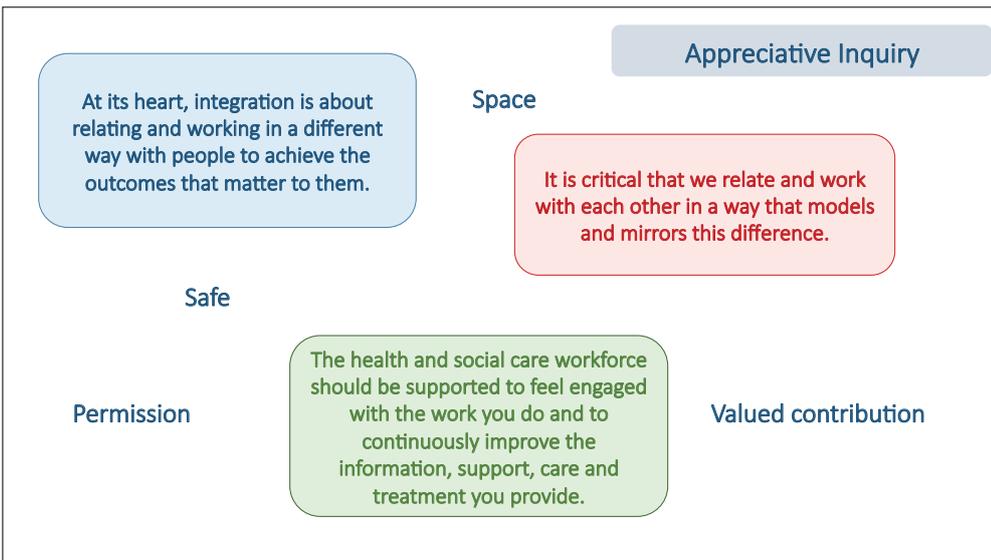
Shared reflection on learning from process, what is to be shared with other partnerships.

3. Session 1: Facilitator plan

Time	Activity	Key points	Resources
20 min	Welcome and introductions	Introduction and background from host partnership to the focus of inquiry	
30 min	What is Appreciative Inquiry? a) Presentation b) Discussion in pairs (or group depending on numbers) – What appeals to you about Appreciative Inquiry? – What are your reservations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check out who knows about Appreciative Inquiry or has experienced it – Is an approach to service development – Has shared thinking with other approaches, eg action learning – Involves a discipline and a need to trust the process 	3.1 Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry Powerpoint presentation
30 min	Practice work together a) Interview in pairs – ‘What has been one of your best experiences of your working life – a time when you felt most engaged and enthused?’ b) What was it like to interview in that way – share key points and collate on flip chart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Asking you to try this way of working – Opportunity to practise (or re-familiarise yourself with this style) and to contract to this way of working – Trust the process – Stick to the questions we have offered 	3.2 Appreciative interview handout 3.3 When inquiring appreciatively handout
	Break		

Time	Activity	Key points	Resources
50 min	<p>Discovery</p> <p>a) Interview in pairs – ‘What has been your best experience of focus of inquiry, a time when you felt that it worked well for everyone involved?’</p> <p>b) In table group – collate what made experience possible, record on flip chart</p> <p>c) Large group – feedback and agree what matters</p> <p>d) One wish for the organisation/team/service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Try to focus on a time when it worked well – Work around table, then as large group (depending on numbers) – Aim is to identify what matters and what we want to bring with us to the positive future – Organise into main themes if possible – Ask people to be as specific as possible, eg unpick what ‘good communication’ is 	<p>3.4 Discovery exercise</p> <p>3.5 Discovery quadrants</p>
30 min	<p>Action</p> <p>Who do I need to share this thinking with and how will I do that?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Depending on energy, do this either as big group, walking gallery, post-it notes etc 	<p>3.6 Sharing the discovery action plan</p>
20 min	<p>Check out</p> <p>What was it like to inquire in this way? What am I taking away with me from today?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Either post-it notes or silent writing 	<p>3.7 Session 1: Checking out handout</p>

1. Introduction



Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a means to **create the space and conditions** so we can make a difference. In doing so it activates and engages us by **using our own experiential evidence** from practice as a way to inspire us to take action.

Deficit based problem solving

- Begins with critique of failure.
- Diagnosis of problem from detached viewpoint.
- Focus on cause of problem.
- Move away from problems.
- Encourages defensive behaviour.
- Assumes organisations are sets of problems to be overcome.

Appreciative Inquiry

- Begins with recognising success.
- Looking at what's working well – as a participant.
- Focus on organisation at its best.
- Move towards the best future.
- Encourages openness.
- Assumes organisations are sources of creativity and innovation.

Sound familiar...?

Action learning

Strengths based

Coaching

Solution focused

Assets

Adaptive leadership

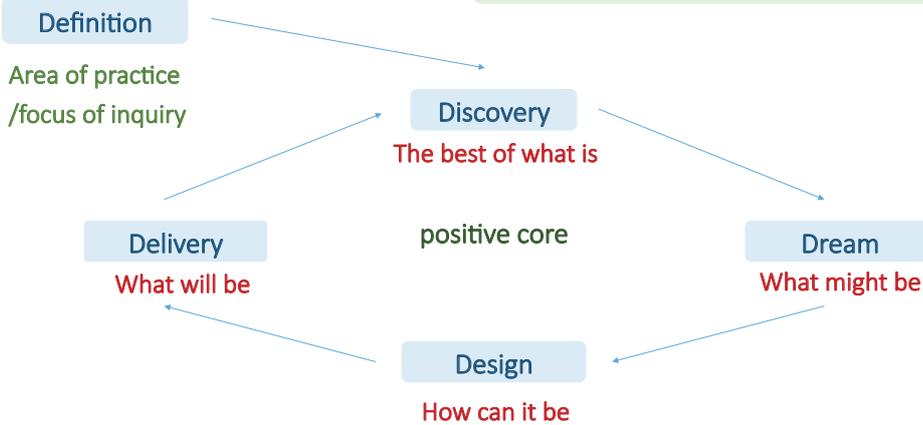
PERSONAL OUTCOMES

Appreciative Inquiry

- In every group or organisation, something works well.
- Looking for what works well and doing more of it is more effective and motivating than looking for what doesn't work and doing less of it.
- What we focus on becomes our reality and absorbs our energy.
- The language we use to describe reality helps create that reality.
- The questions we ask influences us and the direction of travel.
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when they take the best parts of the past with them.

Talking Points Practice Guide (2012)

Appreciative Inquiry: The 5D model



3.2 Appreciative interview handout

Work in pairs to share a story about the theme below, one person telling their story and other person listening and interviewing. Swap roles after five minutes.

Theme:

What has been one of your best experiences of your professional life – a time when you felt most engaged, alive and enthused in your work?

When telling your story: try to stick to the theme and focus on one of your best experiences. Try to notice and resist any tendency to drift off into negative experiences.

When listening and interviewing: we suggest that you use the questions below to help the person to stay focused on their best experience.

- What's really important about this experience?
- What do you value most about it?

3.3 When inquiring appreciatively handout¹

'Belief rather than doubt is the stance to adopt. This is not a time for scepticism or for questions that imply a need for "proof".'
(Magruder Watkins and Mohr, Appreciative inquiry:
Change at the Speed of Imagination)

- **Assume wellbeing and strength rather than deficit**

You are looking for examples and incidents of things at their best.

- **The inquiry is the intervention**

You are not just gathering data. The questions you ask affect the emotional state of the person you are asking them of and the ongoing, ever-changing image they have of the organisation and the process of change.

- **It's not just the questions, it's the way you ask them**

As you will know, the way in which you ask the question influences people and shapes their expectations about the value and genuineness of the interview. When you are focused and interested the interviewee will experience being fully heard.

- **You are after stories, not opinions or analysis**

You want the person to be almost reliving the experiences they are talking about and telling you about; what they thought or felt at the time rather than examining them in a more detached way and telling you what they think of that experience now. This way you are more likely to get the genuine experience rather than a refined official line or something that the person thinks you want to hear.

- **Once you have the story you can move on to values, life-giving factors and wishes**

The motivating power of values and wishes comes from their emotional charge. The emotions that the stories evoke will allow the person to identify what is really important about the experience and what they want in the future.

¹ Adapted from Practical Appreciative Inquiry, Coaching Leaders 2015

3.4 Discovery exercise

This phase is about the work; to appreciate the best of what is. You are invited to think of those times when you have a sense that it is working well, when you feel most effective, engaged and productive. In doing this the aim is to uncover the unique factors that made these high points possible.

Work in pairs to share a story about the theme below, one person telling their story and other person listening and interviewing. Swap after 10 minutes.

What has been your best experience of (insert theme), a time when you felt that it worked well for people?

Some useful questions to ask each other.

- What's really important about this experience? What do you value most?
- What made this experience possible?
- When things are working at their best in relation to keeping people at home what does it look or feel like?

3.5 Discovery quadrants

When.....is at its best

What's important?	What made it possible?
What does it look or feel like?	One wish for the team/service?

3.6 Sharing the discovery action plan

When.....is at its best

Who do I need to share this with?

How/when will I do it?

3.7 Session 1: Checking out handout

What was it like to inquire in this way?

What am I taking away from today?

4. Session 2: Facilitator plan

Time	Activity	Key points	Resources
20 mins	<p>Welcome and reconnect Go round the room and each person share one positive experience they have had of asking a colleague the inquiry discovery question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Remind people to do this in advance – Don't have to share the actual conversation each person had just the experience of asking the inquiry question – Purpose is to reconnect with appreciative thinking – Reinforce the point that these positive experiences are your 'open doors' 	
40 min	<p>Dream Working in tables or small groups – envisage an ideal future in which the team/organisation is organised around your best experiences (from discovery) where these are the norm rather than the exception</p> <p>a) Spend a few minutes individually reflecting on what this is like (record on post-its)</p> <p>b) Share vision as a group and depict your dream – draw, graphic (flip chart, pens)</p> <p>c) In small groups come up with a newsflash/headline/statement that describes the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Set your imagination free – try not to worry about what is possible or not possible in the 'real world' – Aim is to come up with innovative new ideas based on your discovery – Newsflash/positive statement – be vivid, compelling and bold, maybe even controversial. Something that others will be inspired or challenged by. State positively in the present tense. 	4.1 Dream exercise

Time	Activity	Key points	Resources
30min	<p>Share the dream Each group to present newsflash – as they are doing this ask the group to notice the positive language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Purpose is to reaffirm and strengthen the dream/ positive future – Others listen as inquirers, what is the positive you see in this? What seems important? What does it connect with? 	4.2 Some examples of open inquiry questions
20min	<p>What are the enablers? Interviews in groups of three 'Imagine that you wake up tomorrow and everything is as it should be' How did you get there? What made it possible? What are you doing differently? What do you see others doing differently? How does it feel?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Try to mix groups up so each trio is made up of someone from health, social care and independent/third sector – One person interviewing, one person interviewee, one person noticing and taking notes (focusing on what made it possible) 	4.3 Getting to the dream handout
10 min	Break		
60 min	<p>Action planning Work in tables/small groups using either action plan or game plan template. Imagine ourselves in the positive future, looking back...what moved us in the direction of our dream. What do you want to try? Test of change. Who, what and when?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Think about the signs that things are moving in the right direction. What might this look and feel like, what else do we need to pay attention to? 	4.4 Game plan template
10 min	<p>Check assumptions If there was one thing that hasn't yet been said in order to reach a deeper level of understanding, what would that be?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Depending on energy do this either as big group, walking gallery, post-it notes etc 	4.5 Questions for connecting ideas
20 min	<p>Check out What was it like to inquire in this way? What am I taking away with me from today?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Either post-it notes or silent writing 	4.6 Session 2: Checking out handout

4.1 Dream or 'what could be' exercise

What's your ideal future? What would it be like if your team was organised around your best experiences with people?

1. Reflect for a few moments on what the future could be like.
2. Try not to worry too much about what feels possible or not possible now.
3. Try asking yourself the following questions:

How would our work/team be if all our wishes came true?

No matter what happens what will we want to continue in our future?

4. Share your thoughts around the table.
5. Collate your thoughts and come up with some way of sharing your vision for the future with the rest of the room.

Imagine it is a year from now and the team has won an award for, eg best team working, or partnerships with carers, or supporting care at home. How does it feel? What are we doing differently that enabled us to win that award? What's it like to work with this team?

What if our positive experiences were the everyday norm? How would we know this was the case, how would the outside world know?

4.2 Some examples of open inquiry questions

- What was the best bit about...?

- What was really important about your experience of...?

- What made it possible?

- What did you value most about...?

- Without being overly modest what did you do well?

- If you had one wish for the future in relation to...what would it be?

- What did you find that you were able to build on?

- Who were your friends/allies in this?

- What would make it even better?

- What could be the new story in relation to....?

- What are the possibilities in relation to....that you might not have seen before?

- What might be the signs that things related to...are moving in the right direction?

- What might the impact of...be?

- What options can you create here?

- How do you feel about this?

- What else might you need to pay attention to?

- What might you achieve here?

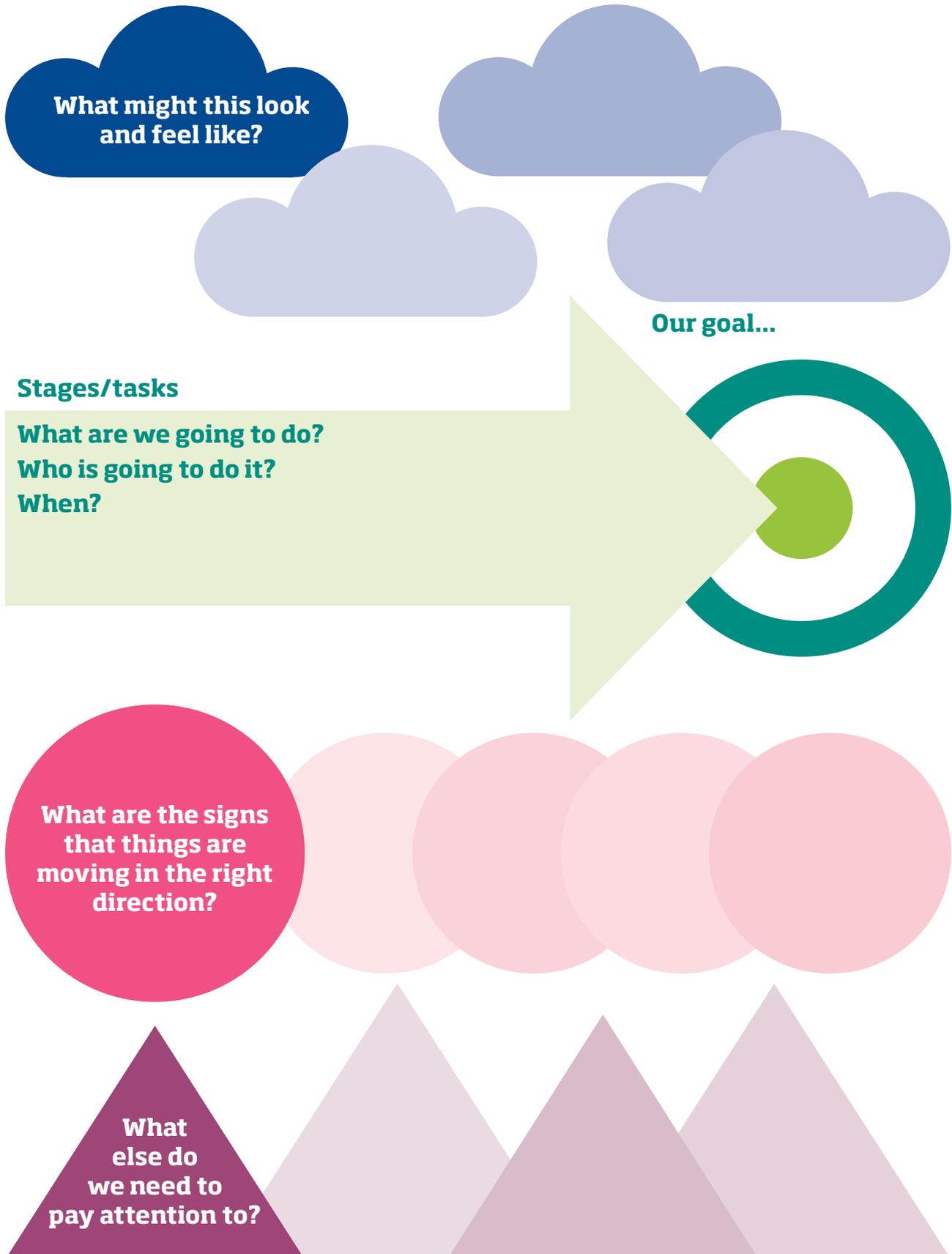
4.3 Getting to the dream handout

Imagine that you wake up tomorrow and everything is as it should be.

How did you get there?

What made it possible?	What are you doing differently?
What do you see others doing differently?	How does it feel?

4.4 Game plan template



4.5 Questions for connecting ideas and finding deeper insight

- What's taking shape? What are you hearing underneath the variety of opinions being expressed?

- What's emerging here for you? What new connections are you making?

- What had real meaning for you from what you've heard? What surprised you? What challenged you?

- What's missing from this picture so far? What is it we're not seeing? What do we need more clarity about?

- What's been your/our major learning, insight or discovery so far?

- What's the next level of thinking we need to do?

- If there was one thing that hasn't yet been said in order to reach a deeper level of understanding/clarity, what would that be?

4.6 Session 2: Checking out handout

What was it like to inquire in this way?

What am I taking away from today?

5. Session 3: Facilitator plan

Time	Activity	Key points	Resources
20 mins	Welcome back and reconnect – something that has lifted your spirits		
40 min	Sharing stories Share stories from actions agreed/game plans from last session Discussion using open questions Presenter invited to share 'headline' from the discussion	As listening to stories, ask group to notice (and record on post-it notes if they wish) What's the positive you see in this? What seemed important? What struck a chord? What else are we discovering?	Flip charts and post-its
20 mins	Repeating the cycle Small group discussion: how has using an inquiry-based approach influence our thinking or action. What are we noticing?	Reinforce messages about Appreciative Inquiry – not linear, cycle, constant process of discovering etc What is our question now? What is the one thing that hasn't been said?	5.1 Reconnect with Appreciative Inquiry Powerpoint presentation (includes slides with questions)
20 mins	Break		
50 mins	Action planning – What are you going to take forward? In small groups (one group per theme) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works well? • What would make it even better? • What experiment/test/ little things do you want to try? • How will you continue the work over the next three or six months? 	Action plan Agreement as to who 'holds these'? If we could sow one seed now...what would it be?	5.2 Action plan template

Time	Activity	Key points	Resources
30 min	<p>Other opportunities to be inquirers</p> <p>What would you say to others not in the room?</p> <p>What opportunities do you see for taking forward Appreciative Inquiry within integration?</p> <p>What could an inquiry-based approach offer to:</p> <p>a) your own practice and development?</p> <p>b) our approach to aspects of service improvement?</p> <p>How could we sustain and spread this inquiry-based approach?</p>	<p>Small group discussion using game plans for inquiry and ways of working/learning together</p>	<p>4.4 Game plan template</p>
30 mins	<p>Reflection and check out</p> <p>What did you value most about using Appreciative Inquiry?</p> <p>What would have made it even better?</p> <p>What was it like to inquire in this way, how did you feel?</p> <p>What are you going to do with your knowledge and experience of Appreciative Inquiry?</p>	<p>Feedback will depend on time and energy, individual reflection or group discussion or write one thing per post-it note and stick on flip chart as you leave the room</p>	<p>5.3 Session 3: Checking out handout</p>

5.1 Reconnect with Appreciative Inquiry

Powerpoint presentation

Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry

At its heart, integration is about relating and working in a different way with people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them

Space

Appreciative Inquiry

It is critical that we relate and work with each other in a way that models and mirrors this difference

Safe

Permission

The health and social care workforce should be supported to feel engaged with the work you do and to continuously improve the information, support, care and treatment you provide

Valued contribution

Appreciative Inquiry

It is a way of looking at organisation change

Focuses on doing more of **what is already working** rather than focusing on fixing problems

It mobilises change by focusing on strengths

Uses those strengths to reshape the future.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is a means to **create the space and conditions** so we can make a difference. In doing so it activates and engages us by **using our own experiential evidence** from practice as a way to inspire us to take action

Deficit based problem solving

- Begins with critique of failure
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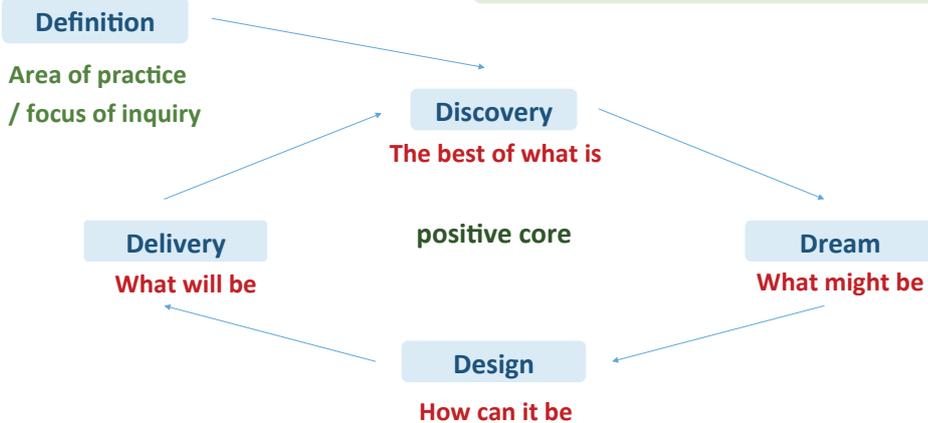
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Appreciative Inquiry

- In every group or organisation, something works well
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- What we focus on becomes our reality and absorbs our energy
- The language we use to describe reality helps create that reality
- The questions we ask influences us and the direction of travel
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when they take the best parts of the past with them

Talking Points Practice Guide (2012)

Appreciative Inquiry: The 5D model



Powerful questions...

Are
thought-provoking and invite reflection and finding deeper meaning

They

- refocus thoughts – from problem to solution
- can help someone feel more constructive about a situation and create options
- tap into curiosity and creativity
- can make a problem feel more like a challenge or an opportunity
- create forward movement – out of the problem state and into solution or action
- bring underlying assumptions to light

For example...

I'm really struggling with this job and my boss doesn't support me – she doesn't even know what I do!

Why can't my boss help?

How can I get my boss to know more me? about what I'm doing?

How can I make sure my boss understands more about what I'm doing and encourage her to give me more support

5.2 Action plan template

What works well?	What would make it even better?	What do we want to try?	What will keep us going?

5.3 Session 3: Checking out handout

<p>What did you value most about using Appreciative Inquiry?</p>	<p>What would have made it even better?</p>
<p>What was it like to inquire in this way, how did you feel, what have you learned?</p>	<p>What are you going to do with your knowledge and experience of Appreciative Inquiry?</p>

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