

# Appreciative Inquiry

*Positive Approach to Change*

*Title V Federal-State MCH Partnership Meeting*

*October 22, 2024*

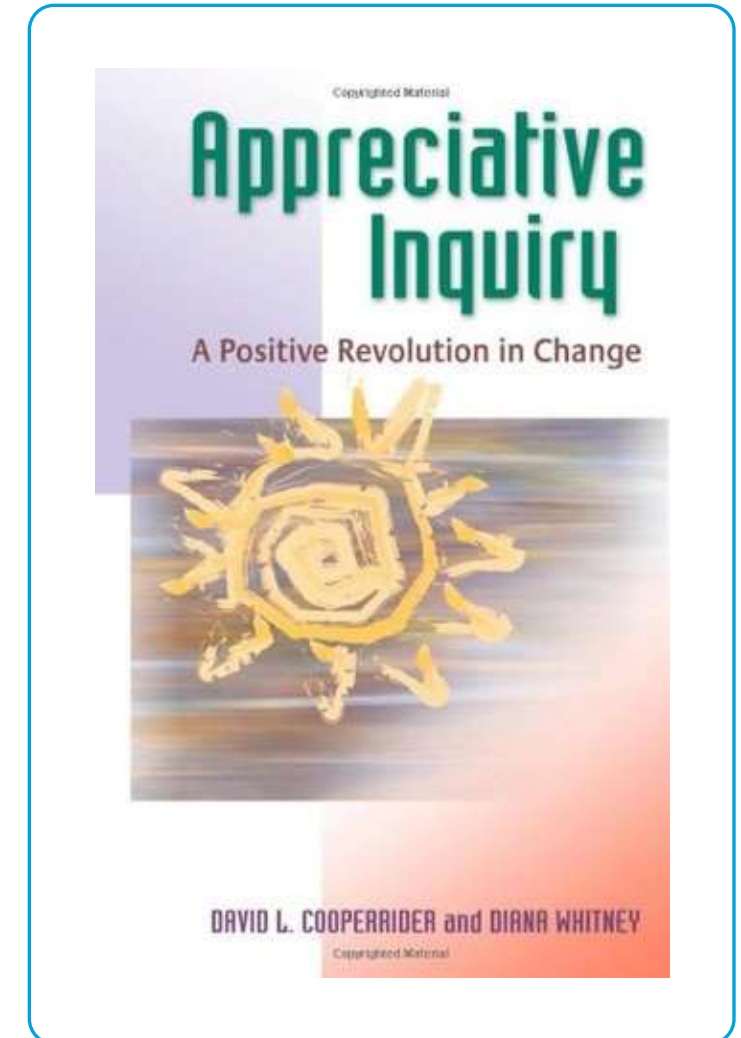
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National **MCH** Workforce  
Development Center  
Advancing Health Transformation

# Appreciative Inquiry

- **Definition: A change management approach and tool that focuses on how to build on existing strengths and how to engage stakeholders to create change.**
  - “Search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them”
  - Support and build on what is already working
  - Inquire, Imagine, and Innovate (vs. negate, criticize, diagnose)



# Problem Solving vs Appreciative Inquiry

## Problem Solving

- Identify a problem
- Analyze causes, set performance measures
- Discuss ways to address the problem and meet measures
- Plan actions

## Appreciative Inquiry

- Identify successes, recognize what is working
- Envision what might be; dream and wish
- Discuss ways to support success and achieve dreams
- Plan actions

# When Should You Use Appreciative Inquiry?

- When the problem is **complex**
- When the problem keeps coming back
- When the attempted fixes make things worse
- When there is no clear path forward

# Benefits of Using Appreciative Inquiry

- Builds relationships across a group
- Encourages a sense of pride and belonging by starting focusing on strengths and achievements
- Encourages people to express commitments and ambitions without self-limiting
- Sets a high level for groups that need inspiration
- Creates space for people to engage with each other and rewards that engagement by highlighting individual dreams and strengths throughout
- Builds on the full range of thinking and communication styles
- At its best can change the way groups think!

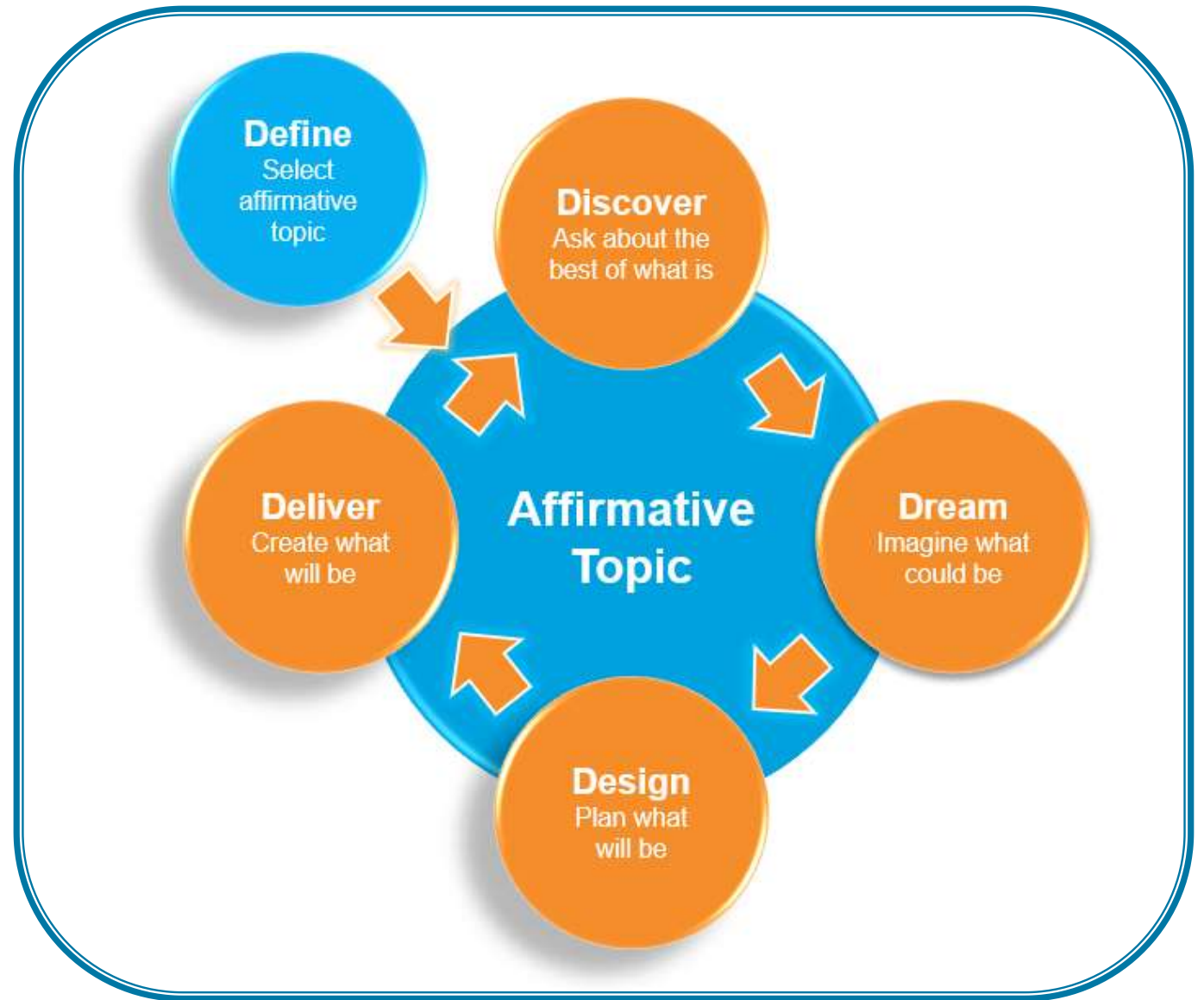
# Challenges Using Appreciative Inquiry

- **What are some common challenges?**
  - Feels “soft”
  - Requires time and effort to start and to maintain
- **When should you avoid using AI?**
  - Small or technical issues that can be resolved with technical help or QI processes
  - Group has deep mistrust and won't be able to share freely
- **What are the caveats for using AI?**
  - Starts with the premise that you can quit doing things that aren't working
  - Assumes the group has strengths now, and has dreams that are not mutually exclusive

# Appreciative Inquiry Process: A Four-Step Dialog Model

## Section Two

# Appreciative Inquiry Process: 4D Cycle





**DEFINE**

# DEFINE

The **DEFINE** step precedes the main four steps. It provides a frame for the discussions that follow.

The frame should be **AFFIRMING**.

- Frame the work as a positive statement.
- Agree on the wording before you begin the first dialog.



# AI Steps: Define

## *American Samoa Example*

- Before:  
"Reduce morbidity and mortality due to rheumatic heart disease"
- **AFTER:**  
"Every Child Protected and Safe"



# Define: Choosing an Appreciative Inquiry Topic

- Reframe the problem in the **affirmative**
  - Flip the problem in a positive direction
- Define what is **desirable**
  - What is it you want more of related to XX..??
- Cultivate **genuine curiosity**
  - “I want to know more about this topic”



*The topic takes you  
where you want to go*

# DISCOVER

**Step 1**

# Discover

In the **DISCOVER** stage, people talk about what is working related to the affirmative goal.

- Engage **EVERYONE** in the system in dialog about what is working in specific areas
- Ask, listen, share
- Appreciate what is
- Uncover new perspectives; find overlap



# Discover: Facilitator Guidance

- Organize by **PAIRS** or **TRIOS**
- Split up people who work closely together, if possible
- Take turns in the “interviewer” role
- Give plenty of time for in-depth answers and follow-up questions



# AI Steps: Discover

*New Hampshire Example*

- What's working well now related to our goal of high-functioning, coordinated system of care for CYSHCN?







# DISCOVER NOTES

YOUTH INPUT INTO SYSTEMS  
NON PROFIT + BURDEN (SIC & FV)  
FAMILIES CONNECTING  
TRANSITION WORKSHOPS  
CARE COORDINATION  
PAYMENTS FROM  
INVOLVING THE  
PRICE ↑ FOR  
PAID FAMILY  
IEP TEAM  
GOALS  
POSITIVE EXP  
SHIFT IN BURDEN  
COLLABORATIVE  
NH LEADERSHIP  
ARE IMPOR

A 6° OF KNOWLEDGE - TIGHT NETWORK  
Q SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS - OPTIONS  
Q STUDENT LOAN FOR  
Q CHARTING THE LIFE COURSE  
PERSON-CENTERED  
A LEVERAGING SERVICES  
- SPREAD SERVICES  
- LESS DUPLICATION  
SYSTEMS  
RELATIONSHIPS  
F HIPPA WORK  
A MCO'S  
Q LOTS OF  
A NH EASY  
SO MANY

# What does “discover” feel like?

At your tables, do brief interviews about something in your world that is going really well...

# Discover: Interviewer Instructions

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

- Ask open-ended questions... prompt the interviewee to say more than “yes” or “no”
- Show curiosity by asking for details or explanation
- Don’t “pull focus” by responding with a story of your own
- Sample questions to ask:
  - What are you most passionate about in your work?
  - What is going well from your perspective? What accounts for these successes?
  - Is there a specific group for whom your program works especially well? Why?

# DREAM

Step 2

# Dream

**DREAM** is a broad conversation about the specifics of the future we desire. These are the kinds of questions to explore:

- What do we want? What can we imagine?
- What is the world calling us to become?

The goal of this discussion is to:

- Describe our desired future state in **DETAIL**
- Articulate what we **WISH** for



# Dream: Process

- Put people in larger groups (four to six is ideal)
- Organize around specific themes if appropriate for your group or topic (see example)
- Stay laser focused on the **future state** ... don't have to worry about what's practical or likely



# Dream: Process

- Everyone *Listen*: probe, be curious, get to specifics
- Everyone *Share*: collect dreams or wishes from everyone in the group
  
- You can build on each other's dreams:
  - Use improv rules, say “Yes, and...”
- Recast GAP statements into WISHES
  - Rephrase “But we don’t have \_\_\_\_...” into “I wish I had...”



# DESIGN

Step 3

# Design – state action planning process

**DESIGN** is the practical, immediate stage of the process. It asks these questions:

- How can we use what we have right now to build a path to our Dream?
- What can we design right now, to help us achieve the Dream in the future?

Focus on the outcomes of the previous discussions. The goal is to find action steps that:

1. Support, grow, amplify or expand things that work
2. Use resources we have now to create something we need in the future
3. Build capacity now to do work we want to do in the future



# Design: Process

The first design goal is to build on what exists and amplify strengths.

The second design goal is to build capacity that will enable key elements of the “Dream” future state.

This conversation is about what can be done now and in the immediate future. Here are some tips:

- Use a capacity checklist as a guide
- Co-construct the new design
- Plug in design and planning tools here [maybe this is a link? Design Thinking, 5R's, EBDM approaches...]

# DELIVER

Step 4

# Deliver

**DELIVER** stage is all about putting learning into practice. In this stage, commit to processes that will result in sustainable effort. In this stage you are planning to adapt over time. Expect changes in the context, changes in your own capacity as you learn and develop, and changes in the people.

- Key Question: How do we affirm the capabilities of the whole system and each person in it?
- Sustainability: Put plans in place that will drive/extend our progress toward the future state over time
- Also known as “Destiny”
- Can use priority matrix and implementation tools here



# Thank you!

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Advancing Health Transformation