

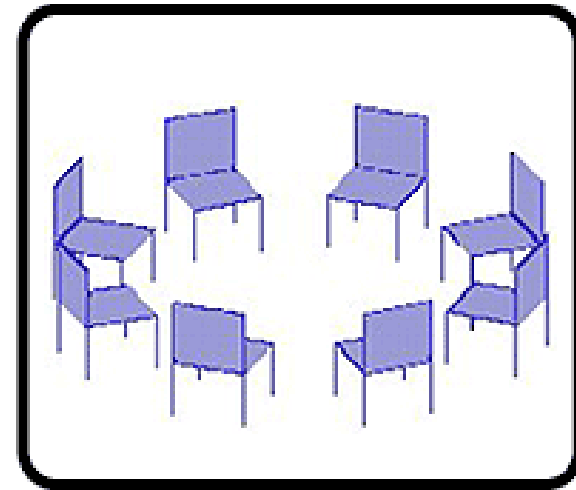
## A few reminders

- ✓ The Discovery and Action Group discussions may be iterative in that thoughts raised in one session may be reprised in later sessions.
- ✓ It is good for the facilitators to have or ask for a silent scribe to capture ideas, reading these ideas back to ensure that they reflect what was meant.
- ✓ *Your job is to listen.* Do not feel like you have to answer or respond or remind everyone that a “policy exists.”
- ✓ Try to keep count in your head and try not to say anything at all – not even asking another question - until two or three others have spoken.
- ✓ Silence is ok. Usually, people are thinking about what to say, and the silence feels longer than it is. Look at the clock and notice that it’s only seconds that are passing.
- ✓ Try not to judge the value of the comments with statements like “good point” because if you don’t say that to everyone, it could make some feel like their comment is not valued.
- ✓ If you comment, try to invite others into the conversation, using phrases like “What do others think?” and “Are we missing anyone?”
- ✓ Use active listening and other nonverbal signs to engage quiet individuals.



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# Discovery & Action Handbook



## Purpose

- ✓ Engage staff at all levels in conversations to discover existing solutions among them and create new ideas.
- ✓ Introduce pathway to participation for anyone who is attracted to the project.
- ✓ Provide the Core Team with the opportunity to listen to staff, identify promising ideas and remove barriers.
- ✓ Create a dynamic wave of activity in the school to produce momentum.
- ✓ Identify participants who volunteer to act on these solutions and ideas.

# Wait Time

## Take 20 Seconds

When facilitating D & A's it is **more** important to create a real conversation than it is to provide all the "right" answers – as facilitators we can do this by asking the assembled group good questions and then WAITING for people in the group to answer.

The most important thing to remember here is **not to begin speaking too soon after you've asked a question**. Pose the question and then wait at least 20 seconds for someone else to speak.

20 seconds of silence in a group can feel like a very long time – on average, facilitators begin speaking after six seconds – so, increase your tolerance of loooong pauses.

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### *Pause and look at your shoes.*

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During these long pauses people in the group are often formulating their answers and working up the courage to respond – if you start talking too soon, you truncate that process and communicate (unwittingly) that you're the one with the answers.

One good way to encourage the group to respond is to look down at your shoes, this disrupts your eye contact with members of the group, signals that this is time for reflection and thinking and takes a little of the pressure to begin talking off you.

# A Key Indicator

We all want to know if we're doing a good job, especially when we're trying something new. If you find yourself wondering how you are doing as a D & A facilitator, after you've conducted 10 – 15 Discovery & Action Dialogues stop and take a look at your personal To-Do list.

If you're doing effective D&As, as a facilitator your own to-do list shouldn't be getting significantly larger or longer with action items from, or for, others. If you are conducting effective D & A's participants should be volunteering to take on new activities, play new roles and help remove barriers to better practice.....in fact, you may find this shift disconcerting.

## Your to-do list shouldn't be getting longer

Keep track of what's on everyone's to-do list – if yours is the only one getting longer, you may want to think about how you are asking and listening to the answers to APD's most important questions.

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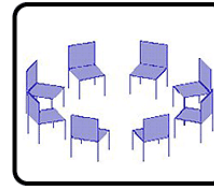
*What could we do now? What would it take to make this happen? Any volunteers? Who's willing to take the next step?*

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Does this mean your job will get easier? Not necessarily, you may find that you have to work harder at running interference for newly engaged staff, you may find that you're doing more outreach and offering new and different invitations to usual and unusual suspects and, in what may be your biggest new role, you may have to pay much closer attention to small ideas – and the potential power that can be unleashed by lots and lots of small ideas turning into big change. may be your biggest new role, you may have to pay much closer attention to small ideas – and the potential power that can be unleashed by lots and lots of small ideas turning into big change.

# Formal and Informal

## Planned group discussions



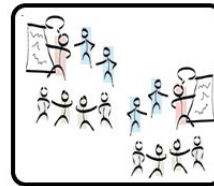
For some Discovery & Action sessions you'll want to invite a small group to join you at comfortable time and place to talk about a challenge using the key D&A questions. Sometimes these can happen as part of or in place of some other meeting already on the schedule.

## Ad hoc conversations



Other Discovery & Action sessions may be more informal. You can take opportunities for quick, ad hoc conversations any time you find yourself with one or more people with a stake in the issue.

## Special meetings



From time to time, you can invite a larger group to come together, share experience and make sense of the ideas that have emerged in D&As so far.

# Small Changes, Big Effects

## Remember the butterfly effect

Small changes can have very big effects in systems. You've probably heard of the "butterfly effect" which refers to the phenomenon that a severe storm in one part of the world can cause atmospheric turbulence on another continent. The saying goes that the flap of a butterfly's wings in Africa can create high winds in California.

When we're tackling big problems, we often think we need to create an equally big program to solve them. That can feel overwhelming and makes it hard to get started.

The butterfly effect suggests that big changes can be the result of many small actions adding up to something big. The Discovery & Action process is one way to identify and magnify those small actions that allow you to get started.

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## *Celebrate small wins BIG time!*

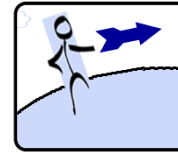
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It's important to celebrate these small changes to provide concrete evidence to participating staff that the whole system is serious about small changes and their potential for BIG improvements.



# Who, What, When, How?

## What's next?



Action is a very important part of the Discovery & Action process. The goal is to have at least one follow-up action identified by the end of each session. It doesn't have to be a great big monumental project. A few small efforts can add up to big changes.

## Recruit volunteers



When an idea emerges from the discussion that seems to resonate with the group it's time to get specific about who will take the lead on the next steps. It's usually easier to recruit volunteers if the tasks can be broken up into several small actions (contact one person, find out a piece of information, make arrangements for a next meeting).

## Document plans



Create a simple system to document and share follow ups – who, what, when, where, how? Find a way to keep track of all the ideas that emerge. If no one is interested in taking action on one of them yet – that's OK. Put it in a "parking lot" that you can review later because some ideas that are not "ready" now may be picked up later.

# Tips for Facilitators

## Facilitator non-verbal behavior

- Maintain eye contact with everyone as you speak
- Practice active listening: nodding, smiling, showing interest. Listen carefully and show interest in participants' responses and exchange
- Sit in the group, not higher or away from the group

## Facilitator verbal behavior

- Be sure participants talk more than you do and exchange among themselves
- Refrain from making suggestions, giving advice unless specifically asked
- Ask open-ended questions with "What, how, what if, "
- Invite participants to tell their story or share their experience with the issue at hand
- Let the conversation guide the group

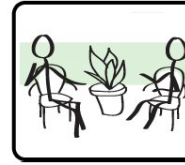
## Encourage everyone to participate

- Acknowledge individual's willingness to talk, even if the statement is incorrect, beside the point, by saying: "this is interesting....that's a good question, I never thought of it this way.."
- Don't answer questions from the group yourself, but asking other participants to answer them
- Ensure that everyone can voice their ideas or opinion
- Don't let one person dominate the discussion : acknowledge every person's contribution to the group but stress the need to learn and hear from EVERYONE

## Quote participants ideas, remarks and opinions

- Repeat ideas from participants
- Summarize ideas, opinion from the group
- Broaden the discussion and connect to the larger goals
- Let people know that you listened carefully to what they said
- Thank the group

# Set the Tone



## Setting up the climate

1. Choose an informal or familiar setting for participants
2. Create a congenial atmosphere by using casual conversation and small talk to make people feel comfortable (refreshments are good too!)
3. Introduction: Make sure everybody knows everybody
4. Be relaxed, direct and confident



## Explain the purpose of the meeting/activity

Sample statements such as:

*"We are here together because of our common concern about.....". "We, facilitators, are here to learn from you about your experience with (issue/problem)..... so that TOGETHER we can address it".*

Present the APD Concept in the context of a specific problem: *"We would like to invite you to address this problem by looking and discovering solutions from within our own (organization, department, units, etc..)."*

# Engage Everyone

## Broaden the conversation

When searching in your organization or community for behavior and solutions that are unusually powerful and effective (positively deviant) it helps to broaden your conversations to include the people most involved – this is especially powerful when you can bring together people that don't normally talk with one another.

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*Nothing about me without me!*

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## Who can answer the question?

For example, a teacher might say: “Well, we would incorporate new ideas if we could leave materials we've created on our own in the library or someplace like that.”

A good APD response to this might be: “Who could we talk with about whether that might be possible or where else there might be a place we could do that?”

Or, during a D&A someone might say: “The coaches need to change their behavior by spending time with us right after they visit.”

A good APD response might be: “Which coaches could we ask about whether this makes sense? Who could approach one of these coaches?”

## Who is missing from the conversation?

# Just Do It!

## Finish what you start? Not always!

There's probably a voice in your head repeating a lesson from your childhood: *Finish what you start!*

And that's effective advice in many areas of life – but it isn't especially helpful when you're doing Discovery & Action.

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*You don't have to finish – you just have to start!*

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In a D&A Dialogue you don't have to finish the conversation, in fact, it's more powerful and effective to start the conversation, keep it short and then go back and back and back and back to the group to continue the dialogue in short, periodic bursts that are high-energy, high-engagement and, therefore, high-impact.

You don't have to finish, you just have to start. It's OK if you haven't answered every question or gotten every good idea from the staff about how to improve practice. Just get started and keep going!

Sometimes you're probably going to feel like you're just going in a circle, that's when it's going to be important to slow down and celebrate some small wins big time!

# Buy-In v. Ownership

## Not the same thing



There is an important distinction between ownership and buy-in. These words are not interchangeable and they are not synonymous.

**Ownership** is when you own or share the ownership of an idea, a decision, an action plan, a choice; it means that you have participated in its development, that it is your choice freely made.

**Buy-in is the exact opposite:** someone else, or some group of people, has done the development, the thinking and the deciding, and now they have to convince you to come along and buy-in to their idea -- so that you can implement their idea without your involvement in the initial conversations or resulting decisions. Aiming for buy-in creates lukewarm, pallid implementation and mediocre results.

When it comes to solving intractable socio-technical behavioral problems in systems the notion of buy-in is just not useful – people in the system need to own the new behaviors.

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*Anytime you or someone around you thinks or talks about buy-in – beware!*

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It is a danger signal telling you that your development and implementation process is missing the essential ingredient of involving all who should be.

# Capture Butterflies

## Make the invisible visible



Capturing butterflies was the phrase coined by an APD coordinator. He said: “I used to know my job – it was to tell people important things. Now, my job is harder because I spend all my time trying to capture butterflies.”

The most important thing you can do is to notice and capture the butterflies. Butterflies are those lovely, often small ideas that someone will float into a D&A conversation – these ideas are often either so small, or so obvious, that we fail to notice and capture them. And, because we don't notice these butterflies, we can't turn them from ideas into action.

Your job is to capture those butterflies –

When you think a butterfly is floating around but hasn't been made explicit, here are some good prompts to use to help capture it:

*Could you say that again so we can all take it in?*

*Wow, did anyone else just notice a gem of an idea float by?*

*What do you think of that idea? What would it take for you to try that?*

# Key D&A Questions

## Question 1



Affirm the participant's knowledge of the problem/challenge.

Provide opportunities to get thoughts and questions out on the table.

***What do you know/think about ....?***

## Question 2

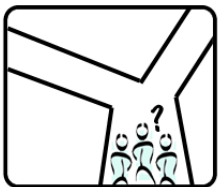


Focus on personal practices (rather than on what other people do or don't do).

Recognize the participant's knowledge of what they are supposed to do.

***What do YOU do when you want/need to ....?***

## Question 3

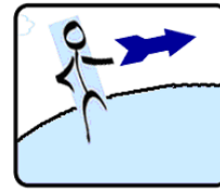


Identify the barriers and constraints to the desired behavior.

Why **can't** you? (which gets at identifying the barriers) rather than Why **don't** you? (which sounds judgmental)

***What prevents you from doing that 100% of the time?***

## Question 4



Establish that practicing the desired behavior (and getting around any barriers) is possible.

Identify the existing uncommon successful strategies that enable some individuals to overcome barriers or issues. Identify the enablers and supports that make the desired behavior easier or more likely.

***Do you know of anyone who has overcome these barriers? How?***

## Question 5



Provide an opportunity for participants to generate and share new ideas for enabling the desired behavior.

***Do you have any other ideas about how we can ....?***

## Question 6



Identify action steps with target dates and a mechanism for reporting back. Recruit volunteers for each action step. Capture ideas that don't yet have an identified action plan or volunteer in a "parking lot"

***What would we have to do here to implement that idea?***