**STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS**

**Learning Outcome 1: ACTIVITY 1**

**PAIRED ACTIVITY**

**Appreciative inquiry**

Storytelling involves inviting people to reflect on events in their present or past that have been exceptional and to identify how they hope things will be different in the future (the wish question). It combines positively focused inquiry and dialogue, to compile a collective imagination that moves the group forward.

During this activity participants will be interviewing each other, then collectively analysing their own data. The session will have the following 3 parts:

* + Preparing to Interview (10 mins)
  + Conducting interviews (20 mins)
  + Compiling results (analysing stories) (10 mins)

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| **Interview Subject:**  **“What value does stakeholder management bring to a project or organisational strategy?”** |

Preparing to interview

The strength of your storytelling process will depend on the quality of the questions asked. Questions lead us in directions. The following four generic questions provide the basic foundation for storytelling.

1. *Best Experience*: Tell me about the best times that you have had with your community (or group, or organisation). Looking at your entire experience, recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your involvement. What made it an exciting experience? Who was involved? Describe the event in detail.

2. *Values:* What are the things you value deeply -- specifically, the things you value about yourself, your family, your work, and your community (or group, or organisation)?

3. *Core Life-Giving Factor or Value*: What do you think is the core life-giving factor or value of your community? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make your community (or group or organisation) totally different than it currently is?

4. *Three Wishes*: If you had three wishes for this community (or group or organisation), what would they be?

* When developing questions related to your group’s focus, start with the above generic questions.
* Add additional “probing” questions that help get more detail – such as who, what, when, why, and how  related to the story.
* Start with stories of the *group’s* success – then stories of *individual* success
* Since storytelling is central to appreciative inquiry, develop open-ended questions that encourage  stories, conversation and dialogue.
* Avoid question that lead to a “yes” and “no” response.
* Use questions that will help to strengthen the group. For example, “Tell a story about a time when the  group worked together to achieve something that benefited all.” Or, “Tell a story about a time when  the group worked together to help you achieve something that was important to you.”
* Encourage personal accounts, rather than stories about others.

Conducting interviews

* Use the interview preparation as your “script,” to interview each other for 10 mins each. Choose a location where you both feel comfortable.
* Capture key words and phrases.
* Introduce and ask the questions as they are written.
* If necessary, use additional questions to encourage the interviewee.
* Let the interviewee tell his or her story. Try to refrain from giving your story. You will be next.
* Listen attentively. Be curious about the experience, the feelings, and the thoughts. Allow for silence. If your partner does not want to or cannot answer a question, it is OK.
* Allow enough time and watch your time – If there is a set time limit for the interview, be aware of it and stick to it. If you need more time, ask if this is possible.
* Focus on the incident itself and not unnecessary background information.
* Seek firsthand experience rather than stories about others
* Deal constructively with negative comments or a tendency to focus on problems.

***Source:*** *Watkins, J.M., Mohr, B.J. and Kelly, R., 2011. Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination (Vol. 35). John Wiley & Sons.*