

# Leadership Bites: Appreciative Inquiry

LEADERSHIP LEARNING IN 20 MINUTES

**NHS**

**Leadership Academy**

**South East**

## What is Appreciative Inquiry? .... a coaching mindset

Appreciative Inquiry is a style of coaching which supports the development and improvement of mindset, skills and behaviours. When executed well, coaching can enhance an individual, team and/or organisation.

Coaching is at its most effective when used with motivated individuals and teams for continuous long-term improvement but of course, it's also crucial for the coach to embody the characteristics needed to provoke progress, some of which are: Positive, Enthusiastic, Supportive, Trusting, Focused, Outcome Oriented, Knowledgeable, Respectful, Patient, Assertive, Observant and has a Clear Direction.

## Appreciative Inquiry

The key principle of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is to identify and do more of what is already working, rather than look for problems and try to fix them. It also encourages trust, reduces defensiveness and suspicion, and helps to quickly establish strong working relationships. It focusses on existing strengths, achievements and successes (the aspects of a person's/team's work which they're proud of, which motivate them, and which reap good results) and uses them as a foundation for a realistic future vision, and the launch pad to reach it.

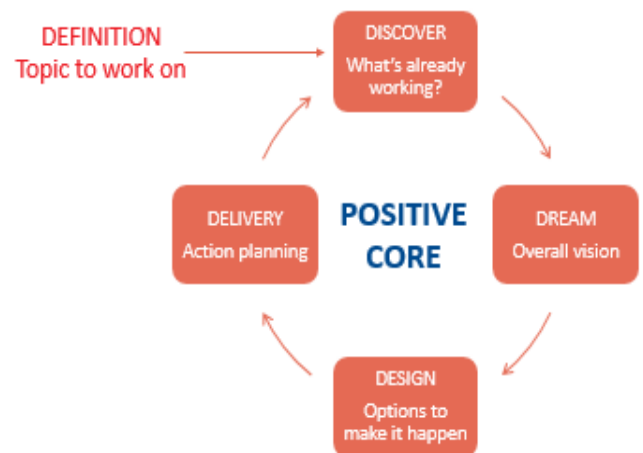
Appreciative Inquiry is the investigation of those things that are most effective, taking time to understand how and why it works and applying that learning to the next goal. It doesn't ignore past failures; instead it encourages a more positive and creative frame of mind to come up with ideas for improvement.

These strengths, achievements and successes are referred to as the 'positive core' and when they're linked to a strategic agenda, progress can be rapid while at the same time building enthusiasm, confidence and energy to get things done.

## Give it a try...

Here are some Appreciative Inquiry questions to get you started:

- What have been your best experiences at work?  
A time when...
- What do you value about... yourself, work, organisation?
- What are your core values that you wouldn't be the same without?
- If you had three wishes for your performance, what would they be?
- What achievements are you (and/or your team) proud of?
- Apart from the money, what makes it worth coming into work?



## Further learning ...

Take some inspiration from Carol Dweck's TED talk "The Power of That You Can Improve" as well as reading "The Coaching Habit" by Michael Bungay Stainer.



# Time to reflect...

Take some time to note down your thoughts on what you've learned;

What resonated?

What has made you curious?

What small changes could you make to start having an impact differently and quickly?

What might you need to share with your team, and commit to 'testing and learning' together?

