

Appreciative Inquiry in Group Supervision: How to Guide



Appreciative inquiry offers practitioners time and space to reflect on a piece of work, and explore what caused the work to have an impact. This allows us all to learn from what works well.

Appreciative inquiry helps us to build a continual learning culture where we celebrate good practice.

Getting started

How long?

We recommend that you schedule half an hour for doing appreciative inquiry in Group Supervision.

You can, and we would encourage people to, do appreciative inquiry at any time, e.g. during one to one supervision, and in general conversation, which only needs to take around 5 minutes.

Who and what do they do?

Identify a:

- **Person with an example of good practice/ something that worked well:** They talk about a good piece of work they have done and answer questions. Appreciative inquiry can be used **on any good aspect of work – not just in relation to cases** – from building relationships with families, to building relationships with colleagues or having a good reflective discussion in supervision.
- **Facilitator:** The Facilitator asks the person strength based questions about the piece of work to understand what worked well, why, and what impact it had.
- **Observer(s):** Listen to the discussion and then feedback what they learned from the conversation at the end.

Until your team is familiar with appreciative inquiry questions, it is recommended that the Facilitator is a Signs of Safety Practice Lead.

You can do the exercise in groups of three, so each person has a role, or you can have a number of observers. If your team hasn't done appreciative inquiry before, it is recommended that you let them be observers before doing the exercise in threes so they can see how it works.

Top Tips:

- **Remember** – all the questions need to be strength based so they elicit an answer about **what worked well**
- **Use a timer** and **stick to the format** (overleaf) to keep the session focussed.
- **Resources you may find useful are available on the [LSCB Website](#):** EARS Questions: Appreciative Inquiry

Drilling down on what work well – using EARS Questions:

Elicit – ask about the situation (e.g. tell me more about...)

Amplify – dig for the detail (e.g. who did what, where and when? What made this different? How did you make this happen? What would other people have seen/ said you were doing that helped you to get a good outcome? How did you know what you were doing was working?)

Reflect – reflect on what the work meant (e.g. what's the most important thing you've learned from this work? What do you feel most proud of?)

Start over – go back to the beginning and use an elicit question on another aspect of the work.

Appreciative Inquiry in Group Supervision



The Appreciative Inquiry Session

1. Set the timer for **5 minutes**.
2. The person bringing the example **introduces themselves and the good piece of work**
3. The **facilitator asks the person questions** to understand what caused this to go well. Only the facilitator and the person talk.
4. When the 5 minutes are up, **the observer(s) feedback what they have learned**.
5. Everyone has **3 minutes to write down their reflections and what they have learned**.
6. If you are doing this exercise in threes, **rotate the roles** and start again at step one until everyone has had a turn in each role.

Exercise for Practising Appreciative Inquiry Questions

You can expand the session above to practice creating appreciative inquiry questions. Additional steps are shown below in orange.

1. The person bringing the example **introduces themselves and the good piece of work**
2. For **5 minutes**, the group individually write down **strength-based EARS questions** they want to ask the person.
3. When the 5 minutes are up, **the questions are all shared with the Facilitator**. The Facilitator might ask each person to share their best question.
4. **Set the timer for 5 minutes**. Using the best questions from the group, the **facilitator asks the person questions** to understand what caused this to go well. Only the facilitator and the person talk.
5. When the 5 minutes are up, **the observer(s) feedback what they have learned**.
6. Everyone has **3 minutes to write down their reflections and what they have learned**.
7. The **Facilitator asks the Case Holder to say what they liked** or found useful about the process, **and which question was the most powerful**.