



**StFX**  
UNIVERSITY

**COADY**  
INSTITUTE

CENTRE FOR  
**EMPLOYMENT  
INNOVATION**

# **TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT**

## **STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACHES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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# Asset-based Community-led Development (ABCD)

What did we learn in  
session one?



# Asset-based Community-led Development (ABCD)

- ABCD as a way of thinking about community.
- Focuses first on strengths and assets rather than problems and needs.
- Identifies and mobilizes community and individual skills, passions, and assets.



## Three Lanes

What can  
community do  
for themselves?

What can  
community do  
with support  
from others?

What does  
community  
want  
government or  
institutions to  
do?



## Participation Framework



# World Cafe

- Create the space
- Welcome & introductions
- Small group rounds
- Questions for exploration
- Harvest (capture insights)

Two rounds, build on the ideas of the group before!



# Topic 1. Appreciative Interviewing.

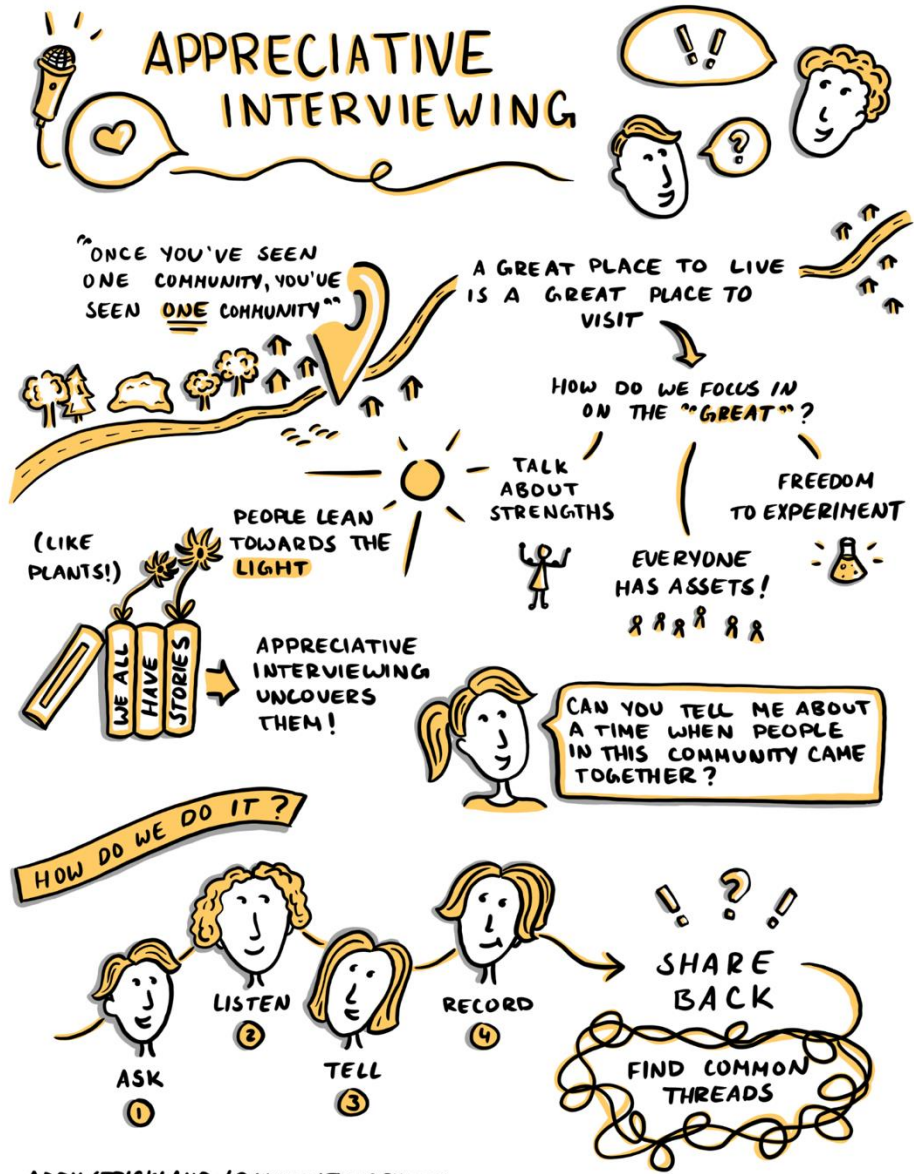
**Appreciative interviewing** is an approach derived from the field of appreciative inquiry, which focuses on doing more of what works, and seeks to expand possibilities. When working with community, appreciative interviewing allows us to engage in a way that feels good for everyone involved, and maintains community's confidence. Instead of starting by asking a community what they could do better, we start by asking them what they're doing well. Instead of asking about greatest issues, we ask about greatest strengths. The answers show us the community in a way that helps both us and the community see themselves in a positive light, build confidence, and inspire action.

**Your Task:** Think of a time when you witnessed or took part in a collaboration between community members and an institution, organization, or government that had a positive impact on your community.

- Take 2 minutes to think about your example. Who? What? When? Where? Why?
- Move into pairs with an interviewee (storyteller) and interviewer.
- The interviewee has 3 minutes to share their story. The interviewer then uses appreciative-style questions to learn more about what made that example possible. Rotate storytellers so each person gets to share.
- Come back to your table and discuss key themes (success factors) that arose from your conversation. Assign a note taker to capture high-level thoughts, ideas, and learnings. Choose three (3) key learnings/ideas to capture on the coloured sticky notes (one idea per sticky note).

## **Appreciative-style Follow-up Questions (Use as you see fit!):**

- Please tell me more about...?
- What did each partner bring to the collaboration (assets, knowledge, strengths, perspectives, etc.)?
- What was particularly memorable about that experience?
- What was the context/environment that made that possible?
- What were the contributing factors that made this experience possible?
- What was your role in the experience? Who else was involved? How did they contribute?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did this experience affect you? How about your teammates? What about your clients/customers/partners/etc.?
- What influence did your relationships have on the outcomes?
- What was unexpected about this experience?
- What was your most memorable learning experience?



ADDY STRICKLAND / @ILLUSTRATIONSBYADDY

# Notes and Ideas from the Tables (Topic 1)

① ABCD WORLD CAFÉ

Common goals.

Community.

Using the asset the community has.

Learning each other strength.

Bring the best out of people.

Clear communication.

Debrief/evaluation.

Active Communication, engagement

① ABCD WORLD CAFÉ

Strength based/positive questions were asked.

engaged participants & decision makers

Respectful environment (no bad ideas)

Facial Expressions, body language (learning in)

Confirmation of process or outcome to create context

① ABCD WORLD CAFÉ

- Finding space for community connections
- Added funding in budget to support program
- Partnered with Health board - sponsoring some of programs  
 > 3 months
- community came to see when the space was provided
- Finding community connections  $\neq$  directly through the community members - not gov. finding the facilitators/programming
- Connections to local businesses - re cafe staying open later
- give ownership (recreation) to the community - create sustainability

Notes + Ideas

# Top Three Takeaways from Each Group

No Bad IDEAS	Ask questions from a strengths Base	Opening creative & specific space (unstructured)	
Active Communication Receptive Listening	* enhancing communication in communities	listening to understand vs. listening to respond.	valuing voices
Safe Space Conversations	empowering partners / Participants.	Ask the why (bring out passion)	Buy-IN community create connections - Health board, school, local businesses
Hands on ACTION!	evolution oriented	Create safe space + building trust	Using what the community has to give !!
Go To where The People Are	clear communication	Common goal	

## Topic 2. Public Engagement.

*“Public engagement is premised on the belief that everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that will affect their lives... Hearing from people with diverse lived experiences leads to more innovative ideas, better decisions, greater public support of outcomes and stronger democracies.”*


(Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. (2020). Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement.)

**Your Task:** Read the statement above, and use the questions below to guide a discussion with your table. Assign a note taker to capture high-level thoughts, ideas, and learnings. Choose three (3) key learnings/ideas to capture on the brightly coloured sticky notes (one idea per sticky note).

To help frame your discussion, think about the scope of decisions you make in your role and potential decisions you will have to make (or contribute to) in the near future. This could be decisions related to the development of a new policy or program, an upcoming event or activity for community members, development of an annual recreation plan or multi-year accessibility plan, actions to support the commitments within Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation, or other decisions that may impact community.

### Questions:

- In your experience, what has been working well in the way you engage with community?
  - a. How do you know it’s working well? How do you evaluate your community engagement efforts?
- How have you been soliciting input/feedback from community? (Take a look at the IAP2 Spectrum!)
  - a. What tools or approaches?
  - b. What’s working well?
  - c. Where on the spectrum do you find yourself most often? Where do most decisions fall?
- How do you keep the community informed about how their input was used/acted upon?
- What do you want to grow and amplify to strengthen your community engagement in decision-making?
  - a. What do you already have that you could use towards that goal?
  - b. Where might you want additional support?

**Increasing Impact on the Decision** 

	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Engagement Goal</b>	To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that stakeholder concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the stakeholders.
<b>Promise to Stakeholders</b>	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
<b>INFORM / COMMUNICATION</b>				
<p>To provide our stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</p> <p>Inform, Education, Increase Awareness</p> <p>We promise to keep you informed.</p>				

*\*Adapted from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Engagement Model*

# Notes and Ideas from the Tables (Topic 2)

② ABCD WORLD CAFÉ

- \* Intentional outreach matters.
- \* Go to community, don't require they always come to you.
- \* Follow up + next steps shared after connect.
- \* Involve community in early stage decision making to empower partnership.

\* Balancing Contributions

② ABCD WORLD CAFÉ

- Connecting to current events/reality of community
- Problem - how do I know the right ppl are @ the table
  - is everyone represented
  - where do we pull this network from.
  - "Flow chart of your network"
- Schools plus → Bring multiple Dept? to tables (High level org).
- Conversations online (social media), <sup>open house</sup> formal public mtg about X topic  
form a board, get organized, outline direction, fund raising grants
- Committees from all communities within the greater community

Notes - Community voice

② ABCD WORLD CAFÉ

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ♥ MULTIPLE APPROACHES
- ♥ GOING AT SPEED OF "BUILT TRUST"
- ♥ INVITE PEOPLE PERSONALLY
- ♥ BEING FLEXIBLE / GIVING NOTICE / CONSISTENCY / ORGANIZED
- ♥ UNDERSTANDING OWN VALUE / VOICE
- ♥ RESPECTING PEOPLE'S LIVED EXPERIENCE
- ♥ MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE AT
- ♥ FOLLOW UP IS IMPORTANT
- ♥ NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS
- ♥ BEING INVITED IN
- ♥ CREATING SPACE / OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE STORIES

Notes + Ideas


# Top Three Takeaways from Each Group

# Low vs. Higher-Hanging Fruit

**Low hanging fruit** = achievable with the assets that already exist in the community (no external resources required), and within a shorter time frame

**Higher-hanging fruit** = may require additional resources, time, and / or external support or funding

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 On your way out, please add a sticky note with your low-hanging fruit to the **Tree of Action**.



'People support what they help to create. They want to make it happen.'  
- Peter Kenyon





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**THANK YOU**

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