Using Appreciative Inquiry and a Peer-Led Approach to Guide Organizational Change

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Outline

- Introductions
- Defining Appreciative Inquiry
- Our work group and guiding principles
- Focus on feedback
  - Activity
- Next steps and takeaways
- What can you do?
- Resources
- Questions?
Introductions
Appreciative Inquiry

“Appreciative Inquiry is a process and approach to facilitate positive change in organizations, groups, and communities. At its core, it assumes that some things are working right and that this core must be preserved. It seeks to understand the good and set a path to the ideal new state. It is grounded in five principles: Constructionist, Simultaneity, Anticipatory, Poetic, and Positive. It leverages powerful questions with active listening to have conversations that matter and create new ways of thinking.”

https://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net
“We live in a world our questions create.”

David Cooperrider

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Background

- New Dean + Appreciative Inquiry
- Library Strategic Plan: communication goal
- Workplace Principles

- Faculty Learning Community with book, *Thanks for the Feedback: the Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well*

Work group developed a series of professional development workshops on feedback
GVSU UL Workplace Principles

Core workplace values, which were reaffirmed through Appreciative Inquiry:

1) Ask how this benefits students
2) Enable an entrepreneurial culture
3) Take informed risks
4) Approach others with respect and empathy
Work Group Guiding Principles

● We approach these workshops as peer facilitators not experts. We are all sincerely interested in this topic, still learning, and still trying to walk the talk.

● We embrace a learner mindset and a positivist approach: what do you/we do well? And what can we do even better?

● We value psychological safety. We hope to provide a safe space to share experiences, perspectives, and challenges. Share as you feel comfortable.
Work Group: what and how we did it

- Members: library staff and faculty
- Support: senior leadership, GVSU Work-Life Consultant (HR)
- Peer-led
- Goals created collaboratively with support from all
- Created series of workshops: Types of Feedback, Navigating the Conversation, and Ways of Knowing
Activity

1. When do you receive feedback at work?
   a. Annual reviews
   b. Regular meetings with supervisor
   c. From colleagues

2. How often do you receive feedback at work?
   a. Not enough
   b. Too often
   c. Just right
Culture of Nice

“I cannot offer critical feedback--if I do my teachers won’t like me, and my colleagues won’t work well with me.”

(Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p.24)
Why Feedback?

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Workplace culture
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)
- Annual Performance Reviews

Important to check for understanding rather than jumping to a judgment or conclusions (appreciative inquiry)
3 Types of Feedback

Appreciation
Is to give thanks, recognize a person’s value (who they are)

Coaching
Is to improve skills

Evaluation
Is to rank performance
Three triggers

Three Triggers to Effectively Receiving Feedback:

1. **Identity**: I screw everything up, I’m doomed, I’m not a bad person, am I?

2. **Truth**: That’s wrong, unfair, not helpful.

3. **Relationships**: You’re the problem, not me, who are you to say this, after all I’ve done for you.

Ch. 1, *Thanks for the Feedback*
Four Feedback Skills

1. **Active and empathic listening** (“This is what I’m hearing…”)

2. **Asserting** (sharing, advocating, expressing)

3. **Process moves** (referee, step outside of conversation)

4. **Problem solving** (“Now what?”, next steps)
Finding balance

- Workplace principles values
- Accountability
- Agency
- Resilience narrative
- Empathy and curiosity
- Psychological safety
- Scaffolding
- Ethic of care

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Ongoing work

Continued **scaffolding** and **intentional integration** into the workplace:

- Changes to hiring practices with focus on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)
- Onboarding of new faculty and staff
- Developing follow-up professional development trainings
- New role: Strategic Lead for Organizational Development
What can you do?

- Book clubs
- Collective meeting agreements (before workshops or meetings)
- Workshops and trainings (peer led or facilitator outside of unit)
- Appreciative Inquiry facilitation

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Individual → Group → Organization

- **Appreciative inquiry** can be used in large or small scale ways-- in conversations or part of organizational change management.

- **You have agency** in feedback conversations in how you react and what you say.

- You can use a **peer-led approach** to create professional development opportunities.
Resources

Public Google Doc: http://gvsu.edu/s/1mR
References

- Photos from Unsplash.com
- https://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net
- Stone, D., & Heen, S. (2014). Thanks for the feedback: The science and art of receiving feedback well (even when it is off base, unfair, poorly delivered, and frankly, you're not in the mood). New York, New York: Viking.
Questions?