

Appreciative Interaction Debriefing Session

After interactions, appreciatively debriefing is important for improving practices while taking good care of each other. **The emphasis should be on what we did right.** This is not a time to beat ourselves up, even if the whole session seems to have gone horribly wrong! The following sequence of questions can be helpful when discussing our own practice.

1. What I like about what I did in the interaction?
2. What I like to see more of in my practice next time?
3. What was helpful about what I did?
4. What was less helpful about what I did?

When interactions involved colleagues, each should provide the same feedback, e.g., what I liked about what you did today....

In addition, it is important that co-workers consider their performance as co-workers in three components: content, underlying processes, and feelings.

1. **Content:** Discuss the overt behavior of the participants/group members and how the structure of the session was maintained. Consider whether the right sequence of sections or exercises were used, and if the exercises were appropriate to the group as a whole. Vital or turning point moments from the session can be examined and magnified. Consider what methods and strategies may improve delivery of the content.
2. **Underlying processes:** Explore the dynamics underlying co-worker interactions with each other and with the participant(s)/group members. Have a respectful but frank discussion about your working relationship. While co-workers may not agree on all matters of professional approach, it is necessary for co-workers to at least speak honestly with each other about issues related to practice. For example, it may be important for colleagues to discuss the impact of gender or racial differences on their co-working relationship and also on their dealings with group members. This is also a time for workers to explore the sub-text of the session, and to attend to any hidden processes that affect their behavior towards participants/group members. For example, it may be that a worker has highly persecutory feelings towards a participant, but needs help identifying why.
3. **Feelings:** Discuss SIFTS (sensations, images, feelings, thoughts and situations). What occurred during the session and what are we left with. It is particularly important to discuss negative feelings such as despair, powerlessness or vengefulness. Without airing these feelings and getting support, workers can be left feeling isolated and de-skilled - a recipe for performance stagnation or burn-out. On the other hand, being in touch with our feelings and our vulnerabilities can be one of our greatest assets.

