



SYSTEMS APPROACHES FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

A Quick Guide to Asking Good Questions

Keep the conversation moving using open ended questions

Close Ended	Open Ended
Did that go well?	How did that go?
Have you thought about what's next?	What will you do next?
Are you measuring engagement with this approach?	Where did you see the most engagement with this approach?
Have you experienced any success with this project?	Tell me about a time when you felt successful in this project?

Stay forward focused

Backward Focus ←←	Forward Focus →→
Why did you do that?	How can you get back on track?
Why can't you do that?	How could you do that?
Why haven't you been able to work with that partner?	What can you do this week to move forward with working with that partner?
Why didn't you follow through with that?	What will help you follow through with that?

Reflect back what you've heard for clarity and understanding

Simple Reflections	More Complex Reflections
Repeating - simply repeat what was said <i>"I heard you say the meeting went terribly and was too short."</i>	Paraphrasing - express meaning using different words to achieve greater clarity <i>"It sounds like there wasn't enough time to address everyone's needs in one hour."</i>
Rephrasing -slight rephrase/synonyms <i>"I heard you suggest that the meeting could have gone better and ended before everyone could share."</i>	Identify feelings and values <i>"It sounds like addressing everyone's needs are important to you and it was frustrating to not have enough time".</i>

Powerful Questions for Groups

What are you grateful for?

What is possible?

What is the challenge?

Can you say more?

What is the opportunity here?

How do we define success?

What are our blind spots?

How has this shown up for you personally?

What if it works out exactly as we want it to?

Who else would you like to know about this?

What resources do you need to help you decide?

What will you have to do to get the job done?

What support do you need to accomplish it?

What bold steps could we take to accomplish our vision?

What do we need to know or learn before moving forward?

Who needs to be at this table to make these decisions?

Who is missing from this table (and why might they be missing)?

What would support look like (sound like, feel like)?

If your life depended on taking action, what would you do?

What part of the situation have you not yet explored?

What are your strategies for communicating what you've learned here today?

When we look back on our mission, vision, and values (or even a strategic plan if that's something your group has) - are we truly meeting these objectives?

The best single mark of an open, honest question is that the questioner could not possibly anticipate the answer to it.

- Center for Courage and Renewal

