

EXAMPLES OF ENABLING QUESTIONS

Clarifying questions

These assist to get a clear picture of facts and the issue being explored.

They are generally open ended, although structured closed questions can be used to provide focus.

- Tell me what you did?
- What thoughts were you having at the time?
- What did you do next?
- What did that mean to the process?
- Is there a theme in this?
- It sounds like... is that the case?
- Is it fair to say that.....?

Reflecting questions

These are designed to promote deeper levels of reflection so that new perspectives can be revealed, patterns of responses identified and understanding enhanced.

- Have you had a similar experience in the past?
- What have you done in the past in a similar situation?
- What were people around you doing at the time?
- What have you learnt from this?
- What are your normal responses to this kind of situation?
- What have you seen other people do in this situation?

Probing and challenging questions

Questions of this type are directed towards opening up potential through supported challenge.

- What would you do differently in the future in a similar situation?
- In an ideal situation what would be different?
- What are you thinking right now?
- What are you feeling about the current situation?
- What is the evidence to support you?
- What part of this have you not explored yet?
- What are you contributing to this by your actions or inactions?
- What would support look like to you?

Action Questions

These are important to ensure that active learning is facilitated through carrying out plans.

- What supports are available to you?
- What support will you need and from whom?
- What are your options in moving ahead?
- What advice would you give someone else in this situation?
- How committed are you to doing this?
- Who are the stakeholders in this?
- What specific actions will you take?
- What is your first action to resolve this?
- How will you measure success?

Appreciative Questions to help people to explore their actions

(Appreciative Inquiry is just what its name suggests: an approach to change that uses questions about what we value and appreciate to discover the best of who we are and to create a compelling vision and design for the future that builds on our strengths)

When you notice things that work well

If the action works well, ask about the good, successful moments and the individual contribution:

What went well ...?

What influenced that?

How did you feel about this?

What did people gain from this?

How could you make sure that this continues to run well?

What can you learn from this, what makes it work well and could this possibly be applied to other situations which do not work so well?

When you notice things that don't seem to work well

If the action does not work well or have a positive outcome, ask about how this could be improved and the individual contribution:

Help me to understand what you think is happening here?

How do you feel about this?

How could it work differently?

What would you and others gain if it was carried out in a different way?

What would be a small step to make in order to improve this situation?

What help would you need to make this small step?

Suppose you come to work tomorrow and it is all working well: Describe what this situation would be like. What would you do differently from what you do now?

