

FACILITATION TECHNIQUE	Discovery & Action Dialogue (DAD)
CORE PURPOSE / FOCUS	#ideation #idea generation #liberating structures #issue analysis #discuss challenges #problem solving #collaboration #intragroup openness
PHASE	#action
SKILL / CONTENT	#creativity #innovation #communication #evaluation #self-reflection #introspection
TIME FRAME IN MINUTES	#<30 #<60 #60-120
GROUP SIZE IN PERSONS	#1-5 #6-15
FACILITATION LEVEL	Skilled
COMFORT ZONE	Stretch

Introduction

DADs make it easy for a group or community to discover practices and behaviors that enable some individuals (without access to special resources and facing the same constraints) to find better solutions than their peers to common problems. These are called positive deviant (PD) behaviors and practices. DADs make it possible for people in the group, unit, or community to discover by themselves these PD practices. DADs also create favorable conditions for stimulating participants' creativity in spaces where they can feel safe to invent new and more effective practices. Resistance to change evaporates, as participants are unleashed to choose freely which practices they will adopt or try and which problems they will tackle. DADs make it possible to achieve frontline ownership of solutions.

Necessary tools (what you need)

- Online whiteboard tool or Slack or Google docs, pick a tool that allows to use a large, zoomable canvas.
- Video conference tool of your choice and availability.

Steps

1. **Structuring Invitation:** Invite people to uncover tacit or latent solutions to a shared challenge that are hidden among people in their working group, unit, or community. Ask anybody interested in solving the problem to join a small group and participate in a DAD. In the group, ask seven progressive questions:
 - *How do you know when problem X is present?*
 - *How do you contribute effectively to solving problem X?*
 - *What prevents you from doing this or taking these actions all the time?*
 - *Do you know anybody who is able to frequently solve problem X and overcome barriers? What behaviors or practices made their success possible?*
 - *Do you have any ideas?*
 - *What needs to be done to make it happen? Any volunteers?*
 - *Who else needs to be involved?*
2. **How Space Is Arranged:** Set up each topic at a different area of the board, spread them out just like you would do it on the walls of a room. Invite participants to zoom in and visit each section during the review section of this exercise.
3. **How Participation Is Distributed:**
 - Facilitator introduces the questions.
 - Everyone who is around is invited to join and be included.
 - Everyone in the group has an equal opportunity to contribute.
4. **How Groups Are Configured:**
 - Facilitator works with a partner to serve as a recorder.
 - Group size can be 5–15 people.
 - Diversity in roles and experience is an important asset.
5. **Sequence of Steps and Time Allocation:**
 - State the purpose of the initiative being discussed and the DAD and invite brief round-robin introductions. 5 min.
 - Ask the 7 questions one by one in the order given in the Invitation. Address them to the whole group and give everyone the opportunity to speak to each question. Make sure your recorder captures insights and action ideas as they emerge—big ones may emerge when you least expect it. 15–60 min.
 - Ask your recorder to recap insights, action ideas, and who else needs to be included. 5 min.

Tips & Tricks

- Question #2 often consists of two parts: how the problem affects the individual personally and how it affects others. For instance, “*What do you do to protect yourself from infections and what do you do to prevent infection transmissions?*” or “*What do you do to keep your students engaged and what do you do to keep yourself energized and enthusiastic?*”
- Create an informal “climate,” starting with introductions and an anecdote if appropriate.
- Notice when you form judgments in your head about what is right or wrong, then count to ten and “let it go” before you say anything (you may need to ask for the help of your recorder or a facilitator colleague).

- Avoid statements like “that’s a good idea” and leave space for participants to make their own assessments.
- Demonstrate genuine curiosity in everyone’s contributions without answering the questions yourself: study at the feet of the people who do the work.
- Do not give or take assignments!
- Do not judge yourself too harshly: it takes practice to develop a high level of skill with this approach to facilitation. Be sure to ask your recorder for direct feedback.

Source

<http://www.liberatingstructures.com>



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