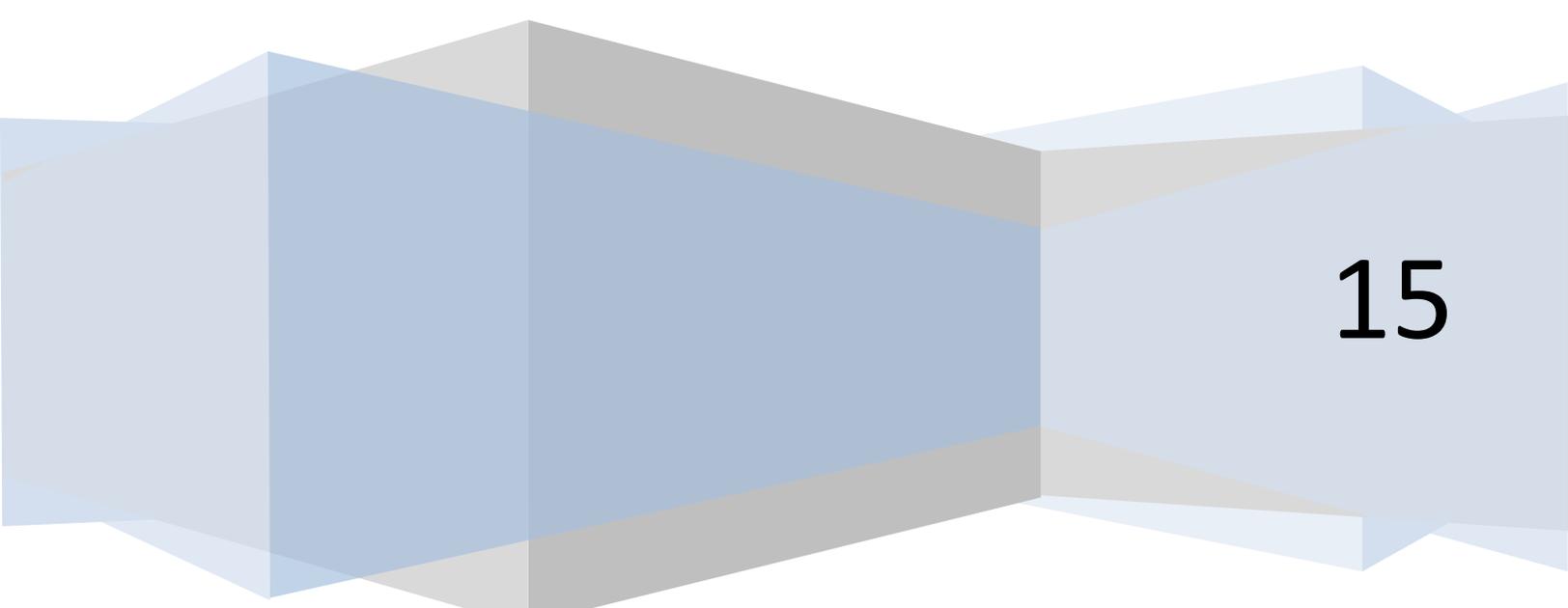


Alberta Health Services

United in Positive Change to Achieve Healthy Attendance

Practicum for Certification as an Appreciative
Inquiry Facilitator

Debra Kasowski, BScN, RN, CEC



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Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Certification – Debra Kasowski

1. **Please include your name, title, email address, phone number and agency that you work for.**

**Debra Kasowski, BScN, RN, CEC
Clinical Manager – Health Link
Alberta Health Services**

Debra.Kasowski@albertahealthservices.ca

2. **Please include the AIFT Dates and location that you received your training.**

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Training September 16-19, 2014 Las Vegas, NV
– Kathy Becker & Jim Pulliam

3. **Brief Description of Organization**

Alberta Health Services is composed of skilled and dedicated health professionals, support staff, volunteers and physicians who promote wellness and provide health care every day to about 4 million Albertans, as well as to many residents of Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. Health Link - 811 is a part of Alberta Health Services. <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/about.asp>

Health **Link** is a 24 hours a day, seven days a week telephone **health** advice and information. This service is answered by registered nurses that anyone in **Alberta** can access.

4. **List of Names and/or category of stakeholders you included in the Core Group, the cross section of people that helped you identify the topic and modify the interview guide.**

Operations Manager (Senior Management), Learning and Development Consultant, Contact Centre Coordinators, Registered Nurses, Information and Referral, Consultant, Operation and Central Access Clerks, Navigational Resources Lead

**5. What was the positive topic that the Core Group identified for the inquiry?
What method did you use to help them identify the topic?**

In discussion with Senior Management, the topic of attendance was brought as a concern as Health Link Alberta has the highest percentage of employee absenteeism within Alberta Health Services. The original idea was Utilizing Appreciative Inquiry to Improve Employee Attendance in a Unionized Environment. However, after meeting with the core team, we recognized all staff are not unionized in our environment and that this did not play a role in attendance. The Core Team decided that the new focus of the inquiry would be ***“United in Positive Change to Achieve Healthy Attendance”***.

On March 6, I facilitated an Appreciative Inquiry Training Workshop to the Core Team via video conference. I was live in Edmonton with the Edmonton Core Team and via video conference with the Calgary Site.

6. Attach or include the modified Interview Guide they used, i.e. the Generic Interview Guide slightly modified for the positive topic of the inquiry.

See Attached.

7. What method of interviews did people use to inquire into exceptionally positive moments, face to face paired interviews, or some other way?

Due to the nature of our work in a call center, we are unable to have many people off the phones at the same time so the core team was asked to complete a minimum of 10 interviews with staff members that they did not know very well.

8. Attach or include a list of the Life Giving Forces (what they MOST wanted to create more of) that the group identified in the stories they shared.

- Teamwork
- Making a Difference
- Positive Supportive Work Environment
- Personal Relationships “Like a family”
- Work-Life Balance/Job Satisfaction
- Striving for Improvement
- Pride in Service

9. Attach or Include Provocative Propositions the group or organization created from the Life Giving Forces.

- ❖ To maintain healthy work environment, more physical and social interaction; more varied activities.
- ❖ Flexibility enables us to be healthy and productive at home and work.

- ❖ **Teamwork is strength.** Co-workers care about each other and provide a friendly and supportive environment.
- ❖ We support each other in fostering a trusting and enjoyable environment
- ❖ **HAPPY Acronym**
 - H – Healthy – people & environment
 - A – Attendance – improved attendance;
 - P- Positive – respect for peers; education
 - P-Participation – group learning activities
 - Y- Yearning –constant improvement
- ❖ Leaning in...Leaning on...Moving Forward...Together!
- ❖ HLA is intra-connected and rewarding – allowing for caring for people, teamwork, pride in work, and education.
- ❖ Do unto others as you would done onto you.
- ❖ Work hard and be proud.
- ❖ All staff will achieve work-life balance.
- ❖ The flexibility Health Link Alberta provides by allowing staff to work from home provides outstanding work life balance.
- ❖ Everyone attends work regularly and takes personal pride in their work and contributes to the success of the team.
- ❖ Availability of long term scheduling or self scheduling. The positive effect is felt by all staff including workforce by encouraging a move toward home and work life balance.
- ❖ Health Link Alberta creates opportunities for communication, collaboration, and cooperation between different individuals and departments at HLA to increase mutual respect between groups and help engage staff.
- ❖ Health Link staff use job sharing, shift trades, and split shift opportunities to ensure work-life balance and healthy attendance.
- ❖ We are supporting each other when life sucks. We are holding you up and showing you new possibilities. We are providing a safe place to fall.
- ❖ Health Link is proud to deliver the care that meets the needs of all Albertans by offering high quality and timely customer service.
- ❖ We are committed to being well educated, up to date, and informed on current and ongoing topics.
- ❖ Teamwork: to focus on everyone doing their part and collaborating as a multidisciplinary team.

10. Attach or include Strategic Intentions the group or organization developed to realize the Provocative Propositions they create.

List:

- More of a say in our rotations
- Selecting work hours and number of days in a row
- Peer support and encouragement
- Encouraged to talk with neighbor on down time (“being allowed to”)
- Positive messages from a variety of management during difficult days
- Turning negatives into positive

- Balance between operational needs and being in a “helping” profession
- Need to know each other’s needs and interaction is key

Commitment Tree and Commitment Leaves

See attached

11. Impact or Results: What organizational, group or community attitude, process, or structure changes have people made as they move toward realizing their Provocative Proposition(s)? What progress have people made as they move toward their Strategic Intentions or Initiative or Pilot Projects? What Stories of success can you share?

Evaluation – June 5, 2015

12. What will you do to ensure that people continue to move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)? How will you help them gather stories of success? How will you help them celebrate? How will you, as the AI Facilitator, support their ongoing success?

I acknowledged the Appreciative Inquiry Core Team Members with a small token of my appreciation with a Starbucks Refresher Packet and a gift tag that stated: ***“Thank you for your being a part of the Appreciative Inquiry Core Team. Your participation was Refreshing!”*** We celebrated with Potluck June 5th Edmonton Site and the Calgary site will determine their date for celebration.

A Rapid Action Team has been formed on both sites with leads. Their first meeting will be by teleconference or video conference. I plan to attend the first meeting to encourage and empower the team to continue looking forward to possibilities and framing an Appreciative Approach and offer my ongoing support as they continue to review the recommendations and SOAR analysis - strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. Some changes may be immediate, whereas, other changes require time to evolve. ***The questions I would like to empower the team with are, “Look for what you can do. What is possible right now? What are other steps you need to take to make the preferred future a reality?”***

13. What did you wish for the inquiry? What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation? What was your “personal best” experience related to facilitating the inquiry?

My Wish: My wish for the inquiry was to plant seeds of positive change and help people use their strengths constructively to create the change they wish to see.

Learning about myself and my facilitation:

My discoveries about myself and the process were very interesting as I could play many roles in this facilitation. At Health Link, I am a part of middle management and an employee of Health Link; however, during this process I was to remain neutral – I was the facilitator.

There were times when negativity was directed at management and I wanted to come to the defense of role and responsibilities of management. Instead, I took a step back and reminded myself to come from the position of a learner and being curious about another person's perspective. If they had a negative perception, they must have a viewpoint of what the best case scenario or what would make it better.

A couple of the staff members who know me quite well commented that negativity was an emotional trigger for me because I am passionate about sharing the Appreciative Inquiry approach. I would have to agree. I am self-aware of the emotional triggers and I used this to develop my critical thinking about what could be possible for me as a facilitator as well as what are the possibilities for the organization. I can use this emotional trigger to my advantage by motivating me to continue to move through the inquiry process. I continued to ask myself questions. Stopping or standing still will halt progress. Change occurs with momentum.

Dealing with negativity was a growth aspect for me in this process. I would refer to this as healthy conflict. Healthy conflict is when you are willing to take information and learn and ask questions to gain an understanding of another person's perspective. Growth comes from this type of conflict. People generally avoid conflict but there are ways to effectively manage negativity to gain new knowledge. I was able to coach interviewers through the negativity or barriers that arose to help discover what the preferred future would look like for their interviewees.

Personal accountability plays a significant role in positive change. With Appreciative Inquiry, we look at what we can do as an organization and what we can commit to as individuals to create the preferred future. It takes away the "they owe me" mentality from all parties.

I learned that in order for me to speak confidently about the Appreciative Inquiry process; I must fully "trust the process" without my own bias coming into play. I needed to be able to address the concerns of others, deal with barriers and negativity, and provide reassurance that everything will fall into place.

I love the framework of Appreciative Inquiry. I have been tested by others that ideas and frameworks are great in "theory" but I have developed my own belief in that theories have been tested and results are repeatable. Appreciative Inquiry has been around for 30 years and has been used successfully in many organizations small and large. Another person's opinion is another person's opinion. They are sharing

their perception and understanding. I do not have to agree with them but I can respectfully acknowledge their point of view.

My experience with facilitating the Appreciative Inquiry approach to positive change was unique in the fact that I was guiding two sites one business unit live and virtually. The Appreciative Inquiry core team was composed of a cross section of all levels of the organization. The core team training was done live at the Edmonton location with virtual conferencing engaging the Calgary site. I felt that I engaged both parties well. I asked questions to facilitate discussions. It was helpful to have one person as a key contact which I was able to debrief with prior to each session by phone or email.

Comments from the participants from both sites included:

“I just want to reiterate what a fun class the Appreciative Inquiry workshop was. Somehow we all just gelled appreciatively.

Healthy attendance was on course for me, as I wanted to participate in a meaningful activity. Debra has a very energetic presence. I hope the generic appreciative interviews and the appreciative summary sheets come together well for the group.

Thank you for sending me on this course.” Calgary Site participant (video conference)

“Honestly, that was one of the most positive, fun, rewarding days that I have had in a very long time. Thank you Debra!” Edmonton Site participant

In my next inquiry, I would like to have more time educate people within the organization on Appreciative Inquiry before engaging the core team and proceeding with the interviews. Overall, I felt I excelled as a facilitator and a learner. I feel confident that I can facilitate many more inquiries to come.

This Appreciative Inquiry was accepted to be presented at the 2015 World Appreciative Inquiry in South Africa as an Inspiring Story but due to xenophobic attacks I decided to withdraw. I look forward to sharing this experience with many others so they may learn from me. New opportunities will come my way.

My personal “BEST” experience was:

My greatest breakthrough was when I was provided feedback that one of the individuals who I felt was cynical about the Appreciative Inquiry approach had started to gain an understanding of the process after attending one of the town hall meetings. I took time to ensure this person’s voice was heard and acknowledged. This same individual has been candid in sharing improvements with me – I appreciate them for this. I learned not

to take another person's opinion personally because they are sharing information with me; it is up to me to see if there is value in it.

What I enjoyed most about the Appreciative Inquiry was that the process generated conversations and self-reflection. Appreciative Inquiry plants seeds of positive change. Some may grow immediately and some may take time to grow and develop. For some people, appreciative living is a way of life and others not so much. Ah-ha moments may come 2 weeks from now, 3 months from now, 6 months from now, or even a year from now. It is in those moments I have made a difference; I may not even know but if I trust the process – I am sure this inquiry will have impacted at least one person. My hope is that that one person continues the ripple effect of positive change in their family, community, and their town or city.

14. Have you received permission from the “client” or “clients” to tell us their story? In other words does the Company of Experts.net have the permission to share this story with others? If not, please try and obtain this so others may learn from your story. Attach any materials that you may have used such as Power Points, agendas, etc. It helps for us to “experience” your facilitation. Also, if you take pictures and we may use those please include them.

Yes. I have been given verbal permission from Yvonne Ewanicke, Operations Manager – Edmonton Site and Lara Osterreicher, Director Operation for Health Link, Alberta Health Services.