# Winds of Change

## Appreciative Inquiry - A Research Methodology For Mental Health – a positive way to research mental health

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# Why Appreciative Inquiry?

- This presentation explores the introduction of appreciative inquiry as a research methodology for mental health research.

- Using an AI approach, gives permission for practitioners to explore and celebrate what is working well while at the same time not discounting that there still is more work to be done.

- As nurses working in mental health services, research of mental health has usually focused on what is not working well and identifying some strategies to solve the problem.

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- Generally research starts from a point of attempting to find out what is wrong and therefore what is not right. Researchers adopting an appreciative inquiry approach instead focus on the good, the strong and what is already working.

- "When we engage in appreciative inquiries, we focus on what makes us feel most alive, on our successes and their determinants and on the strengths" (Collopy, 2009)

- The use of an appreciative inquiry approach is said to be transformational and aims to seek improvement (Smythe & Payne, 2008)

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- David Cooperrider first introduced appreciative inquiry as a way of looking at organisations. This way of viewing organisations has subsequently evolved into a way of studying the world in which we live.

- Cooperrider and Srivastra (1987) introduced their way of seeing the world and then the people in it, through a lens which magnifies the positive aspects of those beings. Carter (2006) describes appreciative inquiry as a way of "studying and exploring what gives life to human systems when they are at their best"

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- Carter (2006) describes the use of AI approach for research is about “working and thinking with people rather than just about them”

- The constructs for appreciative inquiry have a high level of congruency with the current philosophies that underpin mental health services in New Zealand. The concepts of strength based service delivery, tidal models and recovery all share many of the characteristics of an appreciative inquiry approach in that it “ seeks to reveal the strengths, achievements, values, ethos and positive practices that those involved recount with excitement and pride to indicate how the service provided works effectively” (Smythe & Payne, 2008)

- Appreciative inquiry supports a strength based ideology as it also seeks to deliver and discover from a model of empowerment.

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# 4 D Cycle

Discovery: initial inquiry

Dream: about what could be

Design: visualise or articulate the future

Destiny: the action that will change the future

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# How I am intending to use AI

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Watkins and Mohr (2001) identify five generic processes for applying AI as a framework. They are:

1. Choose the positive as the focus of inquiry

2. Inquire into stories of life-giving forces

3. Locate themes that appear in the stories and select topics for further inquiry

4. Create shared images for a preferred future

5. Find innovative ways to create that future

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# Ph.D Study

**Proposed Thesis Title**

The contribution of the mental health support worker to the mental health services in New Zealand – an appreciative inquiry approach.

***Research Question***

What is working well with mental health community support work in New Zealand?

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# How can you or somebody you know be part of this study?

- I am currently recruiting participants
- Data will be collected through individual interviews, paired interviews, focus groups and through conversation on a collaborative website I have developed
- Contact me on 0272309379 or 04 2324520
- Julia.Hennessy@weltec.ac.nz or hennessyw@xtra.co.nz
- http://mentalhealthai.pbworks.com if you are interested in participating, access this site and ask for access

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