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# Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP) approach in service and workforce development

## LEVEL 1 TRAINING IN THE COMMUNITY OF ENQUIRY

### HANDBOOK



**Compiled by Nick Andrews, Swansea University and  
Dr Sue Lyle, Dialogue Exchange**

## Community of Enquiry: a Professional Development tool to facilitate the use of evidence in practice

### Introduction

The need for good communication and thoughtful consideration of evidence in health and social care is widely recognized. However, in complex human organisations the use of evidence in service and workforce development is not straightforward. Whilst simple engineering might be able to use scientific evidence *instrumentally* (i.e. its direct application), the use of evidence in health and social care is more likely to be *conceptual* (i.e. used to shape thinking, culture and practice). For example, how do we use evidence to promote relationship-centred practice? It could be said that using evidence in health and social care services is not rocket science – no it is much more complicated than that, because it involves working with people, not machines. This necessitates techniques that encourage the expression of thoughts, ideas and feelings through meaningful dialogue and creativity (Andrews et al 2015).

A Community of Enquiry (COE) is a practical technique that offers space to collaboratively explore evidence and ask conceptually rich questions together. It encourages the expression of *different* perspectives when exploring a range of evidence from research, service users and carers, practitioners and managers working in health and social care. It is an approach that acknowledges the different philosophies and beliefs of participants whose values, priorities, targets and systems may be very different.

The three-day DEEP course includes an introduction to the COE, because it is felt that it is a particularly valuable technique in supporting the development of evidence-enriched practice. A COE is a group of people, of any age, bringing with them a range of 'evidence', who are respectful of different experiences and open to other ways of thinking, but determined to think and act for themselves – to work and practice their own philosophy. By the end of the course you will be equipped to start facilitating a Community of Enquiry.

A COE allows participants to share what they think and do and why, whilst listening to others coming from different contexts or different values' positions (e.g. researchers, service users and carers, organisational managers and frontline practitioners). A COE takes account of the feelings and concerns of participants at a time when health and social care working environments are changing fast. It encourages participants to collaborate and problematize top-down policies and procedures. When including service users and carers as well as professionals in enquiry participants are able to focus on what really matters to them. Changing practice is not easy; the COE can empower participants to direct this themselves in collaboration with others.

The core questions addressed in the course are:

- What is a Community of Enquiry?
- How do we facilitate enquiry and dialogue between people?
- How do we develop a Community of Enquiry approach in our settings?

## **The Community of Enquiry in practice**

The setting is a care home for older people with high support needs. In one room a group of twenty-four people sit on chairs arranged in a circle and together consider a question they have collectively chosen for enquiry. A few people know each other but most do not. They are a heterogeneous group comprising care assistants, service managers, relatives of people who live in the care home, health practitioners, social workers, a policy maker, a researcher, commissioning and contracts officers and a CSSIW inspector. They have come together for the purpose of dialogue together to share their ideas and thoughts about a topic related to care of the residents in the home: the quality of relationships between carer and cared-for. The choice of topic was directed by evidence from the JRF programme, *A Better Life*, which identified that good care and support should be founded in and reflect meaningful and rewarding relationships.

The stimulus used for generating a COE is frequently narrative in nature and reflects the view that our lives are structured by stories and can help people enter into the lives and experiences of others. In enquiries in social care settings we have used stories derived from the DEEP project, but on this occasion the stimulus for question generation was a picture book chosen to illustrate the key theme of relationships with a focus on people's strengths and what matters to them. *Wilfrid Gordon MacDonald Partridge* (Fox, 1987) is a story about a small child who makes friends with an older person with dementia living in a care home. Following presentation of the story, each member of the group was given time for personal reflection before talking in pairs about what the story had meant to them. Participants then worked in small groups to generate a question for enquiry. Each group's question was aired before a secret democratic vote to choose one for discussion. The question chosen on this occasion was, "Is it possible for care workers and residents in a care home to be friends?" Over the next 45 minutes, a trained facilitator whose job is to help the group clarify their understanding of the issue they had raised facilitated their enquiry. The whole process took three hours.

In a COE applied within the DEEP approach, a group of people come together to explore a question they raise themselves in response to a stimulus that is derived from research evidence. The focus of their interactions is dialogue. The process is powerful – it prioritises respect for each other and focuses on positive human relationships to create an ethical space to ensure all voices are accessed and legitimated. That doesn't mean people don't disagree with each other, in fact disagreeing with each other is a good thing, it is the engine of dialogue, but the focus is on disagreeing with each other's ideas and thinking, not the person

themselves. The key purpose of the COE is to explore the attitudes, perceptions and values held by participants to identify underlying assumptions and consider the implications of the views held.

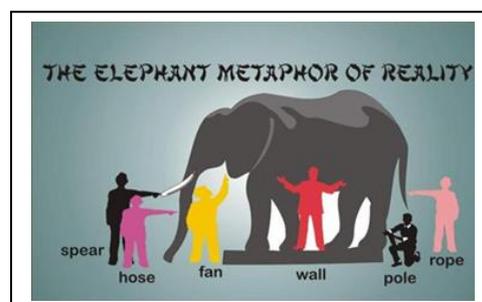
The community of enquiry approach has its roots in Mathew Lipman's COPI (Community of Philosophical Inquiry) (Lipman, 1998). Philosophy for children (P4C) is a well-established and researched classroom practice having been implemented and monitored for over 30 years and used in over 50 countries world-wide. In the UK P4C is managed by SAPERE, the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education and brings together a network of people practicing and promoting philosophical enquiry in communities.

### Creating a space for Enquiry



A safe space has to be created for dialogue, which requires high levels of trust among participants. Ethical considerations are therefore central to P4C. The way participants speak and listen to each other is governed by practices predicated on mutual respect by creating a space for all to speak and be listened to. This is consistent with the DEEP approach, which is founded upon the creation an 'enriched environment of learning and practice' (Nolan et al 2006). Difference is valued and alternative interpretations welcomed. Dialogue is valued as a key to self-knowledge and mutual understanding but does not seek consensus.

This is nicely illustrated in the story of the elephant and the blind men ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind\\_men\\_and\\_an\\_elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_men_and_an_elephant)), which illustrates that each person within a group has a different perspective and that the 'bigger picture' is revealed by valuing and listening to them all:



The COE is designed to subject 'evidence' to careful scrutiny, to question why the world is as it is and ask how it could be improved. To learn to enquire entails a dialogue, in which a group of people engages together in deliberative enquiry. Through dialogue people collectively search for understanding and generate knowledge that is meaningful to them. A COE values both reason and emotion and seeks imaginative ideas for consideration. Participants come to see that there are different 'truths' in the world that depend on culture, settings and context.

Through the process of enquiry participants seek to:

- Clarify their personal conceptions and make them more explicit.
- Better understand the enquiry topic and the conceptions of other participants.
- Arrive at better conceptions than they could have articulated before participating.
- Become better at philosophical and collaborative enquiry.
- Develop a stronger community. (Golding, 2014: 210)

The enquiry process is a philosophical one and draws on philosophical enquiry tools to ensure progress in enquiry is made. The COE is an example of practical philosophy as discussed by Flyvbjerg (2001) whose purpose is clarifying where we are and where we want to be through practical deliberation.

## The Principles of the Community of Enquiry

A key aim is to develop open-mindedness and create conditions for change, both for individuals, communities and organisations; in order to achieve this we follow certain principles and procedures. The principles include:

- Proper valuing of each person's interests and questions.
- Acknowledgement that each person's experience or story is unique.
- Proper valuing of evidence and knowledge, along with the recognition that no one is all-knowing or all-wise.
- Appreciation of different ways of interpreting and thinking.  
SAPERE Handbook (2010)

To ensure we abide by our principles time will be taken to identify virtues to be cultivated during enquiry, such as sincerity, openness, respect, empathy, curiosity. A key to successful enquiry is active listening to each other to ensure all voices are heard. Mercer and Littleton (2007) describe *three* types of talking together (see table on next page). A Community of Enquiry facilitates the development of *exploratory* talk.



Type of talking together	Key features
Disputational talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lot of disagreement and everyone just makes their own decisions</li> <li>• There are few attempts to pool resources, or to offer constructive criticism</li> <li>• There are often a lot of interactions like the 'yes it is!' and 'no it isn't!' kind</li> <li>• The atmosphere is competitive rather than co-operative</li> </ul>
Cumulative talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone simply accepts and agrees with what other people say – for fear of recrimination or not wanted to appear rude</li> <li>• People do use talk to share knowledge, but they do so in an uncritical way</li> <li>• People repeat and elaborate each other's ideas, but they don't evaluate them carefully</li> </ul>
Exploratory talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone listens actively</li> <li>• People ask questions</li> <li>• People share relevant information</li> <li>• Ideas may be questioned and challenged</li> <li>• Reasons are given for challenges</li> <li>• Contributions build on what has gone on before</li> <li>• Everyone is encouraged to contribute</li> <li>• All ideas and opinions are treated with respect</li> <li>• There is an atmosphere of trust</li> <li>• There is a sense of shared purpose</li> <li>• The group seeks agreement for joint decisions</li> </ul>

## Aims and processes of a Community of Enquiry

A Community of Enquiry within the context of the DEEP approach can be summarised as follows:

*A group of people exploring a range of evidence and thinking together with a view to increasing their understanding and appreciation of their contexts and of each other, and use this in service and workforce development.*

Time is taken to develop a Community of Enquiry in which participants feel safe to share their experiences and experiment with ideas. A key assumption is that every participant is a potential source of evidence and insight; it is therefore vital that each member of the community makes an effort to solicit and understand the views of all other members. To facilitate this it is important to create an ethical space for enquiry.

When one engages in dialogue with others, one has to:

- rehearse what others have said
- assess the relevance and significance of one's own remarks
- recognize other perspectives
- explore previously unknown possibilities in the quest for understanding of oneself and the world. (Sharp, 1993)

It is essential to create an atmosphere of trust in which each person feels valued and respected. This trust manifests itself in participants sharing – sharing their ideas, their doubts, their feelings, their hopes and their ignorance. Setting up the room for enquiry is important and we turn to this now.

### **Planning for Enquiry**

**People:** We recommend no more than 14-20 people take part in enquiry. Time needs to be taken to consider 'what will make this work well?' The importance of respect and listening must be considered. The group needs to decide how they will manage speaking and listening, how participants will be chosen to speak, what guidelines should be established to ensure respectful listening and responding. When someone chooses to share their thoughts in the group, they need to know they will be listened to and taken seriously.

**Place:** The room where the enquiry takes place should be cleared of tables and chairs set up in a circle so everyone can see each other and make eye contact. The group should be able to hear each other clearly; therefore the acoustics of the environment need to be considered as well. The facilitator sits in the circle with the participants and makes sure everyone knows that all participants are of equal importance to the success of the enquiry.

**Refreshments:** It is important to have some time to share food and drinks. Coffee and tea on arrival helps to welcome people. Ideally a half-day session either begins or ends with food. Having nice biscuits or cake with tea or coffee creates an atmosphere where people feel valued.

**Resources:** Make sure you have selected the stimulus for enquiry carefully (see below for advice on this). You will also need a rope (a skipping rope is fine), post-it notes, pens, flip charts and fat felts, A4 plain paper.

**Focus on thinking:** Plan a short game, task or activity as an ice-breaker at the beginning of the enquiry to help build relationships, relax people and get them talking.

During the enquiry the facilitator needs to model strategies to help participants enquire together. The aim is for participants to begin to facilitate each other themselves as they learn to:

- ask for **reasons**
- point out **consequences**
- clarify **implications** or **assumptions**
- offer an **alternative point of view**

The following are all crucial moves of good enquiry:

- Careful and sensitive posing of **example** and **counter-examples**
- asking for **criteria**
- being **critical** of one's own ideas as well as those of others
- allowing for **silence in the group**

Sharp (1993)



## The Sequence of Enquiry

The process used to conduct the enquiry is highly structured and can be summarised as follows:

1. **Getting Set:** a warm up activity to prepare for enquiry.
2. **Presentation of stimulus** to the group, e.g. a well presented piece of evidence.
3. **Individual reflection:** participants are given time to make some personal notes on what the stimulus made them think about.
4. **Thinking time:** participants are put in random pairs to share their thinking and identify themes.
5. **Question making:** Groups formulate questions: two pairs join together to share their ideas and come up with a conceptual question they would like to spend time thinking about.
6. **Question airing:** each group presents their question to the rest of the group and explain how they got to the question.
7. **Question choosing:** a democratic voting system is carried out to choose a question for enquiry.
8. **First words:** initial thoughts on the question can be shared in pairs or can come from those whose question has been chosen.
9. **Enquiry:** the group engage in dialogic enquiry to gain a better understanding of the concept/s embedded in the question. Facilitator seeks to deepen thinking through procedural questioning.
10. **Last words:** participants are given the opportunity to have a last word on the enquiry.
11. **Review:** Final reflection on the outcomes of the enquiry and implications for practice.

*It is important to trust the process. The 11-step approach has been proven to be successful in a wide variety of settings, with different people in different places.*

## Choosing 'evidence' stimuli

Choosing starting points to generate enquiry is very important. The 'evidence' stimulus should be short; taking no more than 7 minutes to present and could be as simple as a single photograph. In our work with DEEP we have chosen a range of 'evidence' stimuli including a picture book, a poem, a photograph, a research story, a film clip, a real event or incident, a song, art works, extracts from research or policy, news articles, a dialogue. You can be creative in your choice of 'evidence' stimulus and we shall explore different 'evidence' stimuli on the course. We will also consider how you can create/find your own 'evidence' stimulus. One of the most effective 'evidence' stimuli is narrative from practice. We will consider how you can capture stories and turn them into starting points for enquiry.

### *Examples of 'evidence' stimuli for enquiry*

As discussed earlier, on one occasion we used the picture book, '**Wilfrid Gordon MacDonald Partridge**' (Fox, 1997):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usnOEnTXabw>

This story enables us to explore the idea of relationships and friendship in a care home setting. It is a story about a small child who makes friends with an older person with dementia living in a care home. We followed the sequence of enquiry described above to generate a question: "Is it possible for care workers and residents in a care home to be friends?"

On another occasion, working with a group of community based health and social care professionals, older people and carers, we used '**A Found Poem**' created by Andrew Motion from the research narratives collected as part of the JRF programme *A Better Life*:

<http://betterlife.jrf.org.uk/poem.html>

Participants wanted to discuss, "How important is continuity in care and relationships?"

At a different event, a wide range of participants worked on exploring a policy on violence and restraint, using photographs chosen to represent the concept of anger to generate a question. The question generated was, "Can we ever justify restraining?" We had thought about the concepts we wanted to discuss in advance and chose stimuli we hoped would raise questions around those concepts, but it is important to trust the community to generate a question that is valuable to them. To make sure a question is conceptual it is important to do some work on what a philosophical concept is.

Short animations can provide very powerful stimulus. For example we used a digital-story entitled '**A Train to Cardiff**', which created as part of the DEEP project to stimulate thinking about the subject of professional boundaries:

[http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk/#Stories\\_and\\_Quotes](http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk/#Stories_and_Quotes)

The question chosen was "Should we leave our emotions behind in care work?"

Other examples used in the DEEP project include:

**'The Memoires of Strang the Strong'** – a book written by a man with dementia about his life, which was written as an anti-bullying resource for children, which illustrates the importance of supporting people with dementia to make a contribution to the well-being of others, something which is often denied to them:

<http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk/Medias/The%20Memoirs%20of%20Strang%20the%20Strong.pdf>

**'See me Not my Shell'** – a poem written by older people, carers and social workers about meaningful short breaks:

<http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk/Medias/See%20me%20Not%20My%20Shell%20Poem.pdf>

**'Love, Loss and Laughter'** – a musical photostory about promoting a better life for people with dementia:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_utcMT0Fzw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_utcMT0Fzw)

**'The Piano'** - a very powerful short animation about the importance of memory and life story in an older person's life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZJDNSp1QJA>

**'Gladys Wilson and Naomi Weil'** tells the story of personal connection with someone who has advanced dementia:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrZXz10FcVM>

You will easily be able to find a range of other stimuli on the internet or create your own. The best stimuli create both an *emotional* and *intellectual* connection with the people who view/hear them.

## **Experience Based Co-Design – capturing and sharing evidence from people’s experiences.**

Experience-Based Co-Design (EBCD) is an approach that enables staff, service users and carers to co-design services together in partnership. The approach is different to other service improvement techniques, such as satisfaction surveys and suggestion boxes, which are aimed at identifying people’s views on a service (for example ‘how do you rate the meals in this care home? – very good, good, neither good or bad, or bad’) or what ideas they have (e.g. ‘how can we improve our service?’). Whilst these can be important questions, some people find it difficult to come up with ideas, or say that they are unhappy about something as they do not wish to appear ungrateful.

EBCD takes a more narrative approach, which encourages an open expression about the emotional experiences of service users, carers and staff. It is based on the premise that however well-designed a service may appear, it is the evidence from *experience* that is the best indicator of whether it is a good or a bad service.

As with life in general, the most important emotional experiences are the highs and the lows – the things that make you feel good and the things that make you feel bad. What one person experiences as a high, can be experienced as a low to another person. After you have received a service, it is these highs and lows that you will remember. EBCD calls these highs and lows ‘emotional touch-points’.

The EBCD approach enables the recording of ‘emotional touch-point’ stories through identifying the way people feel about a particular event or activity. It achieves this by asking the person to select a range of emotions that were felt during the event or activity and then asking them to say why they picked these emotions. Their story is then recorded and later shared with others, for example through a Community of Enquiry.

Research on the use of EBCD (Locock et al 2014) has shown that it is very effective in supporting learning and service development, because people use stories to make sense of their world and also to make connections with the stories of other people. When people have been able to express what matters to them, and when this is shared in story format, others are more able to empathise and respond accordingly.

In its original form, which was developed in health services, EBCD records people’s stories on film. However, this is not always necessary and people who have experimented with the approach have found that written stories can be just as powerful.

A set of explanatory slides, touch-point story recording template and emotion cards can be found at:

[http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk/#Experience\\_Based\\_Co-Design](http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk/#Experience_Based_Co-Design)

The King’s Fund Experience Based Co-design toolkit can be found at:

<http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/ebcd>

## The 4Cs of Philosophical Concepts

To help participants understand what a conceptual question looks like we start with a warm up activity. The activity is also important to help build community. We always start with participants sitting on chairs in a circle. Following introductions we do a questioning activity. The following is an example:

Stand up and find a partner – share names and then ask each other:

- *How old are you?*
- Find a new partner and ask each other:
- *When will you be old?*
- Find a new partner and ask each other:
- *What does it mean to be old?*

Following the activity we analyse it to help the participants understand the importance of choosing questions for enquiry that meet the 4Cs criteria. This will help ensure it is a conceptual question.

### ***The 4Cs Criteria***

**Common:** the concept is common to all participants and part of everyday language; everyone uses philosophical concepts on a daily basis.

**Central:** they are at the heart of how human beings think of themselves, other people and things. They structure our thoughts and actions.

**Contestable:** they are so abstract and encompass so many instances that their meaning will depend on situation and context. There will be disagreement about their meaning and their value.

**Connecting:** they need to be connected to our own experiences in order to be meaningful. (Adapted from Splitter and Sharp, 1995)

The concept of age meets the 4C criteria; but it is important to help participants see the differences between the three questions:

- The first question, *“How old are you?”* is clearly a factual question with one right answer (we do allow participants to lie or refuse to answer, nevertheless there is a right answer).
- The second question, *“When will you be old?”* is asking for an opinion, it depends on experience or the imagination. There are no right answers to such questions, everyone’s opinion is equally valid.
- The third question, *“What does it mean to be old?”* is different, it is a philosophical question because it meets the 4C criteria.

The concept of age explored in the third question is a concept that is **common** to all societies and part of our everyday language, it is **central** to how we organize and think about society, it is **contestable**, different people at different times, in different places, or different circumstances will disagree, and we can **connect** it to our own experience.

An exercise like this helps participants understand the importance of creating conceptual questions and also helps them to make distinctions between different kinds of questions.

## Categorising Questions

Participants will find it valuable to spend more time thinking about questions and learning how to generate a conceptual question. The following activity can be done as a skills-building exercise or as a way of helping participants generate a philosophical question.

Choose a photograph that portrays something linked to the contexts in which people work. For example, to present a particular challenge from the JRF programme A Better Life - 'we need to see the person behind the label or diagnosis', we have a photograph that shows an older person sitting on a sofa and on close examination participants notice that the fabric of her dress is the same as the covering on the sofa. The group were given some flip chart paper and asked to generate as many questions as they could from the photograph. They were told not to think too much and to help them get a wide variety of questions a set of question stems were placed on the floor and they were encouraged to try and use all of them: what, where, when, who, how, could, should, would, if, is, does, did etc. Once each group had generated their questions they passed them on to another group. This group were asked to classify these questions as follows:

- **Closed question** (one right answer we can look and see): put a tick beside it.
- **Factual question** (requires research): put a computer symbol
- **Open question** (various points of view can be held) put a smiley face
- **Conceptual question** (needs thinking about, meets 4Cs criteria) put a smiley face with a question mark above it.

Completing this exercise will ensure discussion about the criteria for distinguishing between these different categories. Ask each group to take one of the open questions on their sheet and re-phrase it to turn it into a conceptual question. They can then pass the sheets back to the original group to see if they agree with their classifications.

In a plenary consider what differences emerged between the questions, in particular what groups had to do to turn an open question into a conceptual one. They will see how different question stems produce different kinds of

questions and consider which question stems are most likely to produce conceptual questions. 'Should', for example, can turn a question into an ethical question.

Once a question has been chosen for enquiry we need to consider the 4Cs of thinking that should drive enquiry.

## The 4C's of Thinking

The COE is an approach to thinking that seeks to cultivate four key aspects of thinking:

- Caring Thinking
  - Collaborative Thinking
  - Critical Thinking
  - Creative Thinking
- 
- We show **Caring Thinking** when we listen carefully to other points of view, when we show interest in what they say and sensitivity to their experiences and values. When we apply caring thinking to ourselves it means we take time to express ourselves clearly, give reasons for our thinking and are prepared to change our minds in the face of a stronger argument – we care about the quality of our own thinking.
  - **Collaborative Thinking** is achieved when we respond to each other, when we build on each other's ideas to shape common understandings and purposes.
  - **Critical Thinking** is associated with analytical thinking when we ask questions and seek reasons, call on evidence, make distinctions between ideas and aim for good judgment.
  - **Creative Thinking** happens when we connect our thoughts with other thoughts in unique ways, when we make comparisons, provide examples, give alternative explanations or conceptions.

These modes of thinking complement each other and should all be present in a COE.

***See Appendix 1 for a checklist of skills associated with the 4Cs of thinking.***

## Facilitation Skills

In order to gain the skills needed to facilitate a COE we need to learn how to model open procedural questions so that participants can appropriate them for themselves. The questions below are designed to help participants think more deeply. We can describe these **procedural** questions in terms of the **functions** they perform:

### Information-processing questions

Could you explain what you mean?  
Can someone give an example?  
I'm not sure I understand, are you saying...  
Can you tell us a little more about your thinking there

### Reasoning questions

What are your reasons for saying that?  
Do we have any evidence?  
Why do you think that is the case?  
How do you know?  
How could we answer that?

### Enquiry questions

So you agree/disagree with...?  
What is the best question to ask?  
Can you give an example/counter-example?  
If you say that, does it follow that...?  
Is it always the case or only sometimes?  
What are the exceptions?  
Is that the same as...?  
Are you saying exactly what you were saying before?  
Does your idea connect with...?

### Creative thinking questions

What if...?  
Does... imply...?  
Is that relevant to what we are saying here?  
Does this change our perspective?  
Can we think of other reasons to support this view?

### Evaluation questions

Has anyone changed their mind?  
Have we reached any conclusions?  
What made us think of...?  
Can anyone summarise what we have said so far?  
Do we all understand the differences of opinion on this?  
Has anyone changed their mind in this discussion?  
Have you learned anything new? (Murriss, 2010:33)

## The role of the facilitator

A facilitator is someone who makes things easier for others, the role of the facilitator in a COE is to help the group think well together. The facilitator **never** gives their opinion about the topic under enquiry; the only time the facilitator speaks is to facilitate. The questions above are **procedural** questions to help the group engage in **caring, critical, creative** and **collaborative** thinking. Participants need to be encouraged to listen carefully to each other and that means modeling at all times what it is to be a good **listener**. The facilitator should be a 'guide on the side' not 'a sage on the stage'.

### ***Facilitation Exercises***

Another important facilitation skill is to make use of exercises that can help the participants explore concepts more effectively.

### ***Yes because... No because...***

In a recent enquiry with senior social workers they were asked to respond to the following statement:

*Social care has a distinctive voice in the context of integration*

Forming random pairs they were asked to discuss 'yes, because' and then 'no, because' with different people.

Once participants have chosen a question then it is often helpful to ask them to discuss it in pairs before opening it up to the whole community. This gives them a chance to consider their immediate response to the question by turning to their partner and saying they either agree or disagree with the question by saying, "yes because..." or "no because...". Facilitators can then call on participants to share their thinking. "Who said, 'yes because...', can you share your thoughts with us?" "Who said, 'no because...', can you share your thoughts with us?"

### ***Agree/Disagree***

Following this, a skipping rope was laid down and participants were asked to stand on the line created by responding to the statement according to whether or not they 'strongly agreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with it. You might begin by re-expressing the question chosen as a statement and ask participants to agree or disagree with the statement by standing either side of a line created using a rope, for example: *Carers should not be friends with clients in care homes*. Once

they have decided where to stand along the continuum they were encouraged them to talk to each other about the reasons for their choices and we then asked for get some feedback. This kind of exercise gets everyone involved and also shows the extent to which there is consensus or not in response to the topic selected for enquiry.

You might want to explore a simple *Agree/Disagree* response in which case ask participants to stand on one side of the rope for *Agree* and on the other for *Disagree*. Again get participants to share their thinking with each other and then report to the group.

### ***Good idea/bad idea***

During the enquiry a participant may put forward a suggestion that is clearly controversial. Ask participants to consider whether this is a good idea or a bad idea and using the rope, ask them to stand either side and talk to each other to clarify their thinking before sharing ideas with the group.

### ***What if...***

A good facilitation move might be to ask a hypothetical question for participants to consider. We used this to good effect in two of our enquiries by asking, “What if there were no friendships in care home?” and “What if no-one ever got angry?” Such a question might feel risky because participants have to acknowledge that a current policy on friendship between staff and carers in a care home might not be the best policy. It forces people to question their assumptions and consider the implications implied by the question.

### ***Building community***

During the enquiry take opportunities to build the quality of relationships in the group. Asking them to stand up and change places ensures they speak to different people. Ways of achieving this can be to ask them to stand up and change places if... ‘you are wearing black’, ‘you had a holiday this year’, ‘you’ve read a book recently’, ‘watched a TV programme’ etc. This gets people up and moving and can be followed by a pair-share activity where they are invited to share their thinking with a partner before re-engaging with group enquiry.

### ***Last thoughts***

It is important that the group is given time at the end of the enquiry to reflect upon what has been said, what they have heard and upon their own thoughts, views and opinions about the question or issue that has been discussed. After a period of reflection each person should be given the opportunity to share their final thoughts with the rest of the group. No one should feel under pressure to respond and should be offered the chance to say ‘pass’ if they wish.

## **Review**

Whereas 'last thoughts' are focused on the content of the enquiry, the review is focused on the whole process. We frequently use a set of pictures and ask participants to select a picture that can be used to represent their thinking on the day or half-day of training and/or enquiry. Sometimes it is helpful to use questions to guide this reflection, for example:

- Where are we going now?
- Is this desirable?
- What should be done?

Another useful review tool is [www.ebi](http://www.ebi): What Went Well? Even better if...

## **Post-enquiry reflection**

After you have carried out an enquiry it is good to take some time to review how well it went from your perspective. The following questions are designed to help with that reflection:

- Did I choose a good time of day/week for the session?
- Did I choose a good exercise to start the session?
- Did I choose a good stimulus for enquiry?
- Did I organize the question-making well?
- Did I enable all questions to be aired and appreciated?
- Did I manage the question-choosing well, so that everyone was happy with the process?
- Did I help the community focus on the chosen question from the start?
- Did I encourage the community to build collaboratively on each other's ideas?
- Did I do my best to ensure everyone was included and interested in the enquiry?
- Did they listen carefully to each other?
- Did they express their ideas with care for each other's feelings?
- Should I have encouraged the community to be more critical of each other's ideas through questioning their evidence or reasoning?
- Did I ensure that progress was made in answering the question? (or at least ensure the community was increasing its understanding).
- Did I enable good last thoughts?
- Did I provide opportunity for the community to evaluate the process?

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## About the authors

**Nick Andrews** is a registered Social Worker, who has worked for many years in education and social care services within local authorities and third sector organisations. He is currently working as a Research and Practice Development Officer within the School for Social Care Research, Swansea University. The School has been established to promote and support the development of evidence enriched practice in social care (the DEEP programme) and increase the quantity and quality of social care research in Wales.

**Contact details:** [n.d.andrews@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:n.d.andrews@swansea.ac.uk)

**Sue Lyle** has been a teacher, advisor and teacher educator for 41 years and first trained in Philosophy for Children (P4C) in 1996. Since 2003 she has lead an extensive programme of P4C in Swansea where over 1800 teachers have completed Level 1 training including 65 whole school programmes. Retired from Head of Continuing Professional Development at Swansea Metropolitan University, Sue now leads her own company, *Dialogue Exchange* to carry out research and promote dialogic approaches with schools and adult groups. She is currently working with Nick Andrews to disseminate the DEEP project through the Community of Enquiry with a wide range of professionals in social care.

**Contact details:** [sue.marilyn.lyle@gmail.com](mailto:sue.marilyn.lyle@gmail.com)

**Telephone:** 07817656623

**Website:** Dialogue-Exchange.co.uk

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**Appendix 1: The 4Cs of thinking: Skills checklist**

Caring:  <i>listening and valuing</i>	Give full attention to the speaker	
	Thank someone for their thought	
	Show that I'm interested in other people's beliefs	
	Look after people's feelings	
	Use 'thinking time' well	
Collaborative:  <i>responding and supporting</i>	Name someone when I respond to their ideas	
	Work well with others	
	Build on someone else's idea	
	Act in a friendly way	
	Try to explain myself clearly	
Creative:  <i>connecting and suggesting</i>	Suggest a new idea	
	Give an example	
	Ask for an example	
	Make a comparison	
	Remind everyone of the question	
Critical:  <i>questioning and evaluating</i>	Ask a good question	
	Disagree and say why	
	Ask for evidence	
	Draw a distinction	
	Think of 'what follows'	