
Building Capacity for Quality Improvement at Southeast, Inc.

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator
Training Certification Document

Steve Atwood, MA, Chief Financial Officer
Kelly Wesp, MS, Program Director

Building Capacity for Quality Improvement at Southeast, Inc.

AIFT Certification Document

AI Facilitators:

1. Steve Atwood, MA, Chief Financial Officer

Kelly Wesp, MS, Program Director

2. AIFT Dates: July 21 – July 24, 2009, Las Vegas, NV
3. Southeast, Inc. Recovery and Mental Healthcare Services is a comprehensive community mental health and recovery services organization that began operations in Columbus, Ohio in 1978. In 2005, we acquired a mental health services agency, with office in Tuscarawas and Carroll Counties, which expanded the organization's service area to include these two rural counties. In 2006, Southeast took over the operations of two homeless shelters and a transitional housing program when we acquired Friends of the Homeless, Inc. Southeast also acquired a \$5 million agency in Southeastern Ohio in June 2008. Over the last two decades, Southeast has grown to become a multi-faceted agency employing 360 people with an annual budget of approximately \$32 million. We are certified by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Mental Health. Southeast is accredited by the Joint Commission as a Behavioral Healthcare provider. As a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) contract agency of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, Southeast, Inc. has adopted a mission and responsibility to serve hard to reach, vulnerable populations. Our mission states: "With the belief that all people have the capacity to grow and change, we provide our services to people of all ages, cultures, races, religious preferences, genders, and sexual orientations in order to enhance wellness and recovery, thereby improving families, workplaces, and communities."
 - 4.. The Southeast, Inc. Executive Leadership Committee was the core group of individuals who participated in the AI process. This core group was comprised of the CEO, two clinical directors, the HR director, the Director of Homeless Services, the Grants Manager, the Director of Recruitment and Training, and the Director of Operations. Thus, the core group consisted of 8 people plus the two facilitators. Seven of the people who participated in the inquiry attended the AIFT facilitator's workshop in Las Vegas. The one individual who was not able to attend the AIFT workshop in Las Vegas has read extensively and is very knowledgeable of AI and will attend an AIFT workshop in the future.

On August 5, 2009 this core group met to discuss how to implement and disseminate AI at Southeast. The group discussed the importance of quality improvement for the organization and how to better identify the things that are operating well in the

organization. Through this day long discussion, the core group helped the facilitators identify Quality as the topic for the inquiry and initial steps were taken to modify the Interview Guide to address the best experiences around where quality occurs at Southeast.

The facilitators met after this initial gathering to plan for the two day inquiry. During the conversation, it was decided that focusing on “Quality” could limit the group to observations about when quality occurred rather than when their participation and experience that contributed to quality or success. Through further discussion, the facilitators recognized that the group participating in the inquiry would be top level managers in the organization who greatly influence the culture and direction of the organization. As a result, a decision was made to have the group examine the organization’s success by way of their contributions as leaders and facilitators of change. The success of an organization is dependent on shared passion, common purpose, diverse members, and cooperation. The focus of the inquiry had the participants examine what led them to management or a leadership position at Southeast and then to identify a time when they felt most alive and engaged in their work.

The facilitators left the questions open ended and relied on the process to help guide how individuals defined success (and ultimately quality) for themselves and then how this was infused within the work they did at Southeast. (See attached Two Day Agenda and Interview Guide).

Participants in the inquiry paired off and conducted 60 minute face to face interviews with each person having 30 minutes to interview his or her partner. After the interviews, each pair reported out the life giving forces that emerged from the interviews.

Following are the themes that emerged from the interviews:

- Excitement of starting new programs
- Autonomy
- Creativity/creative
- Innovation
- Desire for total stakeholders to be involved
- Create your own destiny/future
- Caring and commitment to customers
- Valuing diversity
- Valuing risk taking
- Quality care
- Quality everywhere
- Pragmatism
- Desire for dialogue and discussion, valuing the process
- Making time for infusion
- Participatory
- Hope that staff have a different view of QI

- Mission focused
- Flexibility and adaptability

Top themes as decided by the group:

1. Autonomy
2. making time for infusion
3. Innovation
4. Create your own destiny/future

* Macro Provocative Proposition – Southeast, Inc. is the premier choice for wellness. We exemplify quality and service. We facilitate transformation by our willingness to take risks, our ability to innovate, and our appreciation of diversity and autonomy.

10. Strategic Intentions: As a result of participating in the AI event, some members of the group identified opportunities to lead AI processes in their departments and have shared their experiences with the core group. Additionally, the core group is involved in an organizational AI process to involve all stakeholders in helping to define and clarify the macro provocative proposition. The group has begun the roll out by introducing AI in an all staff picnic event. An AI link was placed on Southeast's intranet and information is updated on a regular basis to help the communication among and between the staff. The core team is involved in recruiting employees from all over the organization by providing an overview of AI, and expectations for the upcoming two-day AI event in December. Through this recruitment process, at least 70 people will have the opportunity to volunteer and participate in the event. Seven facilitators will walk the participants through the five generic processes of AI and will facilitate discussion on how individuals can be involved in the planning and dissemination of the AI Work groups.

11. Impact or Results: The core group has expressed a desire for a culture change in the organization. Their behavior is being expressed in more congruent ways. For example, individuals are expressing greater appreciation for each other and the gifts or strengths they bring to the process. Additionally, the group is behaving in ways that promote respect and encouragement. Finally, the group has continued to challenge one another in respectful ways when the deficit-based thinking creeps in to the discussion. The group supports each other through the individual and group change processes.

On an individual level, many of the members of the group have reported using AI during performance evaluation reviews, staff development, and supervision. Additionally, many have reported that they are using AI in their personal lives with their families. In essence, the group has decided to embody a holistic orientation to AI and continue to learn from the processes in which they participate.

What stories of success can we share? The group process has contributed to relationship building through ongoing dialogue and discussion. Rather than going through the “steps” of AI and implementing another program at Southeast, we have examined the process, our value system, our beliefs, and our desire for change. As a result, we have moved forward as a group that has shared leadership and shared decision making.

12. Southeast will ensure that people continue to move toward realizing the provocative proposition in starting with a two-day AI process that will introduce employees to the five general processes of AI. The interview guide will include elements of the provocative proposition and will ask employees to think about the future of Southeast and how they wish to participate and be involved. Through the design phase the 70 participants will divide into 7 smaller work groups initiate organizational and individual processes that support the provocative proposition. Individuals will also generate micro provocative propositions. Through these work groups, other resources will be identified and individuals from various departments will become involved in ongoing work groups

Stories of success will be shared through the monthly newsletter , on the AI intranet site and in monthly All Staff meetings. The AI Facilitators will be resources and advocates for AI and the change process. Since the core team is comprised of the Leadership Team at Southeast, the AI facilitators will be on-call to answer questions, assist with processes and connect work teams to additional resources. The organization is also committed to supporting individuals in their participation by awarding productivity credit to employees to stay engaged in the AI process. Materials have been purchased so that each employee has information about AI and can use the resource guide to support ongoing learning. Additionally, AI will be woven into the fabric of new hire orientation so that all new employees will have the opportunity to learn and become involved from the beginning of their employment at Southeast.

Building Capacity for Quality Improvement

Two – Day Agenda

Monday 8/17/09 – DAY ONE

DISCOVERY STAGE (Appreciating that which gives Life)

- 9:00 Icebreaker
- 9:15 Check In - Review of process, goals and expectations
- 9:45 Pair off and conduct 30 minute Interviews
- 10:45 BREAK (5 minutes)
- 10:50 Debrief of the Interview Process
- 11:00 Small Group Work - Sharing Stories (5 minutes for each person)
- 11:30 Identify Themes/Topics (Put 3 – 5 themes/topics on flip chart and post)
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Scatter-gram exercise

DREAM STAGE (Envisioning Impact)

- 1:20 Create shared images of preferred future (DREAM)
- 3:00 Break (15 minutes)
- 3:15 Complete work on share image (Art Work)
- 3:50 Show Time - Appreciate feedback

4:10 Debrief- Group Discussion about process

4:30 Day two discussion and close

Building Capacity for Quality Improvement Two – Day Agenda

Tuesday 8/18/09 – DAY TWO

9:00 Check In - Recap Day 1, review goals and expectations of Day 2

9:15 Create Macro Provocative Proposition(s) (Start with word image)

10:15 Debrief and discuss process

DESIGN STAGE (Co-Constructing the Future)

10:30 BREAK (10 minutes)

10:40 Create the Micro Provocative Proposition(s)

12:00 Lunch

DESTINY/DELIVERY STAGE (Sustaining the Change)

1:00 Debrief/discussion of the Micro Provocative Proposition Process and begin fleshing out details of the Provocative Propositions and how they will be put into action in Southeast's culture.

2:30 Recap the AI process. Discuss and review difficult concepts and methods to overcome them.

- 3:00 BREAK (15 minutes)
- 3:15 “How will you know when we get there” discussion
- 3:45 Discuss ideas/processes for individual AI projects
- 4:10 Discuss and formalize next steps, involvement process and communication process
- 4:30 Questions, closing and clean-up.

Building Capacity for Quality Improvement at Southeast, Inc.

Aims of the Appreciative Inquiry Experience

- To experience/ learn in groups the phases and concepts of Appreciative Inquiry: Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny.
- To have a voice in co-creating the Southeast community.
- To "Learn AI by Doing"
- To connect with stories of the Southeast Community to magnify learning about redefining our quality initiatives.

What is an AI Organizational Summit?

- The WHOLE SYSTEM participates.
- Future Scenarios are put into HISTORICAL AND GLOBAL perspective.
- People SELF MANAGE their work and use DIALOGUE-not "problem solving"- as the main tool. That means helping each other do the tasks and taking responsibility for our perceptions and actions.
- COMMON GROUND and NARRATIVE RICH INTERACTION rather than "conflict management", or negotiation, as the frame of reference. That means honoring our differences rather than having to reconcile them and searching meaning, hope, and direction in stories that honor and connect us to our history as a positive possibility."
- APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)--To appreciate means to value- to understand those things of value worth valuing . To inquire means to study, ask questions, to search. AI is therefore, a collaborative search to identify and understand the organization's strengths, its potentials, the greatest opportunities, and people's hopes for the future.
- INSPIRED ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE-Because the "whole system" is involved, it is easier to make more rapid decisions and to make commitments to actions in a public way-in an open way that everyone can support and help make happen. The movement to action is guided by internal inspiration, shared leadership, and voluntary initiative. People work on what they share a passion about, what they most care about and believe will make the difference.
- SILENCE-WHICH SUPPORTS DIALOGUE AND APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE: One of the most important aspects of large group interactions is the amazing diversity of ideas, knowledge, identification of capacity, and vision. Much work happens with such velocity that we have found that simple moments of "time out " are powerful and often adds to the depth of listening and dialogue.
-Adapted from David Cooperriders' Guide for the Plenary Sessions (September 30)

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Key Characteristics of an Appreciative Interview

- The interview is based upon an assumption of health & vitality. You are seeking incidents and examples of things at their best.
- The connection between the interviewer and the person being interviewed is through empathy. Questions are answered in a way that evokes feelings in the listener.
- Personal excitement, commitment, and care are qualities that are present when the interviewer and the person being interviewed are sharing stories of their personal peak experiences.
- Intense focus by the person listening to the stories leads to the experience of being fully heard and understood—a desirable effect from the close sharing that takes place.
- Generative questioning, cueing, and guiding make up the role of the interviewer. The skill is to encourage and question without interrupting the storyteller.
- Belief, rather than doubt, is the proper stance. This is not a time for skepticism or for questions that imply a need for “proof”. The trust that develops from simply listening with interest and acceptance is a major positive effect of this process.
- Remember that these are stories being shared, not a reporting of facts. Detail is always useful, as is allowing for the person’s unique individual expression of his or her world.

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Writing Provocative Propositions

A provocative proposition is a statement that bridges the best of “what is” with your own speculation or intuition of “what might be”. It stretches the status quo, challenges common assumptions or routines, and helps suggest real possibilities that present a desired image for the organization and its people.

By creating provocative propositions that make clear the shared visions for the organizations future, there is created a beacon, a set of unique statements that paint a picture of the group’s vision of the organization’s most desired future. This collection of possibility statements provides the clear direction for all of the organization’s activities. Just as a dream always follows the call of the ocean, the organization will move toward its highest and most imaginative visions for the future.

- Is it *provocative*: Does it stretch, challenge, or interrupt the status quo?
- Is it *grounded*: Are there examples that illustrate the ideal as a real possibility?
- Is it *desired*: If it could be fully actualized, would the organization want it? Do you want it as a preferred future?
- Is it stated in *affirmative* and bold terms?
- Does it provide *guidance* for the organization’s future as a whole?
- Does it *expand* the zone of possible change and development?
- Is it a *high involvement* process?
- Is it used to stimulate intergenerational organizational *learning*?

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Provocative Propositions Examples

Performance Appraisal. “Our organization acts on its values for high levels of trust and the belief that people are committed to high levels of personal accountability by using an appreciative performance appraisal process that focuses on employee competence & exemplary service to the organization”.

Environment. “Our organization has an environment that attends to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of employees. Equipment for physical workouts and for swimming is available to all. The cafeteria offers healthy food and a pleasant atmosphere. Employees are given ‘mental health’ days off along with the usual time for sick leave”.

Technology. “Our organization has the most efficient and user friendly technology available. Telephones, computers, copy machines, fax facilities, and so on are all available to every employee who needs access. Training is provided so that we make maximum use of our company’s investment. Technology makes our work easier”.

International Accounting firm. “Our company is poised for a positive future because partners at all regions share a common vision in relation to the firm’s core missions, intent, and direction. It is exciting, challenging, and meaningful direction that helps give all partners a feeling of significance, purpose, pride and unity. The firm uses whatever time and resources are needed to bring everyone on board and thus continuously cultivates ‘the thrill of having a one-firm feeling’, of being a valued member of one outstanding national partnership”.

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ai Interview Tips

- Use the interview guide as your script, to interview each other for thirty minutes
- Capture key words/phrases
- Ask the questions as they are written
- Let the interviewee tell his or her story. Try to refrain from giving your. You will be next.
- Listen attentively. Be curious about the experience, the feelings, and the thoughts. Allow for silence. If your partner does not want to or cannot answer a question, it is okay.
- Have fun.
- At the end of the interviews, take some time to talk to your partner about what the interview was like for each of you.

Building the Capacity for Quality Improvement at Southeast, Inc.

Interview in Pairs (20 minutes each)

In today's rapidly changing world, an organization's success depends on a shared passion, common purpose, diverse membership, use of multiple resources and cooperation among members. In identifying , respecting and utilizing the different passions , resources, experiences and purposes of the individual professional can we build the capacity and cooperation of the Southeast Community.

- 1) Please tell me about your initial attraction to a management and/or leadership position at Southeast? Describe a high point as a manager or administrator , a time when you felt most alive and engaged in your work? What happened that contributed to this moment? Who were the others who were involved? What did you value most about others and yourself? How has this experience positively influenced your work as a manager and leader at Southeast?

- 2) When have you had a sense of wonder, surprise or delight because of cooperation or assistance at Southeast? Tell a story about this time. Who was involved? What did you value most about the other person(s) involved or yourself?

- 3) What do you perceive to be the core values of Southeast? What do you most value about Southeast? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make Southeast totally different than it currently is?

Building Capacity for Quality Improvement Summary Interview Sheet

1. What was the most appreciative quotable quote that came out of your interview?
2. What was the most compelling story that came out of your interview? What details and examples did the interviewee share? How were the interviewee and/or others changed by the story?
3. What was the most “life-giving” moment of the interview for you as a listener?
4. Did a particularly creative and /or innovative example of transformational or deep learning emerge during the interview? If so, describe what you learned about it.
5. What three themes stood out most for you during the interview?

Life Giving Forces
AI Executive Leadership Retreat
August, 2009

Following are the themes that emerged from the interviews:

- Excitement of starting new programs
- Autonomy
- Creativity/creative
- Innovation
- Desire for total stakeholders to be involved
- Create your own destiny/future
- Caring and commitment to customers
- Valuing diversity
- Valuing risk taking
- Quality care
- Quality everywhere
- Pragmatism
- Desire for dialogue and discussion, valuing the process
- Making time for infusion
- Participatory
- Hope that staff have a different view of QI
- Mission focused
- Flexibility and adaptability

Top themes as decided by the group:

5. Autonomy
6. making time for infusion
7. Innovation
8. Create your own destiny/future

AI Retreat
Southeast Leadership Group
8/17/2009
9:00-4:30
Day 1

Icebreaker – good interaction among group. Noticed some people had to take time to think of three strengths or gifts.

Overview of how AI is different from other processes

- Traditionally, we have looked at outcomes first and then create a process to get to outcomes.
- With AI; develop the process and it will get to the outcomes

Interview process:

- Questions built upon themselves
- Learned something new

Are the questions supposed to be answered spontaneously?

- Don't think it's prescriptive; edit, alternate, change anything as you go through the process

When presenting with staff, emphasize there are no right or wrong answers

- Build upon flexibility of the interview
- Set up the rules ahead of time

The value of the process is everyone exploring; find ways to probe deeper of someone who's having a difficult time answering questions

The interview process reaffirmed why I have stayed at Southeast, for what the organization is

- What it does for me

Begin to tell others about how important the interview is.

Sharing stories

Melissa S & Bill

-Bill

Themes: Development of new programs

- Capacity- people helped complete projects; support for one another
- SE does things because it's the right thing to do
- Risk takers

Wishes: Entire staff will embrace QI

- Different type of customer service
- Staff will already be versed with AI process already
- Are values of SE: not afraid to extend ourselves, our expectations of people
- And valuing the difference, people are not there illness; what can we do

-Melissa

- Autonomy
- One core value- not one person in management who is not familiar with “in the trenches”
- Treat everyone in the agency (not just worried well)
- Acceptance

Wishes: everyone understood quality; customer #1

- Customer has choices- opportunity to exercise these
- We could all provide feedback to one another and receive feedback without judgment and criticism

Jayn & Amy B.

-Amy

- Can be a listening host for staff
- With confidence, felt more like she had more to give back
- Core values- client care, autonomy, independent decisions making, creating innovation, progressive
- Innovation is what keeps us from going out of business
- Can synthesize information and bring it some order to get things done

Wishes: more buy in for AI process

- Hopes we can increase commitment to process
- Depth and breath of buy in and commitment

-Jayn

- Perceived SE created its own destiny
- Healthy debate & discussion- open conversation
- Search for more opportunities

Core values: consumer commitment

- Quality of care
- Heart & soul of Southeast

Wishes: everyone would know quality when they see it

- Executive staff define the few indicators of quality
- Quality improvement would permeate the organization

Sue & Melissa M.

-Melissa M.

- Teamwork
- Values of SE
- Programs
- Creating the SE leadership project
- Cooperation and teamwork among staff
- Giving back

Core values: flexibility, autonomy, no eject, no reject

- Run SE as a business- viability
- Internal and external entities
- Communication is open
- If we didn't have our most ill clients, everything would be different about SE

Wishes: energy flowing to QI

- That it would feel good- people want to participate
- Process is open to everyone good communication
- "creating a common language about what we are"

-Sue

- "right kind of things at the agency that made me think it would work out"
- High energy: working through the gallery
- Flexibility; stretch the boundaries, explore, freedom to do so
- "What is it that the here and now is sitting on top of?"
- How do we keep from getting stuck
- Consumers are the heart of their recovery despite what funders do
- Be ok that people are engaging in the process is different ways

Core values: independence, programs that contribute in meaningful ways

- History of SE: using it to inform us of who we are and where we are going

3 wishes: getting the right people in the right place- diversity

- Useful having staff involved
- Align our responsibilities around QA & QI

Carl & Diana

-Carl

- Trust others
- No limitations

Core values: commitment to consumers

- Beyond just mental health, housing and gallery
- CLS program, community commitment
- Creating initiative; diverse backgrounds; view things from a broad perspective

Wishes: bringing all levels together to work on processes

- Getting clients involved in decision making
- Keep having an open glass door – bring management to staff
- Re-evaluation our own jobs; challenging what we do develop non-traditional leadership

-Diana

- Generating ideas
- Working in collaboration
- Opportunities for growth
- Ability to get staff ideas; sense of empowerment; focused on solutions
- Recovered goals; clients change and grow; SE supports the capacity

Core values: people and their capacities; root of her values keeps her grounded in her work

3 wishes: spend more time developing balance between doing and investing in this process

Themes:

-making time for AI = QI

- Making time for AI leads to our future

-“life cycle of any project”

- From the beginning to end, includes all the ingredients

AI Retreat
Southeast Leadership Group
8/18/09
Day 2

How to get group back on topic when group strays?

- Art projects; some wonder if there is a way to get to the next stage with out doing the art piece
- Group process; explore the skill we have, and are we willing to contribute towards it
- The hard work of being in group on completing task

Group – trying to learn our new roles in AI

- Make people move; not next to people you sat next to before- shift the energy of the group

Facilitator's role – What is the role of the facilitator when group is struggling?

- Possible?- bringing the group back to the instructions
- How do you get to common ground
- Willingness to perceive things differently changes the focus

PPS- Language and perception inform cognition which influence behavior

- Moves beyond hope
- Statement of what is

Directional guidance to a desired outcome; Assertive

The process was disjointed due to the constraints on day 1, the visual effect was separated from the verbal statement

- Would it have been more fluid to keep our processes together?
- How to crystallize the process of the visual effect; provide meaning to the process

A different way to carry out the SE mission in a more active way

- Group process around PPS is the goal around AI or QI?
- Get everyone's input
- Jayn- orchestra that composes autonomy, innovation that contributes...

- Investment
- Commitment
- Accountability
- Risk taking
- Innovation

- Create our feedback through what?
- Investing

Rise; coming together

Strive to be a learning community?

Southeast is a good choice because?

- We are the change that the community seeks because we...
- Bringing change home
- SE is the community's premier choice for wellness. We bring transformation through our wellness to take risks, innovate, our appreciation for diversity and autonomy and our commitment to quality and service inclusive of the customer

SE is the premier choice for wellness. We exemplify quality and service. We facilitate transformation by our willingness to take risks, our ability to innovate, and appreciation of diversity and autonomy.

-Reading the group- facilitator helps the process

Micro-provocative proposition

Carl- continue to use AI at shelters

- share this information with staff at the organization
- request : takes time, supplies, food
- AI folder is on G drive for the folks to share
- Set up a tab on the intranet
- All staff – regular agenda items

Purpose of Carl's commitment

- To improve quality of service
- Outcomes; language shifts in shelter
- Be more inclusive; less of a distinction
- Between "us and them" more appreciation
- Language- unsolicited
- Hear things the other community partners about what we are doing
- Good neighbor process
- Purpose- challenge perceptions around homelessness

Steve- Offered to look at the budget and see what can be done for AI activities

- Shifts in customer satisfaction scores, staff retention

Diana- perceptions of staff that are not at down town office

- Use AI as a tool to bring about better quality in the organization

AI is going to where the positive energy is

- Have to get out the deficit thinking
- Get rid of the problem bag

Kelly- commitment is staying connected to the group

Bill- commitment to being open to innovation

- Open to that a great idea
- EBP's- find money to implement an EBP the will support the people we service
- Commitment to fostering independence and autonomy

Jayn- consistency; raise the bar in clinical quality care. Get it where we could be

Carl- requests, brainstorm about applicability of AI in Southeast

- Commitment to a monthly AI lunch/brown bag
- Chartering an AI (inquiry)- to implement throughout Southeast, how to check and monitor

Melissa M. - commit to wellness of the staff

Melissa S. - work with staff on transformation

Steve- AI summit with staff

- How to deliver best quality with constraints in resources

*The visual piece didn't resonate with Jayn

- How is this tied together with the word statements

In groups people are different and need different things. How do you keep everyone engaged and involved in the synergy; not losing anyone in the process?

What can we do to move us closer to expertise in AI model?

- Knowing what the obstacles are for some
- Reflecting on the process
- Learning how we can get out of our own way
- Talk about the high points over the last week

Next steps:

- How do we want to inform staff