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## **What is Appreciative Inquiry (AI)?**

Appreciative Inquiry is a method for intervention with organizations, groups, families and individuals that aspires to create change and growth from the best in the past instead of through finding the problem and then solving it.

### Some basic assumptions

- AI assumes that even people and organizations that are in crisis or difficulty have some moments and aspects of competence.
- AI is based on many research findings that show that it is much more efficient for creating change and growth to focus systematically on successes more than to focus on problems and solving them.
- What we focus on is being charged with energy so we prefer to empower successes that we have experienced rather than charging the failures with energy. This is especially true when dealing with trauma where some traditional ways of working with trauma create secondary trauma through focusing too much on the pain and not on the coping and competency of the people and groups in question.
- In spite of many plans for change being great, we find that in most cases the energy to implement them does not exist. Many a times there is 'resistance' to them. In comparison the fact that AI focuses on the best in the past charges the change with positive energy which makes it much more feasible to take place.

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## Outline of Appreciative Inquiry workshop

24<sup>th</sup> of November 2008

### STARTTS Sydney

- **Evoking an early experience** from which you draw strength and inspiration for working with trauma
- **Theory: Paradigm change** – moving from focusing on what does not work, pain and trauma to focusing on what does work, values, coping skills and competency, how and why
- **AI stages** - the five D's: Definition of the area or issues to be co-researched, Discovering the best in the past, Dreaming a preferred future, Designing inspiring principals, and Delivering specific plans for change.
- **Discovery interviewing** – looking for the best in the past to create a preferred future
- **Sharing and formulating themes** – searching for the skills, competences and values within the best of the past
- **Dreaming the future** – projecting from the best in the past to a preferred future

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- **Designing provocative principles for our work** – creating a list of principles that we would use as criteria to guide any of our planning
- **Delivery** – Brainstorming to come up with big and small applications for our work in light of the best in the past, the dreams and the principles