

- ◆ PG 1-THE PARTNERSHIPS IN DEMENTIA CARE (PiDC) APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) RETREAT
- ◆ PG 1-WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE PiDC ALLIANCE?
- ◆ PG 2- THREE WAYS THE CULTURE CHANGE PROCESS IS STRENGTHENED THROUGH STORY TELLING
- ◆ JOIN US ONLINE: WWW.UWATERLOO.CA/PIDC
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PiDC Alliance

Connection

PROVIDING UPDATES • COMMUNICATING FINDINGS • SHARING RESOURCES • CONNECTING PARTNERS

The PiDC Alliance Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Retreat!

Sharing experiences and learning from one another:

In late April, more than 30 members of the PiDC Alliance came together in Kitchener, Ontario to:

- Share and learn from each other's culture change experiences,
- Re-visit the Appreciative Inquiry process through participation in a mini-AI summit,
- Identify and document the positive core of the culture change process so far, and,
- Plan a way forward for the remainder of the project.

Diverse voices around the table:

Family partners in care, front-line staff, and managers from each of three Culture Change Coalitions (CCCs) and the Village Advisory Team (VAT) worked and shared alongside members of the Research Management Team and project researchers.

Planning for the future:

The group used Appreciative Interviews (see pg. 2 for more details), skits, art, as well as small and large group critical and reflective discussion while moving from the Dawn-Design phase of the Appreciative Inquiry process.

What happens next?

In a [report](#) created after the retreat, the PiDC Alliance outlined some specific ways we can continue to strengthen and expand our culture change journey.



Members of the PiDC Alliance perform their vision of an ideal care future during the AI retreat day.

These include:

- Working to provide more virtual and in person connections between all PiDC Alliance members.
- Reinforcing the value of strong authentic partnerships and exploring alternative ways to include the voices of persons living with dementia.
- Committing to finding opportunities for CCC members to take leadership roles in this process.
- Sharing our stories freely and confidently, through video, writing and communications, so that we can engage wider audiences in our culture change initiative.

What's Happening at the PiDC Alliance?

- The [Huron County](#) CCC is moving into *Dream* phase of the [Appreciative Inquiry](#) process – the team is planning for their ideal care future and welcoming new members!
- [Partnering Together for Change](#) at Bloomington Cove is writing and refining their Aspiration statements in [Dream phase](#).
- The [Yee Hong CCC](#) has entered the [Discovery phase](#) of the Appreciative Inquiry Process. The group will be fine tuning their story-gathering skills.
- The [Reaching for New Heights](#) team at The Village of Wentworth Heights continues to work together to implement their aspiration statements.
- PiDC Alliance researchers created a webinar on [The Dawning Phase of the Appreciative Inquiry Culture Change Journey](#).

3 Ways the Culture Change process is strengthened through story-telling



Appreciative Interviews at the AI retreat day: Asking questions that lead to great stories!

During our April Appreciative Inquiry retreat day, we invited story-teller [Annette Simmons](#) to speak to us about the power of story-telling. Annette taught us that storytelling helps us to see subjective truths as well as objective truths and, in so doing, helps us to connect people to the process of culture change in a stronger more meaningful way.

Lessons for the PiDC Alliance?

Upon reflection, we thought about how Annette's lessons might be applied to the PiDC Alliance's culture change journey towards relationship-centred care. Below are three important lessons we took from Annette:

- 1) **Stories are accessible:** Anyone can tell a story, and people are happy to listen to stories. When we share diverse experiences through story-telling in our [Dawn](#) phase, we learn about the value of each person's experience, role and perspective. Simply, stories help to build [authentic partnerships](#).
- 2) **Stories help us to process change and get inspired by bold ideas.** Culture change is a complex process. It asks us to re-consider traditional problem solving processes which often leave people feeling blamed or isolated. People who feel this way can be resistant to change. "We learned that when we use story-telling in our work, we provide an avenue for participants to share their most profound experiences of relationship-centred care" said Darla Fortune, post-doctoral fellow.

Through story-telling, participants come to their own conclusions about the potential for positive change and then analyse these stories in a way that focusses on already existing strengths and avoids feelings of blame.

Stories are powerful, because they can work to inspire others to imagine an ideal care future in the Dream phase of the Appreciative Inquiry journey. When we share a story, the listener draws her or his own conclusions and lessons, and has, with that story, a powerful tool to share those lessons more broadly in language that is comfortable, non-threatening and accessible.

3) Sharing stories, and gathering stories spreads the message of culture change widely:

Stories resonate. We find meaning in stories and learn from them differently than we do from top-down directives or lectures that include slide after slide of factoids and figures. Culture change is sometimes thought to be difficult to measure, but if we create a space in which people are rewarded for doing the work of culture change and sharing their stories of culture change, we might inspire many more to join the culture change movement.

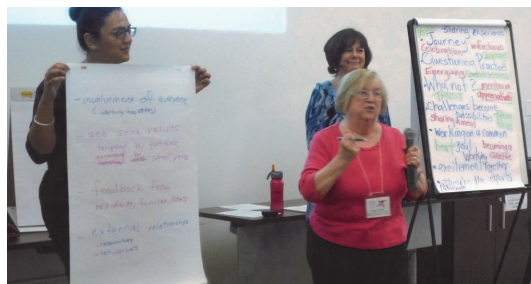
How can I start the process of sharing stories with my group or organization?

The PiDC Alliance has found that 'appreciative interviews' encourage people to grow comfortable with story-telling. In an appreciative interview, pairs or small groups interview one another, but their interview questions are structured to be *appreciative* and to *elicit stories*. A few examples below:

1. Tell me about a time in which you felt strongly supported by your co-workers?
2. Can you describe a high point that you have experienced (or, what you have liked best) in your work? What made the experience so positive?
3. Describe a relationship in your work life where you felt valued? What was it about the relationship that was important to you?

What do we do with the stories once we have them?

Talk about these stories together. Give participants a chance to see what lessons can be learned from the experiences of their colleagues. Ask, what made this story powerful? What was happening? What can this story tell us about our ideal future? What have you taken away or learned from these stories? Soon, your own culture change coalition will be using stories organically in order to exchange bold ideas about culture change.



Family Partner and Partnering Together for Change Member Ros Curtis shares lessons learned from positive stories gathered during Appreciative Interviews at the PiDC Alliance retreat day.