NETWORK DIALOGUES,
DIALOGUES IN NETWORKS

Tessere Relazioni

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Experiment I: Reflective space

Please organize into groups of 3 (or 4, if not equally divided) – over rows of benches

Choose which of you will be:

• the presenter of a problem
• the interviewer
• the observer (2 observers, if you are 4 in the group)
Task 1

1. The presenter takes a minute to think about a real dilemma s/he has – one that s/he could share with the group. (The problem will not be shared wider.)

2. The interviewer helps (facilitates) the presenter to present the problem – by asking good questions. **10 minutes**

2b. During this, the observer(s) observe. *They do not comment.*
Task 2

The interviewer and the observer(s) discuss the matters that came up in the interview. **10 minutes. They do not look at the presenter or comment to her/him.**

During this, the presenter observes. **S/he does not comment.**
Task 3

Discuss the matters that came up between yourselves in the group – presenter, interviewer and observer(s)
Dialogical spaces

• “For the word (and, consequently, for a human being) there is nothing more terrible than a lack of response” (Bakhtin, 1986, 127)

• “Being heard as such is already a dialogic relation” (Bakhtin, ibid, 127)

• Facilitation for dialogical space: helping participants to *listen and to be heard* – with unconditional respect for each and everyone’s Otherness
At the heart of dialogism (at least)

**listening and being heard**, enhanced by:
- space, reflective structures; delaying comments, separating talking and listening
- responsiveness and unconditional respect towards the ever unknown Other
- following and 'echoing' the clients’/citizens’/participants’ themes and language
- talking in the first person (vs. "representing the general view")
- open sentences inviting responses (vs. finite utterances)
- concentrating on the hear-and-now (vs. conducting the discussion towards a pre-set aim)

**In dialogue, one attempts to foster possibilities for generating richer views and joint understanding**
Bureaucracies are sectored, everyday life is not

It is necessary to cross boundaries

✓ towards citizens/clients and their personal networks
✓ between generations
✓ between sectors, units and professions
✓ across hierarchical levels of management
✓ between public, private and 3rd sector produces

Deep vertical specialization, weak horizontal integration

The more boundaries there are, the more boundaries there are to be crossed

Crossing boundaries calls for dialogism:

✓ reaching out to others instead of dictating
✓ listening and being heard
✓ thinking together instead of owning the truth

Boundaries need to be made interfaces

Comprehensive everyday life in its network relations
It is never too early to

- be open
- to encourage cooperation
- enter into dialogue
Three key reminders (’Three NOs’) for relational work

• **Not behind the backs of people** (e.g. professionals meeting to plan and decide how people should live) **but face to face**

• **Not dwelling on problems** (defects, shortcomings) **but focusing on strengths**

• **Not focusing solely on professional work forgetting that the main supporters of people are there private networks**
Facilitators, coordinator and management for Early Open Cooperation

Cross-sectoral management in municipality (top 2 in Finland: Rovaniemi and Nurmijärvi)

Full-time coordinator for Early Open Cooperation (=dialogical network practices)

Pool of facilitators, trained to facilitate via dialogue-generating questions
• facilitators do not give advice
• facilitators come from all sectors of relational work – and serve all sectors (free of cost)
Anticipation/Future Dialogues; Recalling the future with families. Applied also for various planning situations

...interview

Facilitators

Familygroup

Professionals

...take public notes (on flap chart, etc.)
Facilitator’s questions to the family group:
1. A year has passed and things are quite well. How are they for you? (What are you especially happy about?)
2. What did you do to bring about this positive development - and who helped you and how?
3. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?

to the professionals:
1. As you heard, things are quite well in the family. What did you do to support the good development - and who helped you and how?
2. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?

Client’s personal networks and helper networks are summoned for planning co-operation in dialogue.
Facilitator’s questions to the participants:
1. A year has passed and things are quite well. How are they for you? (What are you especially happy about?)
2. What did you do to bring about this positive development - and who helped you and how?
3. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?

Those involved vertically and horizontally are summoned for planning co-operation in dialogue.
Facilitator’s questions

to children:
1. A year has passed and things are quite well. How are they for you? (What are you especially happy about?)
2. What did you do to bring about this positive development - and who helped you and how?
3. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?

to others involved:
1. As you heard, things are quite well in the family. What did you do to support the good development - and who helped you and how?
2. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?

Dialogical spaces and facilitation:
Future/Anticipation dialogues
at life-span junctions

Planning a smooth and worry-free step from one level/unit to the next, e.g from primary to secondary level at school, from hospitalization back home, etc.
Facilitator’s questions if there is no actualized theme for co-operation (e.g. concerning youth):

✓ Have you noticed positive development well worth supporting? What activity?
✓ Have you noticed in the locality unwelcome development well worth intervening? What activity?
✓ What could be done and what could you do?
✓ What happens, if you do it?

Facilitator’s questions if there is an actualized theme (e.g. concerning youth):

✓ What happens if you do nothing?
✓ What needs to be done and what could you do?
✓ What happens if you do it?

Dialogical spaces and facilitation: Anticipation dialogues in community action

Local networks are summoned for planning co-operation in dialogue.
Dialogues making use of Worry Zones, Learning Cafés and Open space:

(a) What are your no worry, small worry, growing worry and great worry situations like
(b) What practices lessen worries and keep them at bay?
(c) What needs to be done to strengthen the good practices
(d) Who does what with whom next

Within units (eg. schools), between units (e.g. two schools) across boundaries (e.g. school <-> child protection, child protection <-> child psychiatry, etc.)
Dialogues making use of Worry Zones, Learning Cafés and Open space:

1. With children:
   ✓ What are your no worry, small worry, growing worry and great worry situations like?
   ✓ What practices lessen worries and keep them at bay?
2. Children’s message to parents. Then the same questions with parents as with the children (see above)
3. Children’s and parents’ messages to teachers. Then the same questions with teachers
4. Planning in dialogue all together

Dialogical spaces and facilitation: Good practice dialogues between families and personnel

Good practice dialogues between children - parents - schools/personnel
Facilitators interview “microcosms” of activity (persons from management, middle management front line, clients, partners) fathoming to what degree the practice in question is rooted in the activity and, what are the success factors and the challenges for sustainability.

Each “microcosm” at inner circle (interviewed & dialoguing) at a time, others listening at the outer circle, then taking the inner circle for their turn of reflections.

*All contexts are unique, but there can be peer learning – if one context is not made the model to be copied by others*
Literature:

Tom Erik Arnkil & Jaakko Seikkula (2013): Metodi dialogici nel lavoro di rete. Per la psicoterapia di gruppo, il servizio sociale e la didattica. Erickson Edizioni

• Also available in Norwegian, forthcoming in Danish and Finnish

Jaakko Seikkula & Tom Erik Arnkil (2005): Dialogical meetings in social networks, Karnac books)
• also available in Swedish, German, Norwegian, Danish, Czech and Finnish
Il progetto *TRA.Mi.Te* vuole promuovere un processo di ricostruzione delle relazioni di comunità, a partire dalle relazioni di vicinato in alcuni contesti abitativi di Trento, Rovereto e Cles, attraverso diversi strumenti e azioni: una ricerca per incontrare le persone, Caffè delle Culture dove conoscersi e conversare sui temi del vivere e convivere quotidiano, Laboratori formativi per acquisire competenze base su come gestire le relazioni all’interno del condominio e del territorio e sulle regole di gestione di un condominio; Tavole rotonde per conoscere esperienze significative a livello nazionale ed europeo; un sito web sulla gestione sociale dell’abitare.