

Lesson 2:

The First Driver of Trust for COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake: Empathy



Empathy

- Empathy is a driver of trust and experienced as “I believe you care about me”
- If people think that you are in it for you, they are less willing to trust you
- Trust is not about “getting people to do what I want them to do,” but rather “supporting them to do what they want to do”
- Building trust does not involve fixing everything now; it means listening to understand, reflecting back, clarifying assumptions, valuing other people’s lived experience, supporting others and building together over time

Empathetic Communication Practices

- Giving people your full presence and attention
- Tolerating difficult thoughts and feelings and knowing they will pass
- Creating shared capacity for emotional regulation
- Asking open-ended questions to explore others’ lived experience
- Listening for understanding
- Avoiding the impulse to “fix” or offer suggestions
- Using appreciative inquiry

Open Honest Questions

- Open honest questions can be used to understand the reasons and feelings underlying a person’s choice to not be vaccinated (instead of making assumptions or asking leading questions that blame or label)
- Open honest questions allow others to articulate what they think and feel, a reflective practice which itself can be an intervention to improve COVID-19 vaccine uptake

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strengths-based, positive approach to leadership development and organizational change. The key steps to appreciative inquiry include:

1. **Define:** What is the focus of the inquiry? (Clarifying)
2. **Discover:** Inquire into what works (Appreciating)
3. **Dream:** Imagine how good it could be (Envisioning)
4. **Co-Design:** Agree to how good it should be (Co-creating)
5. **Deliver:** Commit to what will be (Innovating)

One-To-One Meetings

One-to-one meetings provide a framework for a trust-building conversation. The five steps of a one-to-one meeting include:

1. Getting another person’s attention
2. Identifying a clear and co-created purpose
3. Eliciting and exploring people’s thoughts, feelings, values, interests and assets
4. Articulating the mutual exchange
5. Clarifying commitments

Commitments must be followed through on to gain and sustain trust; leaders should only make commitments that they can fulfill.

When someone says no, we show them respect and understanding, thank them with gratitude and keep the door open for future conversations