



VCAFC

Vancouver Coastal Association
of Family Councils

Connection - Support - Education - Advocacy

VancouverCoastalFamilyCouncils.ca

MARCH 10, 2025
VCAFC
EDUCATION
SESSION



<https://vancouvercoastalfamilycouncils.ca/>
vcafc.regional@gmail.com



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VCAFC Panel Presentation March 10 2025

The Family Council: Effective Communications and Building Relations with LTCH Management and Staff

Presented by Vancouver Coastal Association of Family Councils:

Lisa Dawson, VCAFC Chair

*Co-Chair of Family Council, Louis Brier Home and Hospital
Father a resident at Louis Brier*

Robyn McCorquodale, VCAFC Vice-Chair

*Chair of Family Council, Windermere Care Centre
Mother a resident at Windermere*

Barb Kirby, VCAFC Advisor

*Certified Professional Consultant on Aging
Trained as a Seniors Housing Navigator
Both parents have been through Long Term Care*

Ian Johnson, Ph.D, VCAFC Advisor

Research Scientist, Executive Coach, Collaboration Consultant



Lisa Dawson
VCAFC Chair



Robyn McCorquodale
VCAFC Vice-Chair



Barb Kirby
VCAFC Advisor



Ian Johnson, Ph.D
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PRESENTATION DISCLAIMERS:

- 1. This presentation is based on: a) lived experience as family members, friends and representatives with years of experience, advocating for residents in Long Term Care; b) expertise and training in communications, collaboration and advocacy;*
- 2. This presentation is targeting existing Family Councils in Long Term Care, to provide them with tips and strategies for communicating with Long Term Care Home management and staff, including navigating challenging conversations;*
- 3. This presentation is valuable for any family member, friend or representative of a resident in Long Term Care, for tips and strategies in communicating with Long Term Care Home management and staff.*



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BASICS: COMMUNICATION ROUTINE

- 1. Identify key contacts at Long Term Care Home*
- 2. Query preferred kinds of communications*
- 3. Email, phone call, in-person meeting etiquette*
- 4. Scheduling and frequency of meetings*
- 5. Schedule first meeting*
- 6. Executive to prepare for meeting*
- 7. If applicable, email in advance to management, "Meeting Agenda"*
- 8. Take notes at meeting*
- 9. Follow up email summarizing meeting, discussion points, To Do list*
- 10. Report back to Family Council*
- 11. Follow up, follow up, follow up!*

"To be an activist is to speak; to be an advocate is to listen. Society cannot move forward without both"

Eva Marie Lewis



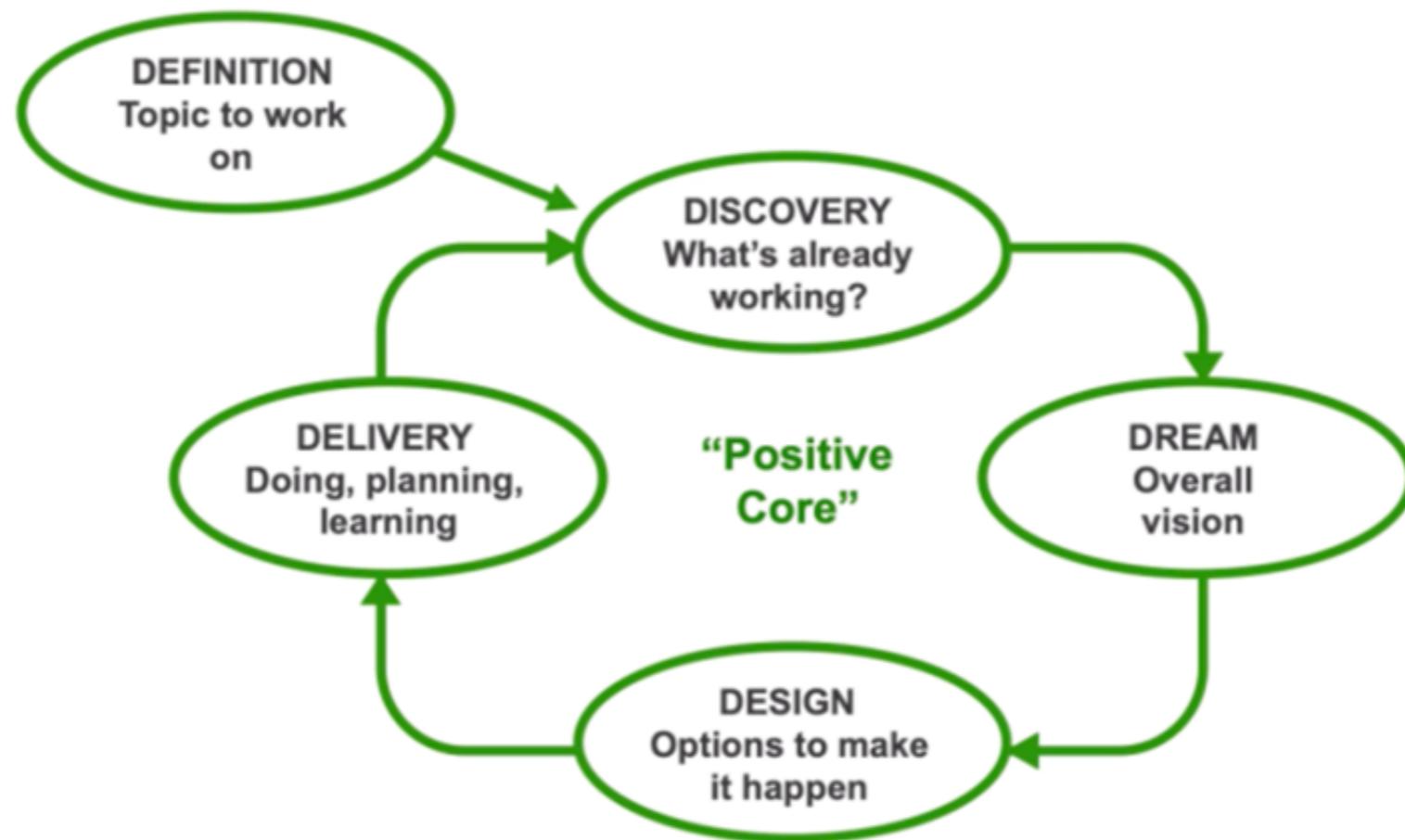
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Appreciative Inquiry - 5 “D”s



Pivot away from **Angry, Frustrated, Critical Attitude**
To **Amiable, Complimentary Alliances**



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Appreciative Inquiry Questions

- 1. Definition Question**
“What’s our focus?” – Sets Intention
- 2. Discovery Question**
“What is working well?” – Builds on Strengths
- 3. Dream Question**
“What might be?” – Inspiring Vision
- 4. Design Question**
“What should be?” – Detailed description
- 5. Destiny Question**
“How to empower, learn, and improvise?”



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Appreciative Inquiry

Leading Indicator of Positive Change

- The Leading Indicator Is
- **Staff Well-Being**
 - Leads to Resident Well-Being





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Need for Practicing Gentle Advocacy

With **compromise**
everyone feels heard
and
solutions are reached





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Guiding Principles that Distinguish Gentle Advocacy From Other Forms of Advocacy

- **Respect & Inclusion** – Acknowledging all voices involved
- **Compassion & Fairness** – Advocating with empathy and integrity
- **Collaboration & Mediation** – Working together for win-win solutions
- **Human Rights & Protocol** – Recognizing legal and ethical frameworks
- **Outcome-Oriented** – Striving for the best possible resolution



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How We Advocate for our Loved ones in LTC

Click on this link to go directly to article

Get to Know Your Care Team

Care Aides, Nurses

Housekeeping,
Maintenance,
Dietitian

Recreation
Reception

Director of Care

Finance Dept

Is there a Problem

Identify the problem.

Timing is Important

Make notes in
chronological order

Whose involved

How's it affecting
your loved one.

How can you help

Who's the Best Person to Help

Can a care aide give you a quick
answer

Post a note on the wall where
easily visible

Start with the Nurse or
Consider the Dietitian,
Housekeeping, Maintenance Mgr.

Follow the homes protocol Read
the Family & Resident Handbook



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[How We Advocate for our Loved ones in LTC](#)

Click on this link to go directly to article

No Resolution?

Speak to the
Director Of Care

Ask for a specific
meeting time.

Practice How you will present

Review Your Notes
Remove emotions, blame
or accusations
Be calm and reasonable
Be concise
Be aware of time
Give them time to process
Ask questions.
How can we resolve this?
What are the barriers?
How can I help?
Stay focused.

Check with the Family
Council in your home they
can help direct you
or

Call the VCAFC they may refer
you to others who can support
you.

Breathe deep and stay rooted
in knowing there are solutions.



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DEFINE THE PURPOSE OF THE PENDING CONVERSATION

Is the purpose to single one staffer out for not attending to resident needs or to ensure more consistent attention to all residents?

CHECK SELF AWARENESS

How to reset and manage emotions

Code of Conduct

GET AGREEMENT ON THE PURPOSE

It is easier to discuss the issues and work towards change if the goal is agreed upon

HOW DOES MGT PERCEIVE THE ISSUE?

What solution do you think they would suggest? Reframe the “opposition” They are the care team for the common purpose of resident health and well being



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CONVERSATION OPENERS



- We would really like your point of view on the food service issue we have on the agenda before we begin this discussion.
- FC seeks your help to support our staff be able to complete their task when they attend to resident ADLs. In the end, improvement following the ADL will make life easier for everyone.
- FC would like your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)? (If the person says, "Sure, let me get back to you," be sure to follow up.)
- FC thinks we have different perceptions about care aides having kitchen duty as well as food service support. We'd like to hear your thinking on this.
- FC is curious about the ongoing rodent issue and efforts to eradicate the problem. We'd like to bounce an idea off you.



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DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS TO INFLUENCE OUTCOMES

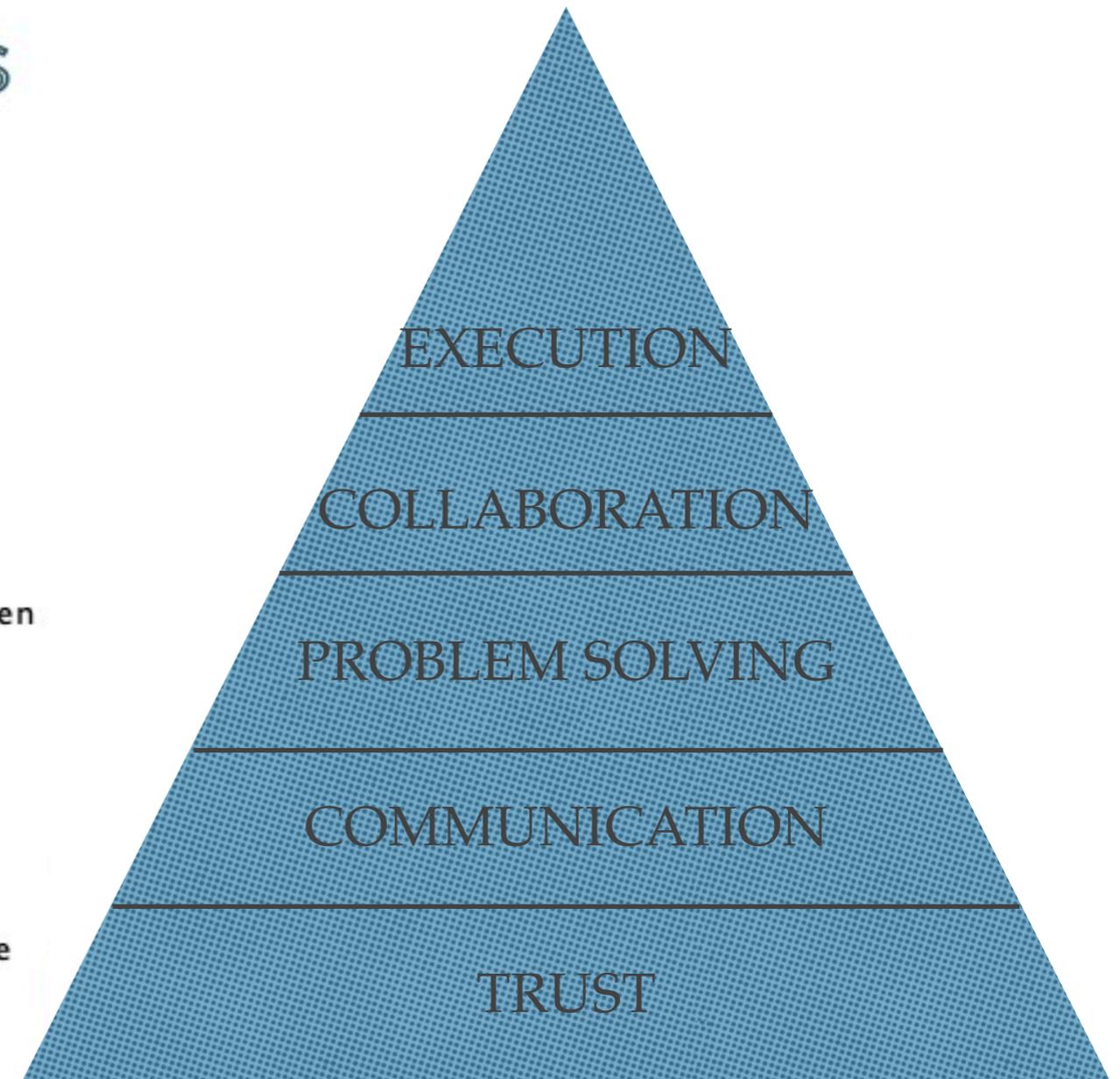
THE RELATIONSHIP TRIANGLE

The interdependency of expectations, understanding and trust.
They all impact and influence each other.

Building Connections and Trust

Open and trusting relationships flourish where connections between care home and families:

- are encouraged and supported to open up respectfully;
- include reaching out for new family and resident ideas and feedback;
- ensure residents and families know who to contact;
- prioritize continuous quality improvement and a support a culture of learning;
- recognize family as part of the caregiver team.





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TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

HOW YOU SHOW UP

What is your level of self awareness?
Are you in a calm state?
Ready to focus on the shared and desired outcome

CONSIDER POINTS OF VIEW

Listen
Be Curious
Don't assume
Don't take uncontrolled outbursts personally

REDIRECTING EMOTIONAL ENERGY

Admit/Acknowledge your emotional state and direct it towards the purpose
Stick to the facts

PRACTICE YOUR CONVERSATIONS

Conversation openers
Move from "I" to "We"
Plant the seed
Influence
Access Resources



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Effective Family Councils The Effectiveness Tool



Shaped by
our
collective
experiences
and
observations.

Building
community
between residents,
families, staff and
management for
effective and
collaborative
conversations.

Targeting the
future state,
improved quality of
life, contributing to
the continuous
quality
improvement
process, always
looking forward.



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**FAMILY
COUNCIL**

Summary:

The Family Council is an advocacy tool; a mechanism of deepening relationships, building trust and reaching quality of life outcomes in a collaborative manner.

VCAFC is your Family Council support system.

Contact us vcafc.regional@gmail.com

Share our information: [https://
vancouvercoastalfamilycouncils.ca/](https://vancouvercoastalfamilycouncils.ca/)



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SUMMARY POINTS

- 1. Communications - Etiquettes; Take Notes; Followup*
- 2. Appreciative Inquiry - Positive; Dream; Proactive*
- 3. Gentle Advocacy - Respect; Compassion; Collaboration*
- 4. Code of Conduct*
- 5. Conversation Openers*
- 6. Relationship Triangle - Trust is the Foundation*
- 7. Effectiveness Tool*
- 8. VCAFC is here to assist you!*

“To most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any”

Alice Walker



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WE CAN DO IT OURSELVES

Holding people responsible for getting things done – feel empowered – be confident [Journal of Aging Studies](#) [Volume 31](#), December 2014, Pages 45-53

RESIDENTIAL CARE REGULATIONS

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96_2009#section59

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

[How to Apply the Appreciative Inquiry Process \(Incl. 5 Tips\)](#)

CRUCIAL LEARNING

Helps people develop greater self-awareness and understanding of others, for more effective collaboration and stronger professional relationships.



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