



Goal: Engage stakeholders through interviews in order to expand your perspective through their eyes.

Purpose

- Strengthen relationships with key stakeholders
- Gather pertinent information through exploration and questions
- Ascertain the key barriers and enablers for our shared work

Why: Why are we doing this process?

What: What will this process help us see in the system?

Who: Who do we need to engage? Who is affected? Who has key knowledge? Who makes decisions?

How: Will we go about getting a wide system perspective?

Stakeholder Interview Process

Directions: Read through the process and develop questions that will enable you to get a BIGGER picture perspective of your inquiry.

Stakeholder Interview Process

As we engage with stakeholders with our initial set of questions, we will reflect upon the key inquiry, remembering the deeper layers beneath the surface, as well as additional stakeholders that need to be included (Who else should I talk to about this?)

Use your stakeholder maps from the previous process to decide who to interview. Create a list of people to talk to. Ideally, this is a microcosm of the entire system we are interested in including in impacting through our outcomes.

Create questions to ask stakeholder and allow the interviews to flow naturally should the conversation turn into something different than anticipated. What we want to understand most are how this person perceives the larger system we are working in and what key insights they have that we need to listen to.

Schedule calls, either in person, on the phone or through videoconferencing. Determine length of interviews, but ideally these will be spacious conversations so that what is not obvious will reveal itself so we can learn more about the hidden and unspoken perspectives can emerge.

Create an intention as an interviewer, i.e. May this interview support our work, may it be service to creating waves of health among many populations for futures to come. As an interviewer, deeply listen to what the participant is sharing with you, so much so that they sense this is a different experience than they have ever had, where someone genuinely cares and listens to their wisdom.

Create a hospitable environment while conducting the interviews. Set the context for why we are having this interview and how the information will be used. Explain that their responses will be shared with your team anonymously with other people's responses in order to get a better understanding.



Invite personal wisdom about the system they are a part of, i.e. if you had a magic wand, what would you do to . . . or from your experience, what are the biggest barriers . . . Let their perspective inform the conversation.

Observe yourself as the interviewer. Notice when you have judgments or barriers getting in the way to you fully listening. Listen from levels 3 (empathic listening) and 4 (generative listening) from the Four Levels of Listening.

Seek to understand deeper structures of the system we are engaging, as though you are seeing it from above. Map out the system; see where connections, barriers, blocks and blind-spots exist. What mental models are you hearing? Is their skepticism or enthusiasm? When something is spoken that you are curious about and you have rapport with the stakeholder, probe to find what is underneath what you are hearing and seek out patterns. What are their greatest concerns?

When the conversation has come to place where it feels it is time to close, keep the door open. *Is there a question you wish I had asked that I did not?* Encourage them to contact you should they have any additions.

Immediately following the interview, reflect and debrief the process with someone or on your own and thank your interviewee in a note.

Stakeholder Questions

Formulate questions that will help you unearth your inquiry, challenges, opportunities, barriers and what is working well. Also unearth what would solving this problem look like to the person you are interviewing.

- What does x mean to you?
- What are you working on to improve health and quality of life?
- What would support you in doing your work more effectively?
- We are working on x, how would you define this? What advice would you give? From where you sit, how are you affected? If we were to solve this puzzle, what would be happening?
- If you had a magic wand what would you do create change?

Also look to speak with communities that have already solved this challenge:

- What is the purpose/vision mission of org?
- What is their focus?
- How do they work with this challenge? What did they do to address it?
- What would they suggest to us?
- What lessons learned could you share?
- Looking into the future, what legacy do you hope to leave behind?

Test your shared vision and goals draft and ask for feedback on it:

- What do you think of our vision and goals statement (mission and values, too)?
- What would you add? What is currently missing?
- Who else do we need to talk to?



After interviews are complete, journal and quietly reflect answering the question:

- What struck me?
- What surprised me?
- What touched me?

Debrief findings with your team. Use relevant quotes and speak them as though you are representing that person. See what patterns emerge from the many perspectives and all the interviews your team has engaged in. Pause between shares to let the sentiment really sink in. Remember to celebrate; this is a very monumental and essential aspect of change work!