

Questions to make visible people's reasons for doing the work they do

Kaethe Weingarten, Ph.D.

Director, the Witness to Witness Program

afta.org/w2w

This is a set of questions that has the potential for enhancing relationships among staff members as they hear each other's stories about what underlies their commitment to the work you all share. The questions can be asked in a group setting where one person takes the lead and asks the questions or the "interviewer" position can be rotated among group members or they can be used in a one on one conversation. The time allotment varies by person. It could take 20 minutes to answer all these questions or an hour. Some people might want to answer each one, some people might want to listen to them all at one time and then choose which ones to answer. Play around with what works best for your team.

1. What is the history of your choosing to work in this area?
2. Does this connect to any family history?
3. If so, what is a story that would help us understand better the connection between the family history and what you have chosen to do for work?
4. If you could travel back in time, what might you observe about yourself as a younger person that would help explain why you do the work that you do?
5. Who in your life has supported those qualities you are noticing about yourself as a child?
6. If you could express gratitude to the person or people who have supported these qualities, what might you say to them in appreciation?
7. What values does your present work connect you to that are important to you?
8. Are these values important to the communities of which you are a member? How so?
9. How might your organization manifest appreciation for those values?
10. If your loved ones could know something you stand for, what would it be? Can you imagine how you could let them know that you stand for this?