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The Bridge to Inclusion: An Appreciative Strategic Planning Process for the Cultural Awareness Coalition of Midland, Michigan

Joel Treisman

University of Pennsylvania, joel@treisman.com

Anna Lucas

University of Pennsylvania, annalucasmarin@gmail.com

Owen Harrison

University of Pennsylvania, oharrison97@gmail.com

Sydney Kastner

University of Pennsylvania, sydneykastner@gmail.com

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Abstract

Inclusive communities are places where all citizens feel a sense of acceptance and belonging. In Midland, MI, a dedicated group of citizens has made a community-wide culture of inclusion their priority. These are the members of the Midland Cultural Awareness Coalition (CAC), a community-based initiative which has attracted a diverse group of stakeholders from a broad cross-section of Midland County. This spring, CAC leaders have collaborated with a team of graduate students (Team Black) enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania's Master of Applied Positive Psychology program (MAPP). As part of their semester-long course in Applying Positive Interventions in Institutions, Team Black identified CAC's organizational strengths, identified opportunities, and drew upon their knowledge of positive psychology to create an application that would best support the CAC in pursuit of their vision. The team conducted a situation analysis and researched the academic literature in the fields of coalition effectiveness, goal-setting, inclusion and diversity, bonding and bridging social capital, psychological safety and psychological capital. Team Black recommends the CAC embark upon an Appreciative Inquiry-informed strategic planning process. This process will empower the coalition, engage the community, and provide a bridge from where the CAC is today, to where they hope to be tomorrow. The desired outcomes of this process include: engaging a broader network of stakeholders, creating a common language around inclusion, clarifying the organization's goal hierarchy, and establishing clear priorities for investing the coalition's limited human and financial resources.

Keywords

community building, community coalition, inclusive community, inclusion, belonging, appreciative inquiry, goal-setting, strategic planning

Disciplines

Other Psychology | Psychology

Comments

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A Positive Psychology Service Learning Project Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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Background Information

The Midland Cultural Awareness Coalition (CAC) is a community coalition focused on inclusion in the greater Midland, Michigan area. The simplest definition of a coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations who share a common interest and agree to work together toward achieving a common goal (Community Tool Box, n.d.). Midland's CAC is a community-based coalition, meaning it is made of community members and focused on serving the community at-large. Its focus is inclusion, and this term has been defined in many ways. True inclusion requires a balance between an individual's sense of personal belonging to a group and a feeling of uniqueness within the group (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). Therefore, an inclusive community is one in which individuals are treated as insiders and esteemed citizens, and at the same time, as distinctly unique members of the community. This definition of inclusion is fitting for the community of Midland, as they strive to celebrate their community's cultural richness as well as to create a Midland culture all its own.

In 2014, the Midland Area Community Foundation released a report titled *Midland: Exploring Our Future* (Midland Area Community Foundation, n.d.). This document was the final product of a community-based strategic planning process which outlined goals and performance metrics, in an effort to measure progress towards their vision for Midland County. The County's vision is "Together - Forward - Bold: An exceptional place where everyone thrives." In our conversations with the representatives of the CAC, they emphasized the migration of the committee's mission from promoting cultural awareness, to its loftier mission of creating a culture of inclusion within Midland. Historically, the CAC's efforts have been focused on organizing community-based events to celebrate cultural diversity. These have included

sponsorship of local musical performances and various Cultural Awareness Month activities, including a cultural awareness creativity contest. CAC leaders hope to create a culture of belonging in Midland where all residents and visitors feel engaged and connected to the community. In refashioning the committee as a coalition, leaders broadened their aspirations. They hope to do more than promote cultural tolerance; they aspire to become agents of change, promoting inclusiveness and acceptance throughout the Midland community.

The aspirations of the Cultural Awareness Coalition are critically important against the backdrop of current trends. Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) show hate crimes rose for three consecutive years and increased 17 percent from 2016 to 2017 (Romero, 2019). For two years in a row, Michigan had the fourth highest number of hate crimes among all fifty U.S. states (Warikoo, 2019). Last year, the Southern Poverty Law Center tracked thirty-one hate groups in Michigan, up from twenty-seven groups in 2017 (Hate groups reach record high, 2019). These trends highlight the importance of community coalitions like the CAC and the need for their efforts to raise awareness and build bridges of understanding across racial, ethnic, religious, gender identification, and other divides.

Strengths

Passionate, dedicated, compassionate, and supportive: these are just a few organizational strengths that have emerged from the CAC. Last month, Team Black conducted a brief survey (Appendix A) of the twenty-five coalition members and received responses from eighteen members. One of our survey questions asked respondents to describe the coalition's strengths. In addition to the qualities above, CAC members highlighted the strengths of diverse representation, positivity, and community. See Appendix B for survey highlights and graphs.

In addition to the survey responses from the Coalition members, CAC leaders identified several areas of organizational strength. Most notably, they highlighted their rich resource of human capital. Today the Coalition includes roughly 25 members, including representatives from two school districts in the county, Dow employees, professors, parents, chamber of commerce members, representatives from different faith-based organizations, and individuals from the creative arts and nonprofit fields. Key stakeholders, including Midland's mayor, are active champions of this effort and are committed to its success.

Challenges

Though the CAC members feel a strong sense of shared purpose, our situation analysis and member survey results highlighted organizational challenges and impediments to success. Some of the challenges identified by survey respondents include: unclear strategic direction, poor alignment among coalition members around goals, financial and human capital constraints, and the ongoing challenge of broadening the Coalition's base of interest and involvement within the community. Several respondents noted that silos exist within the coalition and that the CAC seems to lack a common language, especially in the way they define and talk about inclusion. In addition, CAC leaders noted that some Coalition members are not active contributors and do not serve on committees. Some important strategic initiatives have stalled because none of the volunteer members have stepped up to lead the work.

Our CAC clients mentioned two other challenges: financial constraints and their role within the community. Rather than operating as a standalone entity, the CAC is wholly-supported by the Midland Area Community Foundation. The coalition is one of hundreds of individual funds to which donors may elect to designate gifts. The foundation's annual

support of CAC programs and initiatives averages around \$5,000 per year (M. Kesterson, personal communication, April 11, 2019). The CAC's limited budget constrains the activities and programs they can offer and is not large enough to fund salaries or speaker stipends. What they lack in financial resources and manpower, they have tried to make up for through a compelling vision, hard-working volunteers, creativity, passion, and community partnerships. Lastly, CAC leaders discussed the challenge of the coalition's role in the Midland community. As a coalition, they strive to remain advocates, pursuing awareness-raising and educational activities rather than taking on the role of activists in the community (M. Kesterson, personal communication, April 11, 2019). This creates a challengingly-narrow path for the coalition to navigate, as CAC members serve as advocates for their own micro-constituencies.

Goals

In addition to learning about CAC's strengths, opportunities, and challenges, we wanted to understand how individual Coalition members perceive and align with CAC's stated goals. Responses to our goal-related survey question identified an opportunity to clarify, prioritize, and better communicate CAC goals both within the coalition membership and in the broader Midland community. Responders expressed a desire for more agreement on the CAC's vision and purpose, clearer priorities, greater alignment around goals, and more actionable plans. They articulated a wish to broaden the definitions of inclusion and diversity to encompass those who are "different" in other ways, such as, but not limited to, individuals with physical disabilities, less education, and every socio-economic status.

As a diverse community-based coalition, each volunteer member of the CAC is not only committed to the goals of the Coalition, but also their individual and organizational priorities

outside of the Coalition. This serves as an asset for community representativeness, as well as a necessity to formulate a clear and cohesive strategy for the Coalition. In some ways, the CAC represents a microcosm of the Midland community. The CAC must find a balance between this individuality and internal cohesion before they can realize their vision of inclusion in the Midland community at large.

Literature Review

Drawing from the strengths, opportunities, and goals that arose through our situation analysis and survey results, we chose to anchor our literature review around the following four themes to inform our recommendations: 1) community coalition effectiveness, especially goal-setting, 2) inclusion, belonging and mattering, 3) bonding and bridging social capital, 4) cooperation, psychological safety, and psychological capital.

Effective Community Coalitions and Goal Setting

The success of any Coalition is dependent on the members' ability to agree on and reach their collective goals, without acting in conflict with their personal and organizational priorities. In fact, there are nine key practices that are attributed to coalition success: community readiness and ownership, shared vision and clear goals, organizational structure and capacity, taking action toward community change, diverse membership and ongoing recruitment, collaborative leadership and development of new leaders, funding and resource development, relationship-building and conflict management, and access to external support and assistance (Wolff, 2001). Inclusive processes and membership diversity are two strategies of success that seem especially relevant for Midland (McKay and Hewlett, 2009).

Ultimately, relationship-building is the foundation of successful collaboration and community coalitions. This will be incredibly important for the Coalition to develop a strong team sense, thereby sharing ownership and accountability of the vision. Best practices for non-profit organizational effectiveness suggest a participatory process to establish goals and create a long-term (at least three-year) strategic plan (Liket and Maas, 2015). Effective community coalitions build momentum in a similar way by creating specific goals and priorities and then executing on them (McKay & Hewlett, 2009).

Goal-setting can increase feelings of cohesiveness, perceived success, and reduce conflict within groups (Fandt, Richardson, & Conner, 1990). Research suggests that goal-setting is one of the easiest and most effective interventions for improving performance. Specifically, goals that are difficult and specific produce higher levels of performance and effort (O’Hora & Maglieri, 2006). Setting goals can serve as a benchmark of progress, yet goals will change over time and no longer accurately describe the group’s desired directions or outcomes. Goals should be viewed as dynamic, because even if the higher-level goal remains the same, the path to the goal may shift (Thompson & McEwen, 1958). In the following section, we will discuss a key focus for CAC goal-setting: strengthening feelings of inclusion, belonging, and mattering among Midland residents who are “different” from the majority.

Inclusion, Belonging, and Mattering

The CAC seeks to create bridges of awareness and understanding across all sub-groups and populations within Midland. Our search for relevant psychology studies identified three themes we thought would be helpful in describing and supporting the organization’s goals: belonging, inclusion, and mattering. Belonging is present when: 1) one experiences frequent

pleasant interactions with others, and 2) these occur within the context of a stable and enduring framework of effective concern for others' welfare (Baumeister & Leary, 2007). A sense of belonging is correlated with many positive outcomes related to health, adjustment, and well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 2007). Inclusion bridges the potentially conflicting duality of diversity and sense of community. This view aligns with the coalition's goal of bridging the gap some residents have expressed between work and home, creating a feeling of being "at home, at every point in the community" (personal communication, 2019).

The concept of mattering may be relevant to the coalition's efforts to create a more inclusive, equitable community in Midland. Mattering is defined as one's experience of both feeling valued as well as offering an invitation to add value (Prilleltensky, 2016). According to Prilleltensky (2016), feeling a sense of mattering can bridge the divide between wellness and fairness within a community context. The coalition might consider ways to help coalition and community members of all cultural identities feel valued and invited to add value.

Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

Building social capital is an important factor in the process of creating a culture of inclusion. Researchers have identified three types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking (Szreter & Woolcock, 2014). All three refer to the relationships and trust built between people. Bonding occurs between people who see themselves as having similar identities. Bridging occurs between people who see themselves differently in terms of their social identity. Linking is a type of bridging social capital that happens across formal power structures. Based on what we have learned, Midland enjoys a high degree of bonding social capital. Midland's next focus will be on building bridging social capital, particularly between those with different

cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations (personal communication, 2019). There is evidence that both bonding and bridging social capital can positively affect individual health (Iwase, Suzuki, Fujiwara, Takao, Doi, & Kawachi, 2012; Kim, Subramanian, & Kawachi, 2006).

Cooperation and Psychological Safety

Effective community coalitions are able to recognize potential roadblocks and are rooted in a culture of trust to sustain them through these times of difficulty (McKay & Hewlett, 2009). As we discussed above, coalitions are most effective when they are “cooperative and synergistic working alliances” (Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1993). Productive in-group communication is an essential element of coalition effectiveness. Further, team effectiveness depends on key contributors including: dependability, structure, and clarity of expectations and objectives, feeling one is making an impact (“re:Work Guide: Understanding Team Effectiveness,” n.d.). Notably for the CAC, psychological safety is more important for team effectiveness than all other factors. Psychological safety is defined as an individual’s perception of the consequences of taking an interpersonal risk (Edmondson, 1999). When members feel psychological safety, they feel safe in being vulnerable, taking risks, asking questions, and offering new ideas without fearing they will be seen as incompetent or disruptive.

Application Plan

As we integrated the information from the survey results, situation analysis, and literature review, our goal was to identify a positive psychology application which would create the most significant impact for the Coalition. After much consideration, the application we feel is most appropriate for the CAC is an Appreciative Inquiry-informed strategic planning process. Building on the concepts of Appreciative Inquiry and our study of effective coalitions,

goal-setting, and other substantive themes, we believe this process will serve as a bridge from where the coalition is today to where they want to be tomorrow. Below, we articulate how this appreciative planning process will help the CAC to create a clear, common language, harness its many strengths, unite around a clarified mission and vision, and gain traction toward shared goals, priorities, and desired outcomes.

Appreciative Strategic Planning

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach to organizational development is based on the premise that the art of positive inquiry evokes positive images, which leads to positive actions (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). Unlike traditional organizational change and strategic planning models which often begin by identifying organizational problems that need to be fixed, the AI paradigm begins with appreciating what is best about an organization. Through this process, participants envision what might be, dream about what should be, and innovate that dream to become reality (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011). According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), at a foundational level, AI involves the art and practice of asking questions to strengthen an organization's ability to understand, build upon, and actualize positive potential.

We grounded our recommended application in David Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle: discover, dream, design, and deliver (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011). AI practitioners have since added an additional "D" to the beginning of the AI process: defining the focus of the inquiry (AI Commons, n.d.). This 5-D model is graphically illustrated in Appendix C. The AI process stages will guide the CAC through an appreciative assessment of the organization's current situation and desired future state. Specifically, the Coalition will embark upon a positive

and strengths-based exploration of the following questions: Who are we? Who do we want to be? How can we move toward this? How do we sustain this effort?

We anticipate this Appreciative Inquiry-inspired strategic planning process will result in the following outcomes:

1. Broaden reach within the Midland community by including an expanded body of stakeholders.
2. Establish a common language through shared definitions and CAC discussions.
3. Draft a compelling and achievable mission and vision for the future of the CAC itself, as distinct from the CAC's vision for the future of Midland County as a whole.
4. Identify and prioritize specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bounded objectives in the form of a goal hierarchy.
5. Create a strengths-based strategic plan to guide CAC programs and growth for the next three-to-five years.

Phase I: Define

The purpose of the define phase of Appreciative Inquiry is to focus the inquiry and define the topic. This establishes a foundation for the other stages of the Appreciative Inquiry process. Properly defining the topic requires obtaining input from a broad and representative group of stakeholders. Together, these stakeholders will narrow the focus of inquiry by defining or reframing an organizational issue or opportunity that can be addressed through the AI model (Rothwell, Stavros, & Sullivan, 2015). It is imperative that this topic feels generative, that it is articulated clearly, and that it will move the organization forward. Based on our work to-date, Team Black believes CAC's topic of inquiry should relate to creating strategic alignment of

organizational goals, strategies, and efforts. That said, CAC's key stakeholders - ideally, with guidance from external AI process leaders - will be responsible for defining the topic of inquiry.

Phase II: Discovery

In the discovery phase, we suggest the CAC gather information from two different groups: the Midland community at-large and Coalition members. We recommend the CAC begin by engaging the community of Midland on a broad level. Questions in this stage might include themes like: What strengths live in the community? What opportunities or challenges exist in relation to their vision of inclusion? To better facilitate these conversations, the CAC can use the AI model to craft questions, develop an interview guide, collect and organize data, conduct interviews, and then synthesize and analyze the data they collect (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Giving voice to individuals' stories is a key component of the discovery phase of Appreciative Inquiry. The information gathered in this phase will provide critical input for the next stages of the process and ensure that the CAC's strategy development will be accurately informed by the experiences and voices of a representative sample of community.

The second step in the discovery phase will focus on gathering input from CAC members. In preparation for the AI process, we suggest they use this time to also create a common language. What do the words inclusion, diversity, and cultural awareness mean to them? Individuals can share their own definitions, reference other definitions of the same concept, and finally converge on one shared definition for the CAC. Establishing a common language will provide a rich opportunity to introduce positive psychology concepts. For example, exploring character strengths might be beneficial so the coalition members may better understand the ways their individual, organizational and community strengths interact. In addition, we

envision meaningful conversations about the emotional and physical benefits of bonding and bridging social capital, the need for psychological safety in team effectiveness, and the role psychological capital plays in individual and team resilience (Szreter & Woolcock, 2014; re:Work Guide: Understanding Team Effectiveness,” n.d.; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2006). See Appendix D for an example of what a session like this could look like in practice.

Phase III: Dream

Now that the CAC is equipped with a common language, a better understanding of personal, organizational, and community strengths, and enhanced representation of stakeholders both within and outside the Coalition, the team will move into the dream phase of the appreciative strategic planning process. This stage provides an opportunity to explore who they want to be and what they want to do in the Midland community. The work of AI is built on the notion that organizations are “mysteries and miracles of human relatedness; they are living system webs of infinite strength and limitless human imagination” (as cited in Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011, pp. 740).

CAC leaders and members shared inspiring visions of a more inclusive Coalition and a more inclusive Midland community. The questions they ask in the dream stage will help create consensus around this aspirational vision: What might we (as the CAC) do in the community? Who might we be? How will it feel? What does it look like? Both asking and answering these questions will propel CAC members forward, to think more boldly, and to move in the direction of a shared purpose. With these questions in mind, the CAC can build upon the common language they found in the discovery stage and co-create a shared vision of who they want to be in the community and how the coalition will pursue that vision. Playful cues around the room -

bright colors, interactive toys, and festive snacks, for instance - might help stimulate creativity and allow individuals to feel free to dream big (West et al., 2016)! See Appendix E and F for a detailed guide for the dream stage.

Phase IV: Design

In the design phase, CAC will highlight the “best of what is” and focus on leveraging organizational capabilities, motivation, competencies, assets, and resources. In the dream phase they identified the “best of what could be” by creating a larger vision for their efforts (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011). As the CAC transitions into their goal setting process, they should remember that specific and difficult goals produce higher levels of performance (O’Hora & Maglieri, 2006). Each CAC goal ought to move the organization closer to fulfilling its vision, though goals must be dynamic and adaptable (Thompson & McEwen, 1958).

We suggest the Coalition create a goal hierarchy and put their shared organizational vision at the top of their pyramid of goals (Duckworth, 2016). The CAC’s vision should capture what they are striving for most broadly, this is also known as identifying the ultimate concern. Below the vision in the hierarchy (See Appendix G) are mid-level goals and these are goals that may take a year or more to achieve. The Coalition may choose to have multiple mid-level goals and separate them into goals that take more than five years and goals that take less than five years to achieve. The lowest level of goals should be the easiest to achieve and may be accomplished in one year or less. For instance, a goal hierarchy clearly articulating a vision for Midland as a place of inclusion, belonging and mattering would flow downward through a series of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals. This goal hierarchy would guide implementation of initiatives and programs developed to achieve clear and specific goals.

Phase V: Destiny/Delivery

The final phase in the AI process is known as the destiny, deploy, or delivery phase. During this stage, the organization is evolving into the desired future state envisioned during the dream and design phases. In this stage, teams of collaborators self-organize around a desire to implement specific elements of the goal hierarchy or a specific element of the organizational vision. The destiny or delivery phase of an appreciative strategic planning process builds on the momentum created earlier in the process by clarifying ideals and goals. This stage is more improvisational and self-organized in nature. For example, task teams consisting of current CAC members and like-minded individuals or organizations from the community might team up to champion specific initiatives, ideas or deliverables identified during the design phase. Coalition task teams might form around some of the initiatives identified in our survey results, for example: designing and producing new external marketing collateral, creating new member recruitment strategies and onboarding materials, redesigning the process and content of CAC board meetings, establishing a dynamic and powerful social media presence, and developing a board training curriculum. This final AI step engages as many members of the organization as possible to bring to life the previously articulated vision of the future.

Measurement

The appreciative strategic planning process described above includes multiple stages at which the CAC will be able to assess their progress toward achieving their goals. To measure the impact of this application, we have identified sample metrics and measurement approaches for each of the expected outcomes identified above: 1) broaden CAC reach within Midland community, 2) establish a shared language, 3) create a vision and mission for CAC, 4) identify

goals and priorities, and 5) formulate a three-to-five year strategic plan. The table in Appendix H summarizes the information below.

1. Broaden CAC reach within the Midland community by including an expanded body of stakeholders. The CAC could employ qualitative surveys, community member interviews, and focus groups to gauge progress toward broadening community awareness and support of their efforts. In order to further diversify their community representativeness, they might establish target seats within the Coalition for different sectors and types of organizations in Midland. They may also want to partner with outside marketing firms to help them strategically design and measure their recruiting and marketing messages within various target market segments. Though this may be challenging with the CAC's limited resources, aggressive fundraising and "friend-raising" efforts may uncover potential sources of expertise and assistance in these areas.
2. Establish a common language through shared definitions and CAC discussions. The CAC may employ an array of measurement tools to assess progress in developing a common language. These might include content and outcome analysis of board meeting discussions, self-reports, interviews, qualitative surveys (such as the one conducted by Team Black earlier this year), and questionnaires measuring board member psychological safety and psychological capital. Leadership would need to identify key metrics for assessing progress. Examples might include board member alignment, stakeholder agreement, completion and propagation of a glossary of key inclusion and diversity terms, and measures of participation and contribution to the discussion and decision

making process. As an example, the board might revise Team Black's board member survey to gauge progress. Using our results as a baseline reading, CAC could track changes in attitudes and behaviors over time. Future survey questions might include the following:

- a. What motivates you to continue to work with CAC?
- b. What is CACs vision/ higher level goal?
- c. How does your work within CAC relate to the vision of CAC?
- d. If there are barriers to your work within CAC what's one way you might overcome the barrier? Who can you ask for help?
- e. How does CAC define diversity and inclusion?
- f. How unified does CAC feel? (1 to 7)
- g. How unified does the community feel? (1 to 7)
- h. What, if any, goals need to shift for CAC?

Another option for measuring community inclusion might be to adapt a tool such as the Measuring Inclusion Tool employed by the Alberta Municipalities Association (2017).

This tool seeks to measure inclusion within 10 areas of focus within their community.

Potential areas of focus might include: education, social services, citizen and community engagement.

3. Create a compelling, achievable vision and mission for CAC. Measuring progress and completion of a mission and vision process will likely involve assessing completion of several sub-goals and tasks. These might be as granular as setting aside funding to hire external consulting resources, creating a fundraising plan to underwrite this effort, hiring

a skilled consultant or facilitator, and conducting interviews and surveys of key community stakeholders to provide input. All of these efforts would, ideally, occur within an AI context, including one or more AI summits. The specifics of planning and preparing for an AI summit should involve both internal and external resources and lie beyond the scope of this paper. Measures of progress toward this outcome will include specific project plans, timetables with target dates, budgets, and descriptions of deliverables for each stage.

4. Identify and prioritize specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bounded objectives in the form of a goal hierarchy. As discussed earlier in this paper, Team Black views goal-setting and creation of goal hierarchies as critical success factors for CAC. The process of setting goals and tracking progress will necessarily require timelines, human and financial resources, deadlines, and deliverables - all of which can be measured and evaluated. Measures may involve time-tracking, actual-to-budget spending variances, board meeting decisions, and task or team status reports.
5. Create a strengths-based three-to-five-year appreciative strategic plan for CAC. As already discussed in our application plan, an AI-informed strategic planning process involves five steps, each of which will require planning, tracking, metrics and assessment of performance versus goals. Even before this process can begin, CAC leaders must define the topic of inquiry. Progress and stakeholder buy-in on this can also be measured. Clear timetables, budgets, and steps for implementation are essential for success. For CAC to gain momentum and succeed, leadership will need to commit to measuring - and celebrating - progress simultaneously on a number of fronts.

Progress To-Date

Throughout this service-learning project, we have regularly communicated and shared updates with our CAC partners. In addition, we have collaboratively reviewed and discussed our completed situation analysis, literature review, and application plan. On our most recent call we asked the CAC to answer the following questions: 1) How has our work together impacted your thinking or shifted your understanding of the CAC and its mission? 2) If you had to choose three main take-aways, what would they be? 3) Have our efforts inspired any actions thus far? 4) Going forward, what is your plan for implementation? Below are some highlights from their feedback and their initial thoughts regarding next steps:

The work with the MAPP cohort has solidified my view of the work we (the CAC) are doing and the mission. It has intensified its importance. It has also made clear that our efforts toward calibrating our values and priorities will not be easy, but it will be worth it (M. Kesterson, personal communication, April 4, 2019).

In addition, CAC leadership highlighted the “need for a clear understanding of our vision, what it means to the community, and how we plan to make it a reality” (M. Kesterson, personal communication, April 4, 2019). They found the team’s survey results inspirational and specifically mentioned the “enthusiasm and hopefulness of the coalition members.” The CAC leaders emphasized the value of our findings regarding:

The need to create a common language and to create a vision for the coalition itself. By doing this we feel our ability to communicate with each other and work collaboratively will be enhanced. Additionally, creating a vision and mission for the coalition, that is different from the vision we have for our community, will allow us to create a clear

purpose to inform our work, decisions, and goals. These two aspects are foundational and will be prioritized moving forward (M. Kesterson, personal communication, April 4, 2019).

Conclusion

The Appreciative Inquiry-informed strategic planning process outlined above will empower the CAC to better leverage their strengths, develop a common language, build consensus around a shared vision, and begin the ongoing process of goal definition and execution. The five-step process of definition, discovery, dream, design, and delivery will enable the Coalition to form consensus, build cohesion, and solidify who they are and who they want to be in the Midland Community. The framework outlined above will help the Coalition to better leverage their many assets and implement programs and activities more strategically. This process will empower the CAC to be a more effective coalition as they pursue their noble vision for the greater Midland community “to be a place where everyone feels at home at every point in the community” (M. Donker, M. Kesterson, & G. Wilson, personal communication, January 22, 2019).

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Appendix A: Midland Cultural Awareness Coalition Survey Instrument

Hello, Midland CAC member. We are a team of graduate students in the University of Pennsylvania Masters program in Applied Positive Psychology. The "service learning project" is a foundational element of this semester's Applying Positive Interventions in Institutions course. We have chosen to work with the coalition for this project. We are excited to be working closely with you to apply positive psychology tools and concepts to your unique challenges and opportunities and hope our efforts will help the coalition continue to flourish. We are gathering learning and insights from all of the coalition's stakeholders and would appreciate your completing the following short survey. We hope this will take no longer than 15 minutes of your time. Please note that your responses will remain anonymous unless you choose to identify yourself at the end of the survey. We will aggregate your survey responses and incorporate them into our final report to the coalition. Thank you, in advance, for your participation.

-- Owen Harrison, Sydney Kastner, Anna Lucas, and Joel Treisman

* Response Required

1. What motivated you to join the CAC? *
2. What is your personal connection to the work of diversity and inclusion? *

CAC Mission and Vision

Mission: To promote, encourage, share and sustain cultural awareness throughout Midland;

Vision: An Inclusive Community.

3. How does the mission of the CAC relate to and/or support that of your organizational purpose? If you are not part of an organization, how does the CAC mission relate to your own values and purpose? *
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how aligned would you say your organization's mission and vision are with that of CAC? *
5. What is one goal you have for the coalition within the Midland Community? What is the first step toward accomplishing it? *
6. What are the internal and external roadblocks/frustrations you've experienced while pursuing the goal stated above? *
7. What words would you use to describe the coalition's strengths? Please include as many as you need in order to paint a good picture for us. *
8. If you could develop or transform CAC in any way, what 3 things would you do to heighten its vitality and overall health? *
9. What is your proudest moment as a Coalition member? Please tell us about it! *

Additional Information About You

10. Would you like your responses to be attributed? *
11. How long have you been a member of the coalition? *
12. If you would like us to contact you for further information, please provide your name and email address in the box below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey!

Appendix B: Word Clouds and Graphs of Survey Responses

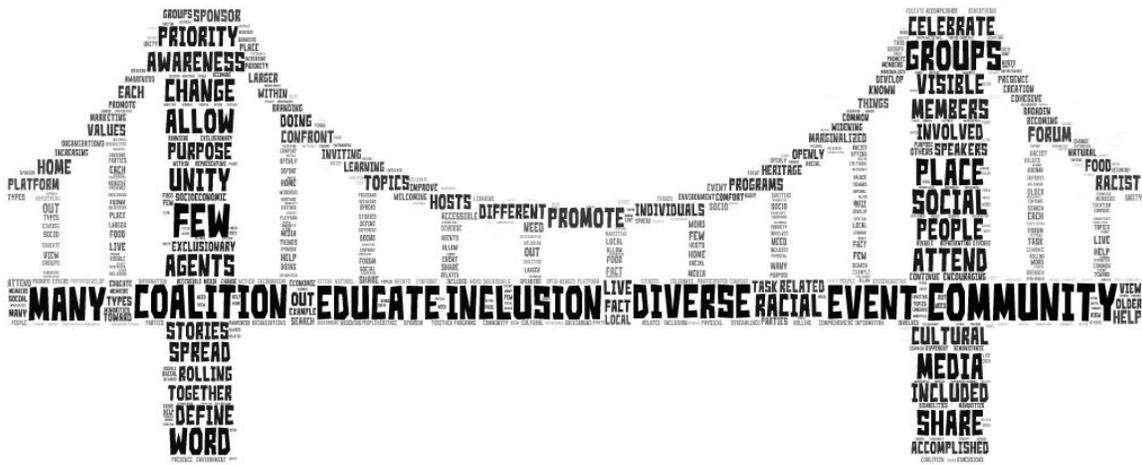


Figure B1. Word Cloud: Goals



Figure B2. Word Cloud: Strengths

How long have you been a member of the coalition?

18 responses

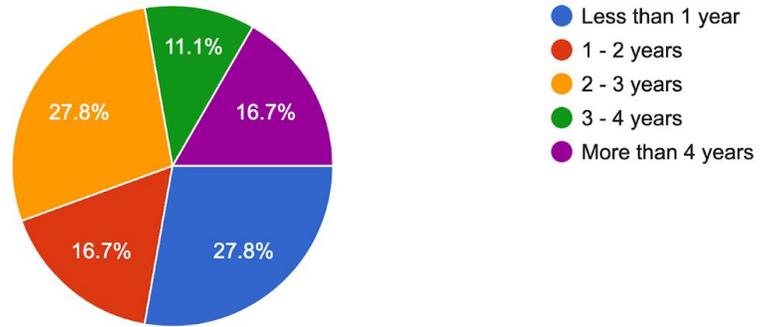


Figure B5. Respondent Coalition Membership Tenure

Appendix C: Appreciative Inquiry 5-D Process

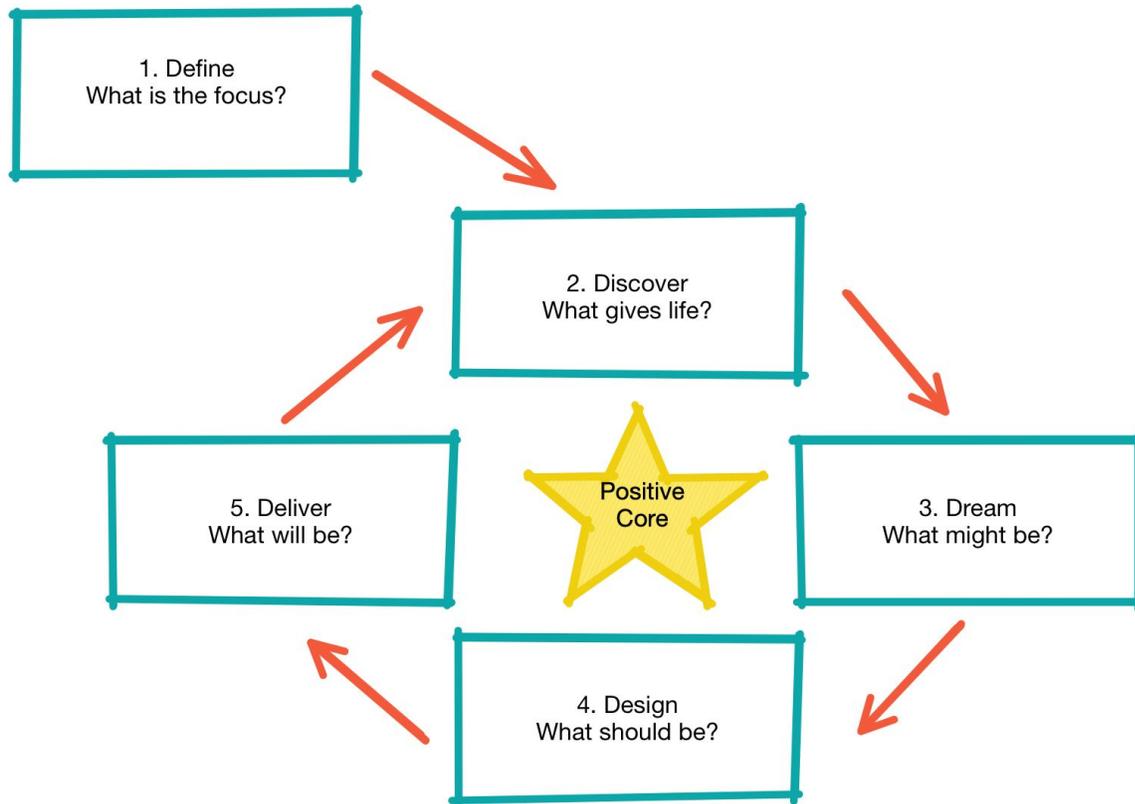


Figure C1. Adapted from AI Commons. (n.d.). 5-D cycle of appreciative inquiry. Retrieved from <https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/learn/appreciative-inquiry-introduction/5-d-cycle-appreciative-inquiry/>

Appendix D: Discovery

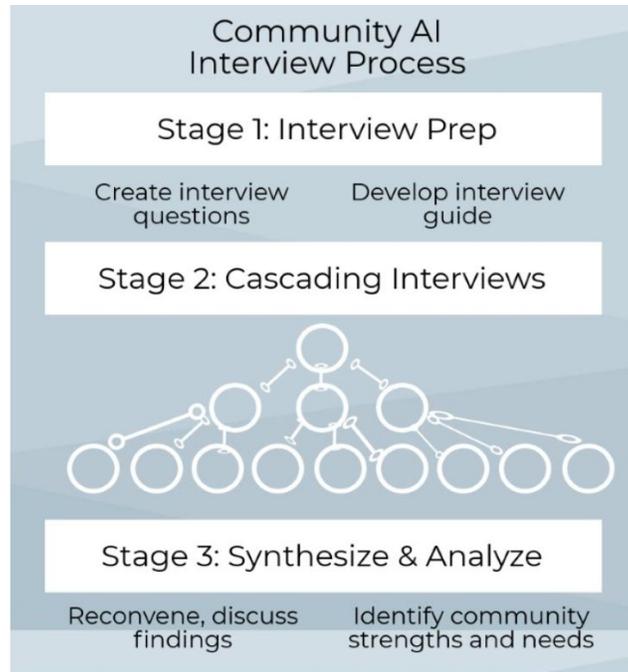


Figure D1. Community Interview Process: Cascading Interviews

The above figure is an example of what the AI interview process could look like for the CAC. Adapted from work done by the founder of Appreciative Inquiry, David Cooperrider (Cooperrider, 2008; D. Cooperrider, personal communication, January 12, 2019).

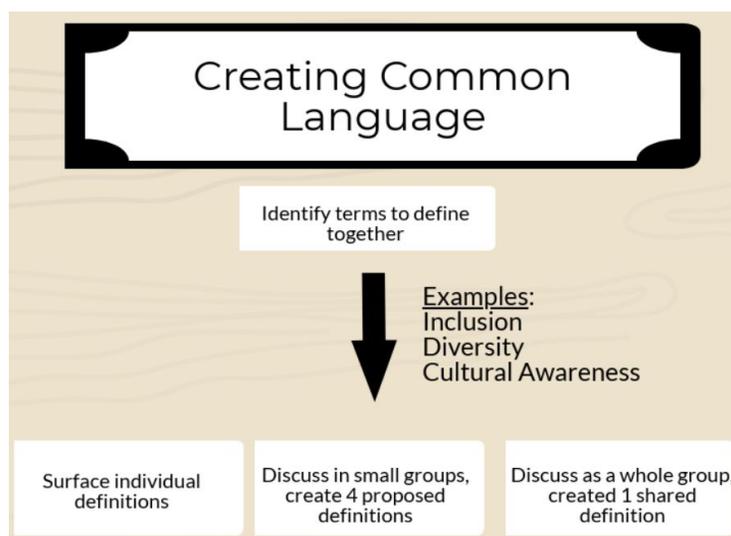


Figure D2. Common Language Session

Session Directions:

Set Up Instructions: Distribute sticky flip charts, post-it notes, and markers around the room. Participants should be seated in groups.

Roles:

Facilitator (CAC member or outside facilitator): ensures each person is heard and that the whole group stays on task, keeps time of small group sessions

Recorder: writes on the flip chart(s) to take notes

Attendees: All CAC members, participate and offer ideas

Anticipated Timing: 3.5 hours

Supplies: Large post-it note flip charts, regular post-it notes, sharpies, computer or smartphone to find trusted definitions.

Purpose: Align on language the CAC can use to further inclusion within the Midland community.

Activities:

Timing	Activity	How?
10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opening: Why might it be helpful to have shared language? 	Small groups, whole group share
10 min	<p>Create a list of words the group wants to define starting with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inclusion ● Diversity ● Cultural awareness <p>Decide if these words feel most important for the group and what other words do, too. Total of 4 words to address today.</p>	<p>Small groups- brainstorm terms</p> <p>Whole group- create one list of everyone's words, vote on which 5 to focus on this session</p>
30 min	<p>Define first term</p> <p>Small groups work to define the term then share their definitions on chart paper for the whole group [while groups do this, facilitator uses phone to find reputable</p>	<p>Small groups- define term</p> <p>Whole Group- small groups share definitions</p> <p>Whole Group- decide</p>

	<p>source definition to share with the whole group] Every group shares their definitions and the facilitator tracks consistencies and discrepancies</p> <p>Someone proposes suggested definition that incorporates all voices, the whole group gives feedback</p> <p>Emerge with one, shared definition that is written and displayed in the front of the room</p>	<p>how to combine them</p>
30 min	<p>Repeat with second term</p>	<p>Small groups- define term Whole Group- small groups share definitions Whole Group- decide how to combine them</p>
<p>15 minute break with playful cues on display as optional activities</p>		
30 min	<p>Repeat with third term</p>	<p>Repeat with third term</p>
30 min	<p>Repeat with fourth term</p>	<p>Repeat with fourth term</p>
<p>15 minute break with playful cues on display as optional activities</p>		
45 min	<p>Introduction to psychological capital and safety: facilitator distributes handouts with information about psychological capital and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Small groups read information on their own and answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elaborate on a time when you did not feel psychologically safe (even if you previously didn't know the term to name it). What did that feel like? How could you change the situation so others do not feel it in the future? ● Whole group share to surface themes ● Small groups generate ideas for how to ensure psychological safety is at the core of the CAC and how to address when it's not ● Whole group share to surface themes ● Facilitator guides the group in creating a plan to prioritize psychological safety 	<p>Small groups: discuss examples of when psychological safety has felt important to you Whole group: share responses Small groups: create plan to ensure psychological safety within this body and how we will address when it is not upheld</p>

Appendix E: Dream - Asking the Questions

Set Up Instructions: Distribute sticky flip charts, post-it notes, and markers around the room. Select a discussion leader, recorder, and timekeeper for each group.

Roles:

Discussion leader: ensures each person is heard and that the group stays on task

Recorder: writes on the flip chart(s) to take notes

Timekeeper: gives time checks to ensure that the assignment is completed in the allotted time

Anticipated Timing: 1 hour

Supplies: Large post-it note flip charts, regular post-it notes, sharpies

Purpose: To surface questions individuals would like to answer together and begin the process of exploring answers.

Activities:

- Invite group to contribute bold questions to explore together. For example: “Who are we?” “Who do we want to be?”
 - The recorder will add one question per flip chart around the room so the questions are prominently displayed.
- Once the group has identified key questions, individuals are invited to sit at their table and write a personal idea and vision on post-it notes corresponding to each of the questions. Once they have written a note for each question, they are encouraged to walk around the room and place them on the posters.
- After the group has completed adding their personal reflections and suggestions, the discussion leader will gather the group back together individuals will select one or two questions they want to flesh out further. Then the large group will split into small groups for deeper discussion. Each group should discuss their question, synthesis the feedback and their thoughts, and creatively present their findings to the whole group.

Appendix F: Dream - Creating the Vision

Adapted from Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros (2008).

Set Up Instructions: Break into small groups focused on opportunities that arose in the discovery phase, then select a discussion leader, recorder, and timekeeper for each group.

Roles:

Discussion leader: ensures each person is heard and that the group stays on task

Recorder: writes on the flip chart(s) to take notes

Timekeeper: gives time checks to ensure that the assignment is completed in the allotted time

Anticipated Timing: 1 hour

Supplies: Large post-it note flip charts, regular post-it notes, sharpies

Purpose: To identify and define the future you want to pursue and create.

Activities:

- Imagine it is three years from now. Visualize the CAC from the vantage point of the opportunity you have selected. What does it look like? What is happening?
 - Then take a step back and explore the following:
 - How did this come about? What did you do to make this happen?
 - What are the things that support this vision? Is it leadership, structures, training, procedures, etc.?
 - What makes this vision exciting to you?
- Next, capture this vision in a three-year aspiration statement on a flip-chart page: “By 2023, what we most aspire to do in terms of (chosen opportunity area) is...”
 - Use vivid language
 - Be positive
 - Be bold and provocative. Make your statement a stretch that will attract others.
- Finally, reveal your aspiration statement to the group in a creative 5-minute portrayal as if the vision existed now. Use as many group members as possible in the presentation. Have fun!
 - *Examples include: a tv news report, song or poem, skit, day in the life, interview, etc.*

Appendix G: Goal Hierarchy Models



Figure G1. Goal Hierarchy

Adapted from Grit (Duckworth, 2016, p. 62).

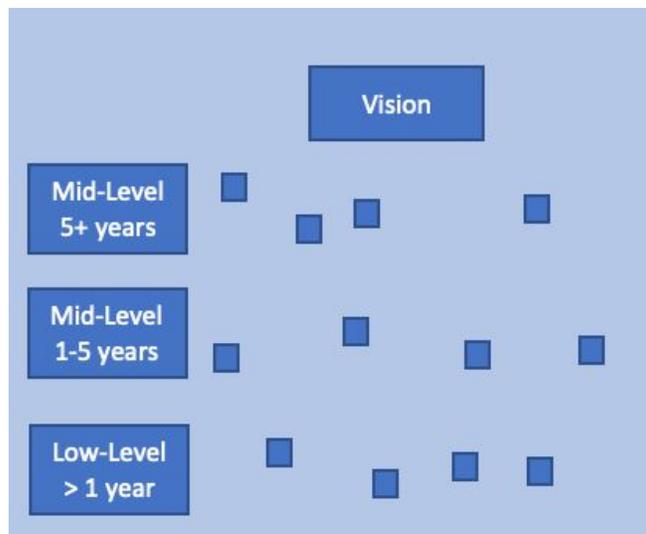


Figure G2. Goal Time-frame

Appendix H: Sample Metrics and Measurement Approaches for Desired Outcomes

Desired Outcome	Sample Metrics/Measures	Measurement Approach
Broaden reach within the Midland community by including an expanded body of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Midland business, non-profit, educational, governmental, religious, and other organizations represented in CAC Reach and frequency of recruiting and communications efforts within target market demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative surveys Interviews Focus groups
Establish a common language through shared definitions and CAC discussions.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures of agreement/alignment among CAC stakeholders regarding key definitions, terms, articulation of strategies and goals Measures of participation in dialogue(s) to find common ground on language and definitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations and documentation by outside consultants Self-reports Interviews Qualitative surveys Tools to measure board member psychological capital and psychological safety
Draft a compelling and achievable mission and vision for the future of the CAC itself, as distinct from the CAC's vision for the future of Midland County as a whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and execution of one or more AI summit(s) led by professional facilitator(s) Creation/publication of strategic plan template, timetables, and implementation milestones, desired outcomes, and deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting/fundraising to allow for hiring outside consultant(s) Hiring outside consultant(s) to lead and manage mission/vision/strategy development Interviews/qualitative surveys to determine stakeholder alignment and agreement on mission/vision
Identify and prioritize specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bounded objectives in the form of a goal hierarchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and documentation of SMART goals together with implementation plans specifying when, who, how tasks will be completed, by whom and requiring what resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of funding plan, timeline and accountabilities for AI summit Hiring outside AI facilitator(s) Deadlines and progress-tracking tools Time- and resource-tracking tools
Create a strengths-based strategic plan to guide CAC programs and growth for the next three-to-five years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication and dissemination of a three-to-five-year CAC Strategic Plan, including accountabilities, timing, resource/funding requirements, desired and impact within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timetables for creation and staffing of committees/task forces to lead execution Budget allocation/funding for planning process Qualitative surveys, interviews, tracking tools