



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

Anticipation Dialogues

- network dialogues in uncertain situations

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Have you ever experienced something like this:

You

- ✓ know or have a hunch that there are **other professionals** somehow connected with the situation you are working with
- ✓ anticipate that things are **not going in the direction you'd wish they were going**
- ✓ would welcome **more resources of help** and **better collaboration** between the various players
- ✓ feel that you are somehow **in the dark** of what is going on
- ✓ feel that what others do **affects what you can achieve**
- ✓ would welcome more **control of the overall situation**



Multi-agency situations = late modern complexity

Modernization (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994): The relationships between the individual and society change profoundly. (Obs: psychotherapy is part of this reformulation of such relationships)

Modernization (Luhmann, 1986): Societal diversification into systems and sub-systems... and sub-sub--sub systems. (Think of all the professions around families with problems...)

Late/post-/reflexive... modern: Everything echoes back. Intended and unintended consequences of actions. (Think of global warming.) Confidence in expert systems erodes.

Evan Imber-Black (1988) : In stead of "multi-problem families/clients" we should talk about **multi-agency families/clients**. Talk about "multi-problem families/clients" is stigmatising - and the focus is off course. Let's talk about the consequences of fragmentation - and try do something about THAT!

Late modern dilemma: The more you try to solve the fragmentation problem the old way (via specialization) the more you create fragmentation.

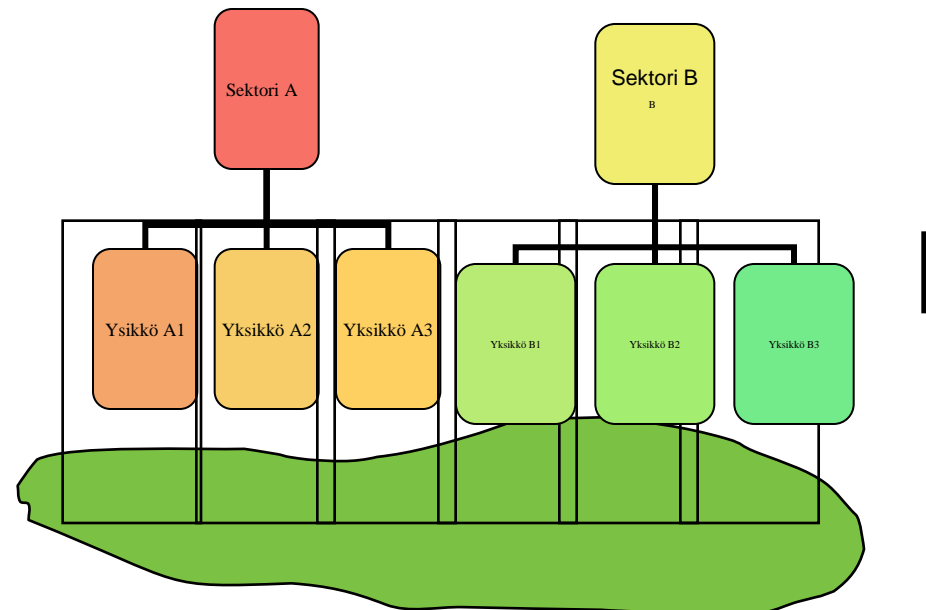


Dialogues as the 'art of boundary crossing':

It is necessary to cross boundaries horizontally and vertically

- ✓ across sectors, agencies and professions
- ✓ towards clients and their personal networks
- ✓ across hierarchical levels of management
- ✓ between public, private and 3rd sector players

***Bureaucracies are sectorised,
everyday life is not***



Generating dialogue in uncertain situations is challenging

- When worries rise, also temptation to regain control by controlling others rises.
- One wishes to control how others think and act
- Network meetings readily turn into "battle grounds" of definition and obligation
- *Professionals may find a common strategy between them and then try to "sell" it to clients*



Have you ever attended network meetings where:

- ✓ at some manifest level, the discussion is about the client and his/her problem, and at some other level there is a **competition going on over who is competent to define the case;**
- ✓ the parties **try to define the common problem**—the problem common for all—as if from a bird's-eye view, and you somehow can't express your own subjective view, nor can anyone else;
- ✓ co-operation is welcomed warmly while participants **try to avoid committing themselves to joint activity;**
- ✓ the professional helpers' **interaction curiously resembles** the interaction the same professionals encounter in their client relationships?



Initiating an Anticipation Dialogue

Initiated by someone who wants to lessen her/his worries

S/he discusses the idea with the family: *I would welcome a network meeting in order to lessen my worries* via getting a better view of the whole and planning co-operation

The professional summons professionals and family member summons private network members

Only those persons that the family wants to be present are invited

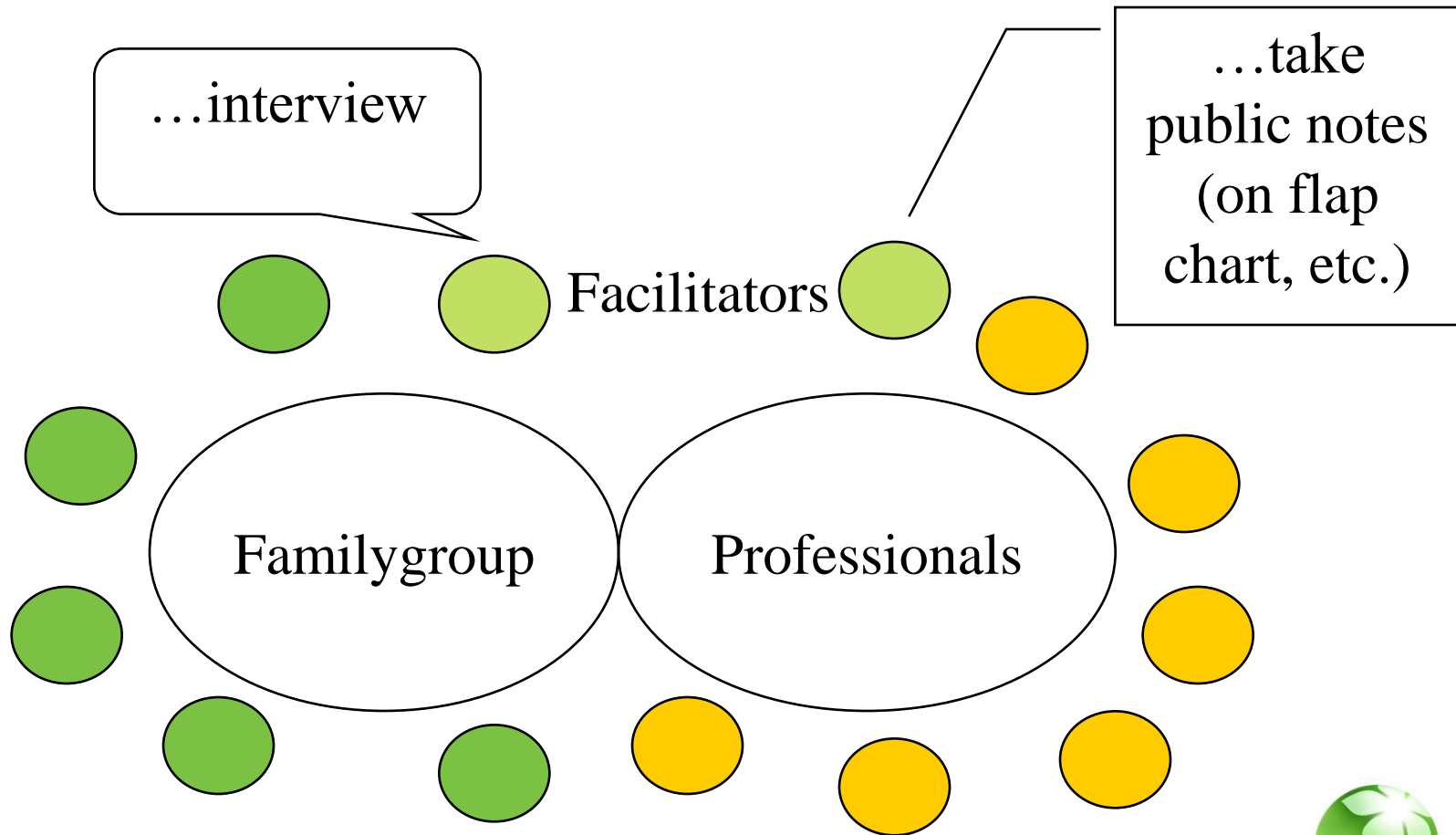
Neutral facilitators are invited through network coordinator. (Neutral= not involved in the case, neutral enough in the eyes of the family)

Facilitators are trained to *only ask questions and take public notes*. They do not give advice, they do not take charge of the "case".

(Facilitators come from the various walks of professional life: from day care teachers to social workers, from doctors to family therapists)



Anticipation Dialogues; Recalling the future with families/Future dialogues



Facilitators' questions

To the family group:

1. A year has passed and things are quite well. How are they for you? (What are you especially happy about?)
2. What did you do to bring about this positive development - and who helped you and how?
3. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?

To the professionals:

1. As you heard, things are quite well in the family. What did you do to support the good development - and who helped you and how?
2. What made you worried "a year ago" and what lessened your worries?



The meetings take 2,5 to 3 hours

- Before closing, participants "return" from the future and discuss co-operation & make a plan
- The next step(s) are crucial and need to be planned concretely: **who does what with whom next**
- A follow-up meeting is agreed upon - if found necessary. (Follow up supports commitment of each party)
- Immediate feed-back for research is gathered at the very end of the meeting
- Evaluation/research data is gathered at the end of meetings & follow up-meetings

(Our follow-up data so far is more or less "laudatory")



The generative idea:

- The necessary people - the voices to be heard - meet face to face
- Talking and listening are separated
- Neutral network facilitators ask a set of simple but thought-evoking questions
- Everyday life (vs. professional actions) in the centre
- The present is approached from a good (near) future: **Future dialogues/Recalling the Future -method**
- Good future is thought of as thinkable and in polyphony
- Coordination is sought at the level of concrete actions, not ideological definitions



"Countless" applications...

by making use of the three core questions in seeking coordinated activity

...project planning, strategic planning...

For example:

- ✓ planning activity that enhances well-being at a school (pupils, parents, teachers in dialogue...),
- ✓ planning projects (clients, professionals from all the necessary sectors, management...)
- ✓ planning organisation or city strategy...



At the heart of dialogism (at least)

listening and being heard, enhanced by:

- ✓ space, reflective structures; delaying comments, separating talking and listening
- ✓ responsiveness towards the Ever Unknown Other
- ✓ following and 'echoing' the client's themes and language
- ✓ talking in the first person (vs. "representing the general view")
- ✓ open sentences inviting responses (vs. finite utterances)
- ✓ concentrating on the hear-and-now (vs. conducting the dialogue)

In dialogue, one attempts to foster possibilities for developing joint understanding



Jaakko's and Tom's network-dialogue book is available in English, Swedish, German, Norwegian, Danish and Finnish

