



## **Appreciative Inquiry**

# **Dream Phase**

## **Visualizing a Positive Future for You and Your Organization**

Training Workbook

## About RAFT

RAFT supports organizations and advocates to cultivate human-centered workspaces through foundational wellness practices, resources, and training to build resilience and promote a healthier gender-based violence advocacy ecosystem.

## Appreciative Inquiry Process

This is the third phase of your organization's Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process.

Last workshop, during the Discovery phase, you interviewed a colleague to learn more about their best experiences at work. From this interview you worked with your colleagues to identify common themes from the interviews that revealed what brings life to your organization, and what you would like to experience more of at work.

During the Dream phase you and your group will discuss what you would like your organization to look like in the future, then generate a creative expression of that future image, and share this vision.

These future images will be used in the Design phase and Deliver phase to create an action plan to bring the future images of your organization to life.



## Dream Phase Objectives

This 2-hour workshop will support your organization in using the themes from the stories shared in the Discovery phase to create future images of your organization that will be used to pull your organization in the direction of positive change.

During the Dream phase you will:

- Review the collected themes from the Discovery phase (and add new ones if you discover some)
- Discuss the ideal image of your organization in the future
- Generate a creative vision of your organization in the future
- Share these images and descriptions with the group
- Take these images and share them with your organization in preparation for the Design phase

## Table of Contents

1. Discovery Phase Themes
2. Dream Phase Introduction and Discussion
3. Creating Your Dream Image
4. Observing Dream Image Presentations
5. From Dreaming to Designing

During the Discovery phase interviews the following themes were discovered about what is working in your organization and what brings life to the work you are doing. Similar themes have been gathered together into groups.

Appreciative Topic/Question:

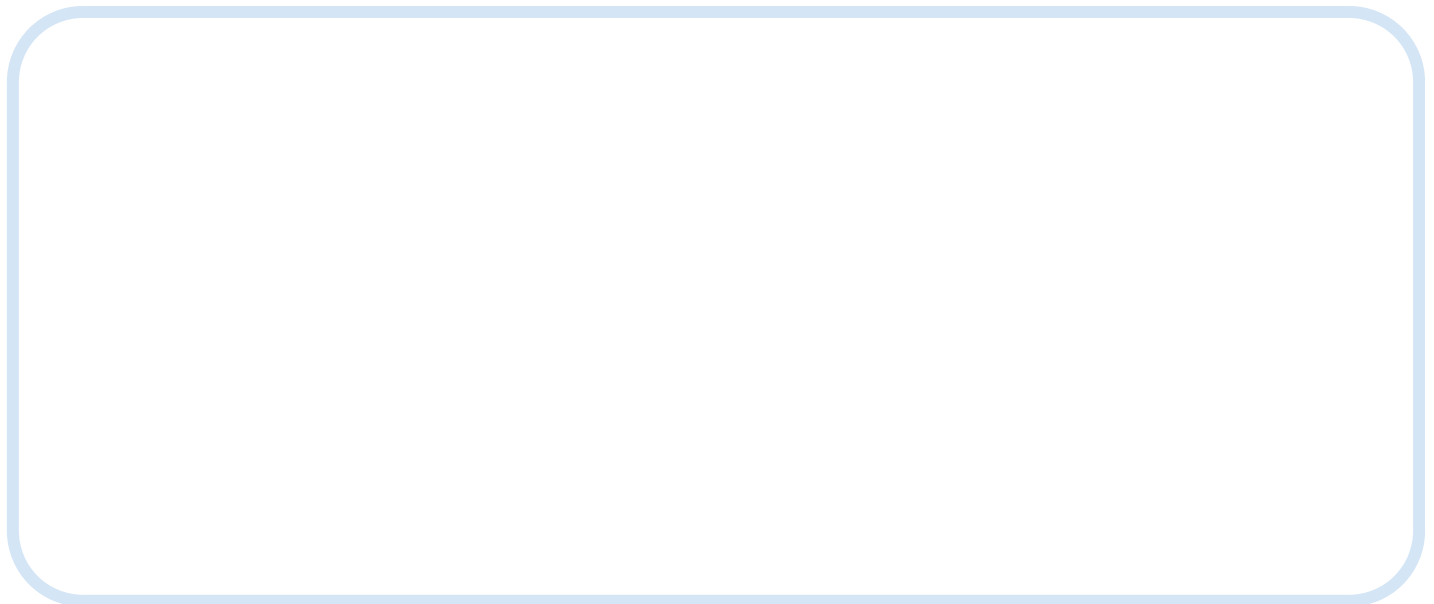
## **Compassion in Camaraderie: Leading with Care, Growing in Unity**

Organizational Themes:

1. Honesty, trust, open communication, talking with each other.
2. Empowerment, fluidity, flexibility, in the moment
3. Commitment, determination, dedication, dependable, patience
4. Strong community, support in multiple ways, teamwork, unity, team you can count on
5. Inclusive leadership, planning reduces stress
6. Empathy, care for others, helping clients, you are perfect just the way you are
7. Space to: share feelings, get support, make others feel good/healthy
8. Anything can happen, no regrets

**Look over your organization's themes and write out the themes that stand out as most important to you. Write a brief explanation, or story beside each theme that explains why it is so important to you.**

(You can pick an entire group of themes or pick individual themes from the groups.)



Appreciative inquiry believes that imagined images of the future guide our present-day actions, and the direction organizations take. However, AI also knows that you cannot simply manifest dreams, so in later sessions we will use the dream images to plan out the actions you and your organization can take to make them a reality.

When discussing your ideal organization in the future make your statements and create images as if all the changes you want to see are already true, and you are already experiencing the dream image of your organization. For example:

Instead of saying: “I hope leadership will be more transparent with decisions.”

Say: “Leadership is being transparent and sharing how they make decisions.”

Instead of saying: “Our organization will have the funding we need to increase wages.”

Say: “One of the best parts of my job is the full funding the organization receives, and the living wage I am paid.”

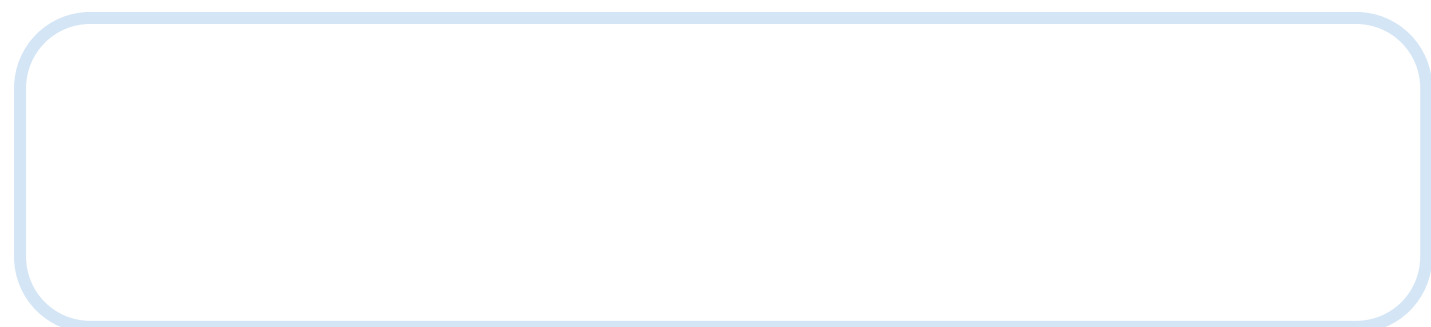
## Dream Phase Discussion

When discussing the ideal future image of your organization in the dream phase:

- Imagine the best possible version of your organization
- Build on the positive themes uncovered in the discovery phase and share any new positive themes that you discover
- Aim high and be bold with your dreams and dream images
- Use stories and examples to paint the image of what the organization looks like in the future
- Remember: talk in the present tense as if you are in the future and the dream has already become a reality.

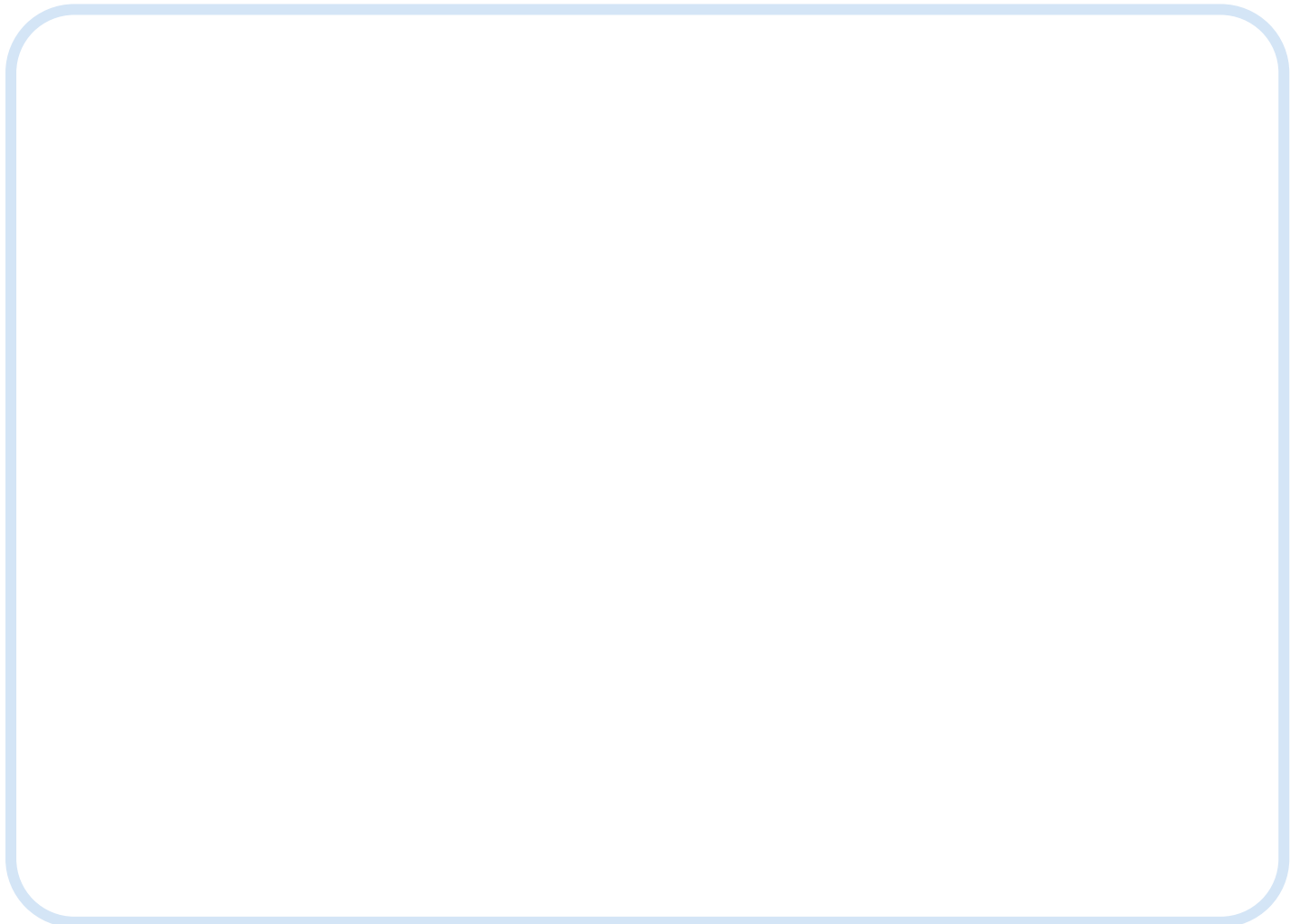
**With as much detail as possible discuss/write out your response to the following statement and questions:**

**Imagine it is Monday, January 4th, 2027, and you are starting your work for the day. What does working at your organization look like? Why are you excited to be starting a new workday, in a new year at your organization? What positive changes have occurred since the end of 2025?**



If it helps you imagine your ideal organization in the future, you can also discuss/write out your answers to some of the following questions:

- How does leadership look different in your work and organization?
- What has changed for the better since 2025?
- Describe your interactions with your colleagues.
- Describe your interactions with leadership.
- What does your schedule look like?
- What systems are in place that make your organization a great place to work?
- What is the atmosphere in your organization?
- What activities are you doing during your ideal workday?
- What do clients say about your organization?
- What are other stakeholders saying about your organization?
- How are your family and friends talking about your work and organization?



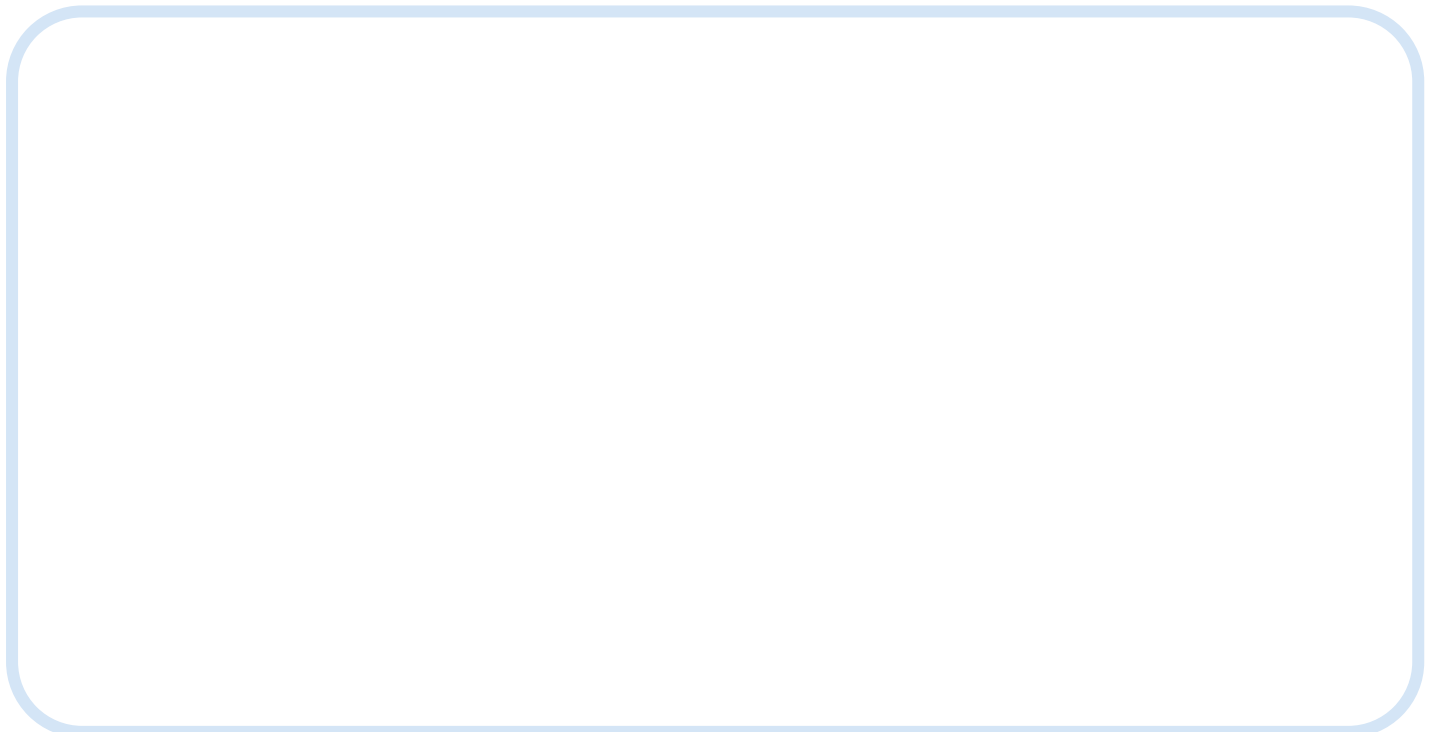
Now that you have created a description of what your organization will look like in the future, it is helpful to generate a creative expression of that future description. This could be:

- A drawing that represents the future organization
- If you have craft materials create a physical representation of your image
- Online images to create a collage that represents the future organization
- Write a poem
- Compose a song
- Write a skit about a staffroom discussion around the new changes
- Write a press release about the positive changes in your organization
- Write an aspiration statement: “By 2027 what we most desire to in our organization is....”

**If it is helpful to you and your group, you can use this more detailed example to guide your creativity:**

**It is 2027 and your organization has just won an award as the outstanding anti-violence organization of the year. Write out a script for a news segment reporting on this award.**

- **What does the reporter say about your organization as the award is given out?**
- **What do clients tell the reporter when interviewed?**
- **What do staff members tell the reporter when interviewed?**
- **What does the reporter highlight as the reasons your organization is winning the award?**



# Observing Dream Image Presentations

While you watch other groups present their creative dream images use the following page to take notes on what excites you, and what you would like to see more of in your future organization. Write down ideas you have for opportunities and actions your organization can take.

Things I like in the future dream images:

**Elements of the images I find the most exciting and I would like to see more of**

**Opportunities and possibilities for action**



Now that you have created your own vision for the future of your organization, and seen other groups share their visions it is time to start preparing for the Design Phase of appreciative inquiry.

Here are some ideas for how you and your organization can keep the discussion about the future of your organization alive before we gather again for the Design Phase:

- Share the notes from your dream discussions and dream images with colleagues who couldn't attend today's workshop.
- Gather people's observation notes from the dream image presentations and compile all of the ideas in those notes.
- Share dream images during staff meetings and give time for further discussion.
- Post dream images in your staff room and allow people to add ideas and desires they have for your future organization.
- Send an email out to your whole organization sharing the dream discussions and images.
- Start brainstorming about projects and actions you and your colleagues can take to make your dream image a reality (then share these ideas with others). We will talk more about what to do with these ideas in the design phase.
- Use this workbook to support colleagues who couldn't attend this workshop to complete their own dream discussions and images.

Appreciative inquiry research shows that what you talk about and what you focus on supports you in creating the future you desire. By continuing to discuss the positive themes you discovered in the discovery phase, and sharing your dream images you can help your organization continue to move forward towards a positive future.

The more conversations you can have, and the more ideas you can think of, the more we will have to work with in the upcoming Design Phase. See you there!