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# **COLLABORATING** **ON** **COLLABORATION**

Using Appreciative Inquiry to Jointly Build the  
Future of Stakeholder Engagement

# What are we talking about today?

- **LEARN ABOUT PROMINENT EVALUATION THEORISTS' STRATEGIES**

Patton, Preskill, Fetterman, King, Cousins, Mertens, Greene, Stake

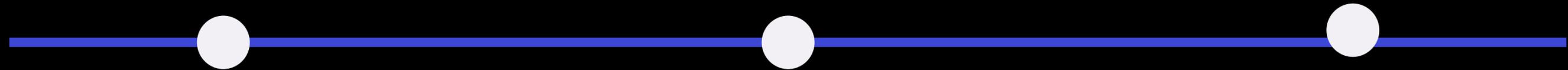
- **COLLECTIVELY PAVE A PATH TO THE FUTURE OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- **DISCUSS EXPERIENCES, METHODS, AND PRACTICES**

That best prepare us to address these key issues in an Appreciative Inquiry manner

- **HANDOUT!**

# INTRODUCE YOURSELF!



NAME

Who are you?

EVAL WORK

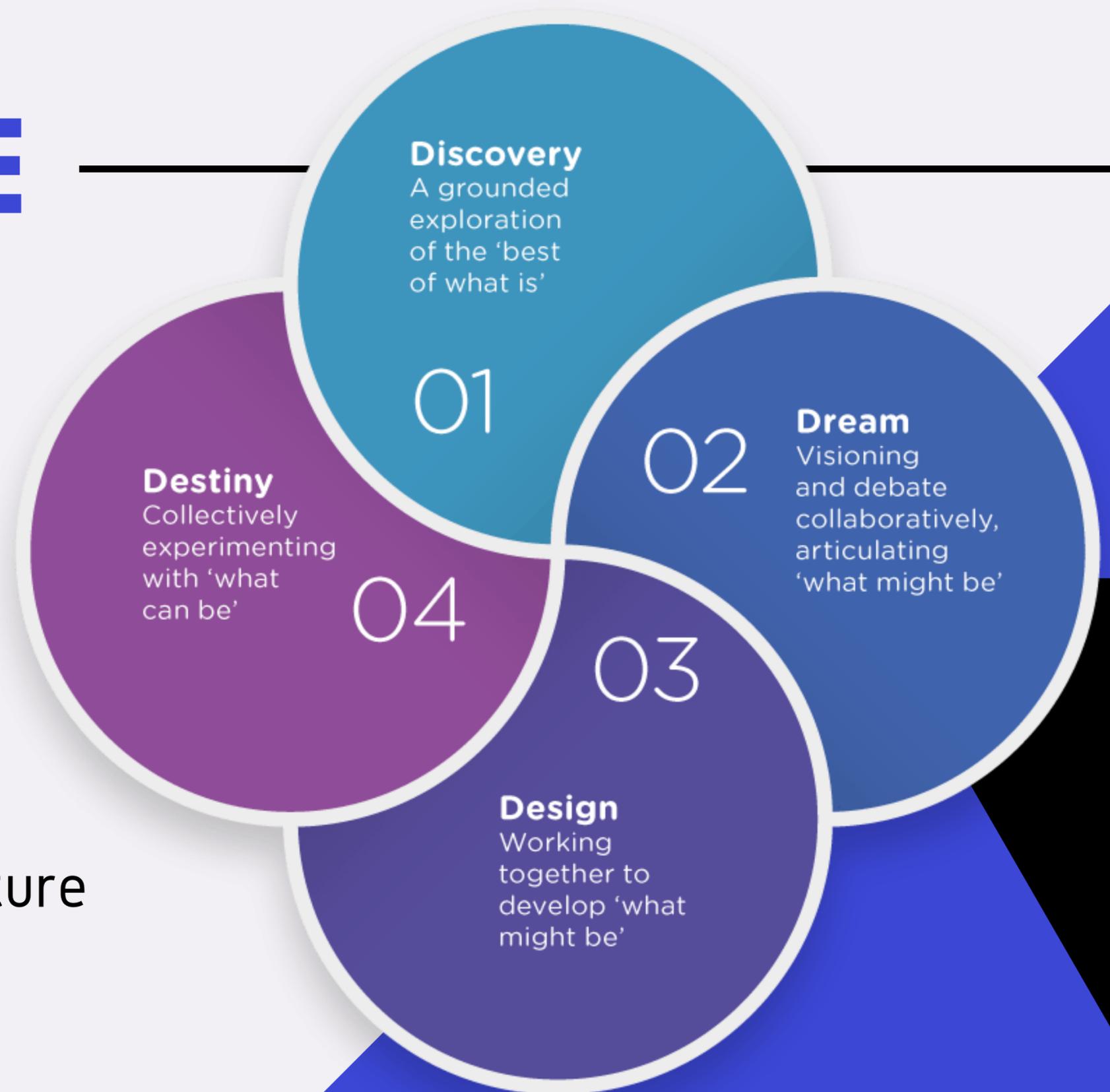
In what context/sector do you typically work?

TODAY'S SESSION

What prompted you to come to this session?

# APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY FRAMEWORK

Focuses on recognizing what has succeeded rather than focusing on problem areas - identifying how future successes can be achieved

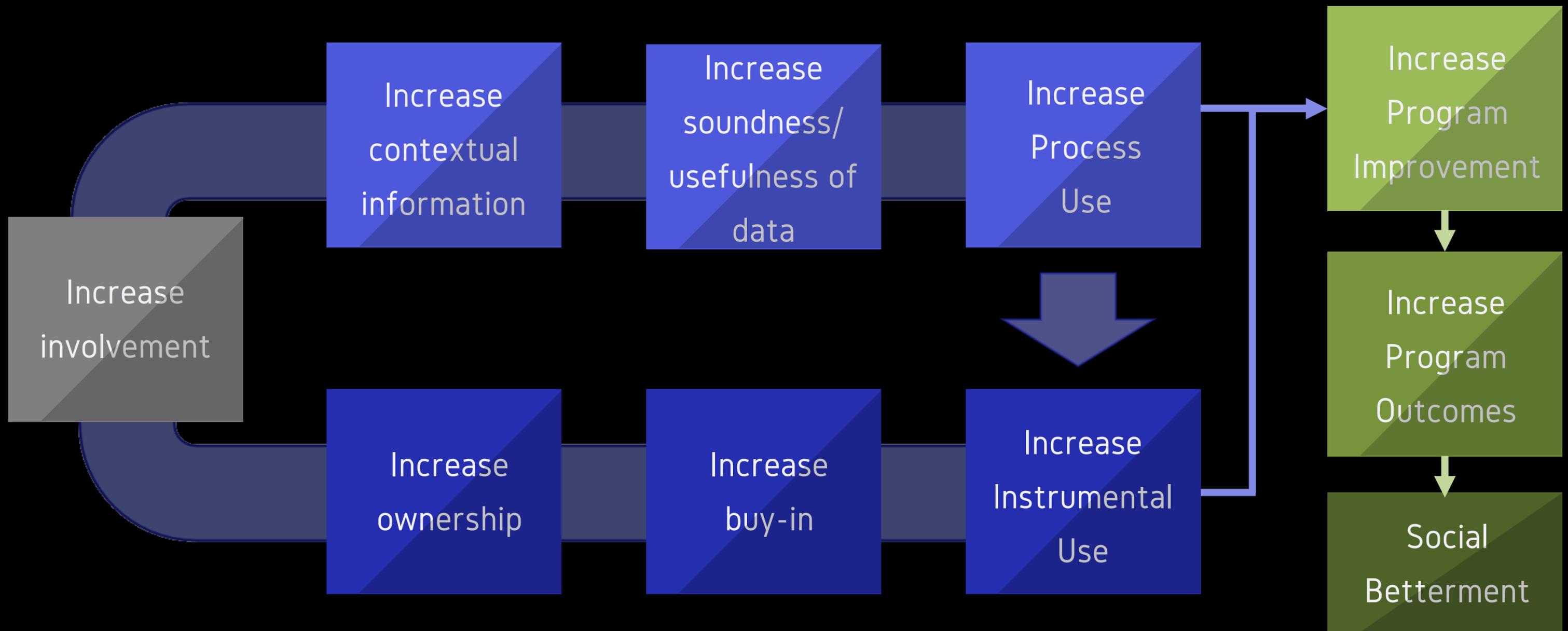




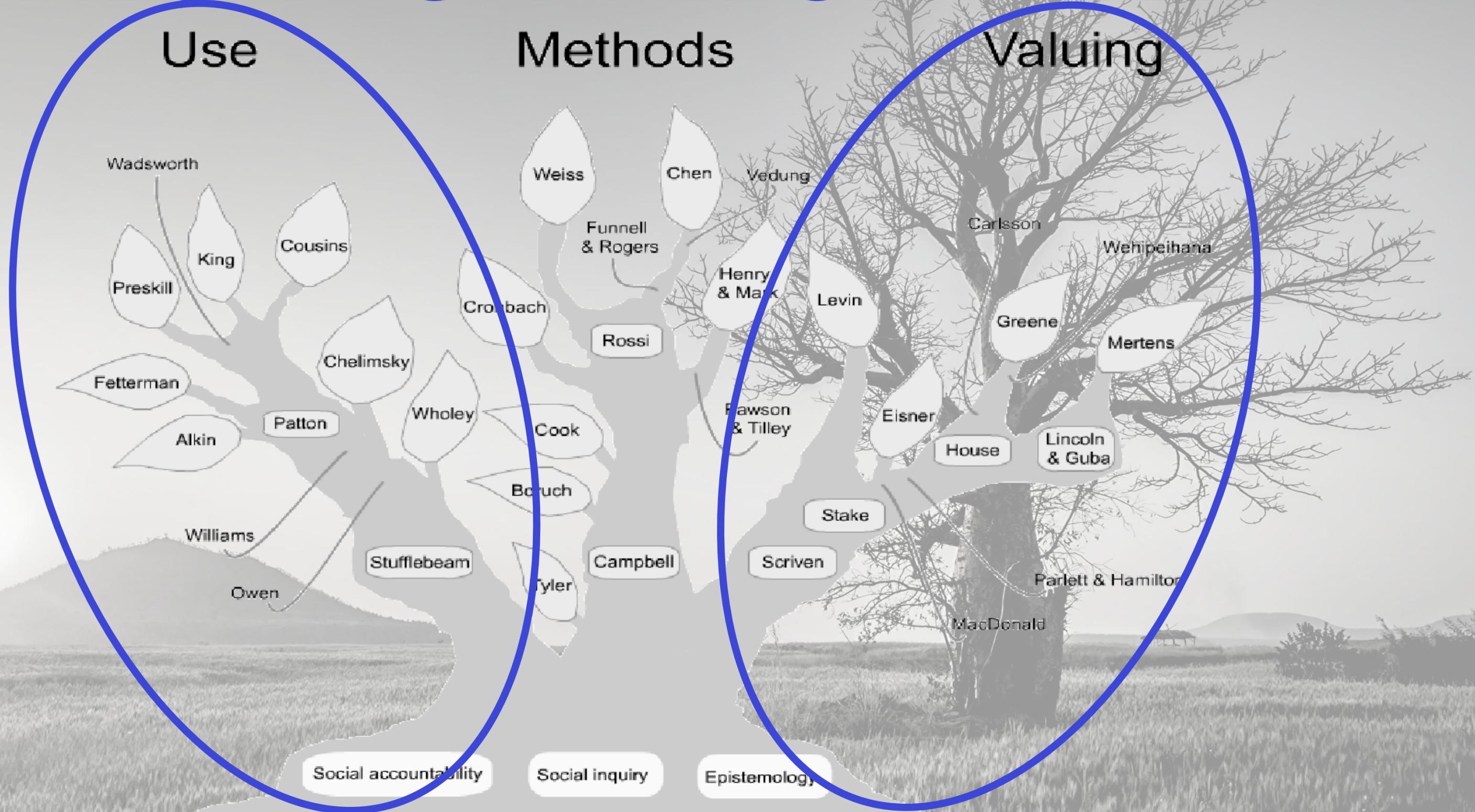
# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS?

WHY DO YOU ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE THIS IN OUR PRACTICE?

# WHAT DOES EVALUATION THEORY HAVE TO SAY?



# EVALUATION THEORY TREE



# TIPS AND TRICKS FOR ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS FROM EVAL THEORY



BRAD COUSINS

Practical  
Participatory  
Evaluation

JEAN KING

Interactive  
Evaluation  
Practice

MICHAEL Q.  
PATTON

Utilization focused  
evaluation

DONNA  
MERTENS

Transformative  
Evaluation

JENNIFER  
GREENE

Values-engaged  
approach



# **SHED YOUR PERSONAL AGENDA AND PRIOR PREFERENCES**

STRATEGY 1



**START  
CREATING A  
PLAN OF  
ENGAGEMENT  
FROM THE VERY  
BEGINNING**

STRATEGY 2

**GET THEM ON  
BOARD  
THROUGH  
SHARED GOALS  
AND A WARM  
DEMEANOR**

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STRATEGY 3





**KEEP THEM ON  
BOARD BY  
BUILDING TRUST  
AND MUTUAL  
RESPECT THROUGH  
RESPONSIVENESS**

STRATEGY 4

# **WORKING GROUPS AS A TOOL TO SUSTAIN ENGAGEMENT AND TAP INTO STAKEHOLDERS' INTRINSIC MOTIVATION**



STRATEGY 5

# INCORPORATING EVALUATION TRAINING TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGAGEMENT

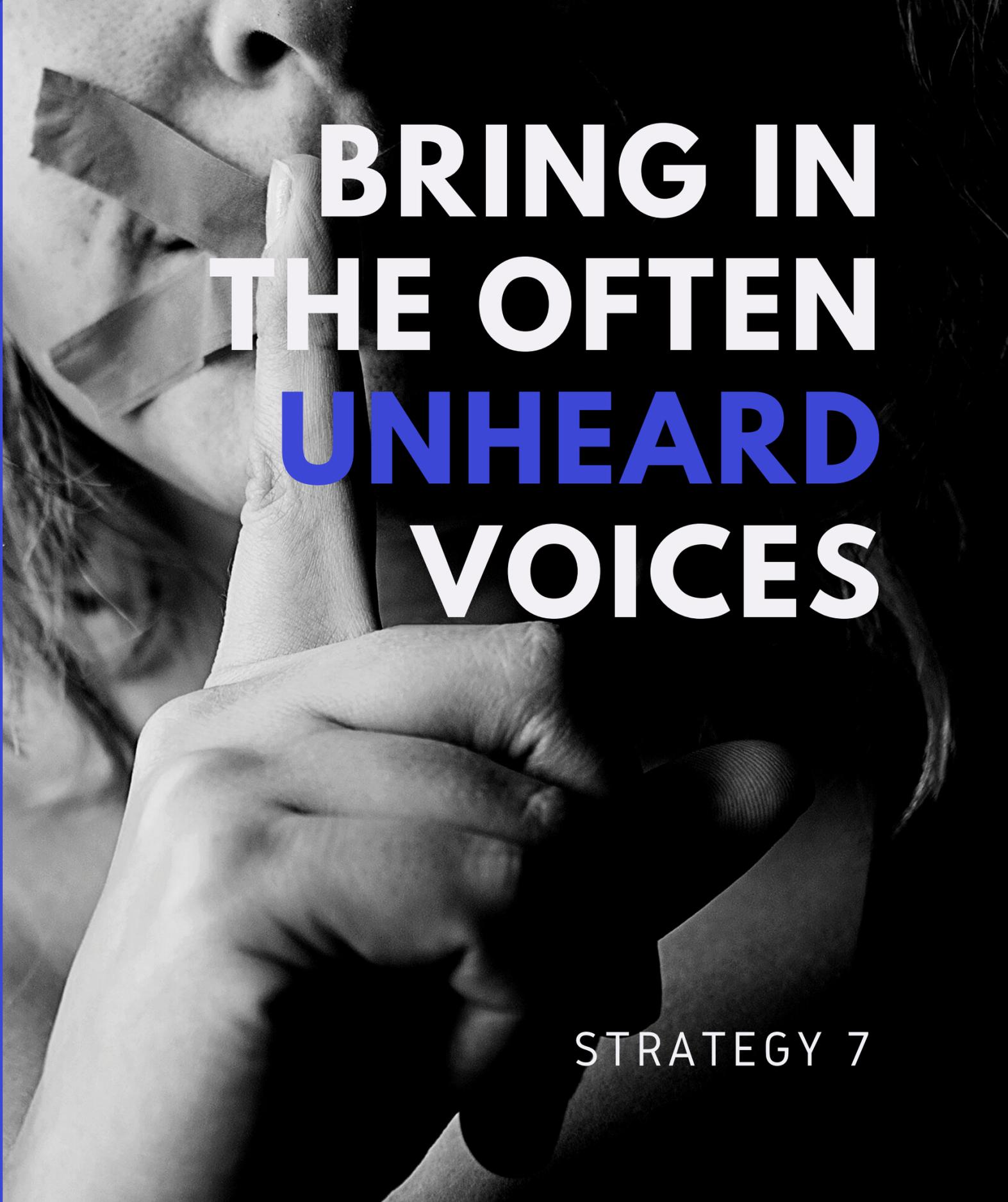
STRATEGY 6

MARGINALIZED VOICES

DEVALUED ROLES

QUIETER STAKEHOLDERS

NAYSAYERS



**BRING IN  
THE OFTEN  
UNHEARD  
VOICES**

STRATEGY 7

Anytime you start a new evaluation, ask yourself these questions

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# *Ask the Right Questions*

## WHO?

Who is essential to engage to create buy-in and enhance collaboration (considering both power dynamics and including a range of voices)?

## HOW?

How do we engage stakeholders in a way that is culturally competent, inclusive, and collaborative, while remaining objective and unbiased?

## WHAT?

What drives stakeholders to want to collaborate and how do we capitalize on these mechanisms in other situations?

## WHEN?

When (if ever) is it more beneficial to engage specific stakeholders in certain stages or aspects of the evaluation but not others?

# Time for some discussion!

Pick a question, chat with your group for about 10 minutes, and then we'll share out.

## COLLABORATING ON COLLABORATION

### CHOOSE AND DISCUSS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WITH YOUR GROUP

#### HOW DO YOU ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN A TIMELY MANNER?

Timely both for the evaluator and for the client.

*Evaluator:* Whenever you have multiple people working on something, it will take more time to get it done. How do you stay on the evaluation timeline while still ensuring avid stakeholder engagement?

*Client:* Clients are extremely busy all the time. They already have so much on their plates - how do we engage them in a way that is respectful of their time?

#### WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR VALUE SYSTEM DOESN'T ALIGN WITH YOUR STAKEHOLDERS'?

You and your stakeholders aren't always on the same page. Sometimes this can be a difficult field to navigate when you have avid engagement from the stakeholders. An unaligned value system can be in terms of moral values, work values, etc.

#### WHEN YOU HAVE CONFLICTING OPINIONS, HOW DO YOU RESOLVE WHICH TO MOVE FORWARD WITH?

Conflicting opinions among stakeholders or between the stakeholders and the evaluator.

*Among:* stakeholders may have differing opinions about what the goals of the program are, what the evaluation should be looking at, what credible evidence is, etc. This becomes especially important when power dynamics become an issue.

*Between:* stakeholders may have different thoughts on what may be credible evidence (especially based on our methodological training).

**HOW DO YOU  
ENGAGE  
STAKEHOLDERS IN  
A **TIMELY**  
MANNER?**

**WHAT DO YOU DO  
WHEN YOUR  
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**WHEN YOU HAVE  
CONFLICTING  
OPINIONS, HOW  
DO YOU RESOLVE  
WHICH TO MOVE  
FORWARD WITH?**

**WHAT'S WORKED  
FOR YOU IN YOUR  
PAST  
EVALUATIONS?**

**HOW CAN APPRECIATIVE  
INQUIRY BE A TOOL THAT  
WE USE IN OUR OWN  
PRACTICE TO ENHANCE  
OUR STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT?**

**WHAT ISSUES ARE  
YOU CURRENTLY  
FACING REGARDING  
ENGAGING  
STAKEHOLDERS?**

# THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING!

[tinyurl.com/aea19collaboration](https://tinyurl.com/aea19collaboration)

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## Collaborating on Collaboration

Stakeholder engagement is abundant in evaluation. Each new evaluation brings about the questions of who to engage, when to engage, and how to engage. Along with these questions come contextual concerns like how to engage all relevant stakeholders in a culturally competent way while dealing with the complicated nature of power dynamics, maintaining objectivity, including underrepresented voices, etc. This session at the American Evaluation Association Conference used an appreciative inquiry framework to tackle these questions. While there were plenty of brilliant things discussed by attendees, this handout has some of the nuts and bolts from the evaluation literature on how best to engage stakeholders.

### IN THIS HANDOUT...

Strategies for engaging stakeholders from evaluation theory

Specific activities for engaging stakeholders in different stages of the evaluation

Specific skills evaluators need to be competent at engaging stakeholders



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(Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Greene, 2012; King, 2012; Mertens, 2007; Stake, 2003; Patton, 2012; Preskill, 2012)

# HANDOUT

# Please Participate!

Validate a tool to measure  
AEA Competencies

Take the Survey: [tinyurl.com/aeasurvey19](https://tinyurl.com/aeasurvey19)

Sign-up for Later: [tinyurl.com/aealater](https://tinyurl.com/aealater)

Email = Raffle entry!

Win a Signed Book or Amazon Gift card!

Provide your e-mail to take our survey and you will be entered to win

About the Survey: You will be asked to reflect on your evaluation skills based on the **official AEA competencies**. This survey will be used to validate a tool to measure the competencies.

How to Participate: Volunteer to complete online Qualtrics survey now or later.

- Survey Link: <https://tinyurl.com/aeasurvey19>
- Sign up for Later: <https://tinyurl.com/aealater>

**Raffle:** By taking the survey or signing up to take it later, you could win **one** of the following **17** prizes:

- (1) Signed copy of *Blue Marble Evaluation book* by Michael Quinn Patton (4 available)
- (2) Signed copy of *The Future of Evaluation in Society: A Tribute to Michael Scriven* edited by Stewart Donaldson (3 available)
- (3) Signed copy of *Evaluation for an Equitable Society* edited by Stewart Donaldson and Robert Picciotto (3 available)
- (4) Signed copy of *Credible and Actionable Evidence* edited by Stewart Donaldson, Christina Christie, and Melvin Mark (2 available)
- (5) One \$10 Amazon Gift Cards (5 available)

**Eligibility:** Conduct evaluation work in the United States or a member of AEA. Must be 18+ years of age.



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