

The crowbar exercise

The crowbar exercise can free a team of a dominant negative view of a person they are trying to help.

The negative view may be due to many factors. But a deep understanding of these factors doesn't necessarily contribute to a loosening of the grip this perspective is holding on the team.

The aim of the exercise is to tap into other stories than the one that is dominating.

The crowbar exercise has two phases.

Phase 1:

The team (or part of it) discusses each of the following questions.

One member takes on the role of secretary and writes up the responses to each question.

- What does ... like?
- Who is important for ...? (Including persons who are no longer alive)
- For whom is ... important?
- What does ... enjoy doing?
- What does ... find important?
- What did ... used to do that ...
 - was good at, could
 - liked doing,
 - thought was important,
 - ...
- What do some people appreciate about ...?
- What does ... dream about?
- What did ... used to dream about?
- What memories does ... cherish? What are some of ...'s most precious memories?
- What are some of ...'s hopes?
- What are some of ...'s secret hopes and dreams?
- What is special about ...?
- What would people around ... easily forget but is special about ...?
- What material things are important to ...?
- Why does ... attach importance to these things?
- What would an interested documentary or filmmaker about ...?
- What would appeal to a writer or interested in the biography of ...?

Phase 2:

(When many questions remain unanswered, the team discusses how they can engage with the person and / or persons in the life of the person around these questions.)

Now the team will produce a letter on the person.

In that letter they integrate the answers to the above questions: eg "You are someone who ... ";
"We know you as ... "; "We know that ..."

Consider seriously giving this letter to the person.

This is an act of touching, tapping into and circulating multiple and preferred storylines.

Writing the letter is essential, even if you decide you do not want to actually give it to the person.

When the letter is written, someone reads it to the whole team.

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