

Diagnosis

In the diagnosis step the organization is doing two things:

1. Gathering information
2. Engaging in an analysis of the organization's situation, opportunities, problems, etc. A target might be to identify the current situation, the desired situation and the forces involved.

A. Gathering Information

1. **Methods of Data Collection**

- Interviews (group or individuals)
- Survey/Questionnaire
- Observing/Sensing/Intuitive "hunches"

2. **Use of a Model or Conceptual Framework**

Using a "lens" to gather information gives us a way to organize the information and identify patterns and issues quickly. A model might be used in the method of data collection or used to discern patterns from a more open-ended data collection process. It is important to fully understand the model being used and, to the extent that the model is normative, to be comfortable with the model's values and assumptions.

3. **Useful Information**

We are seeking information that can be used in the development of the organization. So, the information we gather needs to be:

- something the organization can use to effect change
- able to be shared openly; "confidential" information is rarely useful
- related to an area you are willing to make changes in, i.e., don't ask for information you are not going to be willing to act on.

B. Analysis

1. **Use Models and Conceptual Frameworks**

Using models allows us to see a broader, more integrated picture. It may be helpful to use several models in developing your "hunches", "wonderments" and hypotheses.

2. **Explore Options**

Investigate the process/opportunities/problems. Avoid jumping to solutions. Create several approaches or possible solutions.

3. **Stance**

There are a few mental/emotional stances you need to take

- Participant/observer or Anthropologist
- Servant
- Loving critic of the organization (not unloving critic or uncritical lover)

4. Attention to the Dynamics

Assess issues such as:

- How open is the organization to its own information?
- How open are leaders/participants to hearing each other's information?
- How open are they to information about external forces?
- How open are clients with the consultant (if any)?

C. Building the Organization's Capacity

Diagnosis is in itself an intervention in the organization's life. How it is done can help the overall process or set it back. Three actions that help people's sense of commitment, skill and knowledge are:

- Publicly sharing the information you receive.
- Teaching conceptual models you are using in the analysis.
- Inviting people to join in shaping the information gathering and analysis process.

D. "Let the Data Speak"

Diagnosis involves data gathering; the interpretation of the information, and the identifying of developmental projects, strategic visions, goals, problems to solve, etc. The commitment of people in the organization to the change effort is critical for success. Is the data compelling? Will it motivate people? Diagnostic feedback is intended to increase readiness for strategic change and incremental improvement.

