



## Linking Systems of Care Coordinator Toolkit

### Listening to Create a Thinking Environment

Based on the work of Nancy Kline, [www.timetothink.com](http://www.timetothink.com)

“The quality of everything we do depends on the quality of the *thinking* we do first. The quality of our thinking depends on the *way we treat each other* while we are thinking.”

Here are some of the key components of an environment that supports thinking.

- Attention
  - Listen with palpable respect
  - Listen without interruption
  
- Equality
  - Treat the other as a thinking peer
  - Keep agreements and boundaries
  
- Ease
  - Offer freedom from internal rush or urgency
  
- Appreciation
  - Offer genuine acknowledgement of the other’s qualities
  - Practice a 5:1 ratio of appreciation to criticism
  
- Feelings
  - Allow sufficient emotional release to restore thinking
  
- Diversity
  - Welcome divergent thinking and diverse group identities
  
- Place
  - Create a physical space that says to people “You matter”

## **Framing Open-Ended Questions**

Framing questions that will really engage people means finding a link between their lived experience and the meaning they make of it, and your project's process and information needs.

Early on, your questions may be open-ended and experience-based:

- What are some of the best things about X?
- What's your experience with X?
- What matters most to you when you think about X?

Later in the project, your questions may focus on specific options:

- What's right about this option? What's risky about it? What else comes to mind?
- If this was the next step, what would you advise?
- Thinking about the people who would be affected, what's important to consider?
- Who else could shed light on this?

Near the end of the project, your questions will focus on implementation:

- Imagine it's a year into this change and it's working well. What's happening? And what happened that made the change so smooth?
- Who will be testing the change? When/how often should we check with them?



## **Your Questions, Your Listening**

You may have an engagement format and a particular method you are considering using for this phase of engagement. Use this worksheet to plan the questions you'll use. Make additional notes regarding how you intend to listen, to create a thinking environment.

**PROJECT:**

**PHASE:**

**STAKEHOLDERS:**

**ENGAGEMENT FORMAT / METHOD:**

**QUESTIONS:**

**LISTENING REMINDERS:**