
COLLABORATING FOR KNOWLEDGE (for a change)

Roz Diane Lasker, M.D.

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CHANGING VIEWS ABOUT COLLABORATION

- Collaborating with the enemy
 - Unnatural act perpetrated by unconsenting adults
 - Collaborate or die!
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WHY COLLABORATE?

- What does collaboration enable us to accomplish?
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COLLABORATION IS ‘DAMN TOUGH’

- Collaboration is much harder than working on your own
 - Is it worth the extra effort?
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THE UNIQUE ADVANTAGE OF COLLABORATION: *SYNERGY*

- **What synergy is:** The ability of a group of people/organizations to do more together than they can on their own
 - **How synergy is achieved:** Through a collaborative process that enables diverse participants to combine their complementary knowledge, skills, and resources
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MANIFESTATIONS OF SYNERGY

- ***Actions*** that go beyond the capacity of any single person, discipline, organization, or sector
 - ***Breakthroughs in thinking*** that come from looking at issues from different perspectives
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SYNERGY IN PRACTICE

- Synergy in action is much more common than synergy in thinking
 - **Distinguishing feature:** the ideas and knowledge on which the group's actions are based
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MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Groups can achieve more from their efforts when...

- Collaborative thinking drives collaborative actions
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NEED FOR COMPLEMENTARY SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

- Limitations of our professional frame of reference
 - Unjustified assumptions
 - We don't know what we don't know
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THE EXAMPLE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- The public is the *object* of concern, but strategies and plans are being developed *without* incorporating the public's knowledge.
 - Is that a problem?
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REDEFINING READINESS

- Looking at emergency preparedness through the eyes of the public
 - Research and local demonstrations
 - www.redefiningreadiness.net
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REDEFINING READINESS **EMERGENCIES**

- Smallpox outbreak
 - Dirty bomb explosion
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EXPERT PLANS WON'T WORK

- **Smallpox outbreak:** only 43% of Americans would go to a public vaccination site
 - **Dirty bomb explosion:** only 59% would stay inside the building they are in
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THE EMERGENCY IS *NOT* THE ONLY RISK PEOPLE FACE

- Going to a public vaccination site is very dangerous for 50 million Americans at risk from the smallpox vaccine
 - Under current conditions, sheltering in place can be dangerous for the people inside and for others who depend on them
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PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES *CREATE* UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS

- Under current conditions, many people see no way to protect themselves and the other people, animals, and things they care about because the strategy designed to protect them from the emergency exposes them or their family members to other serious and previously unrecognized dangers.
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A FUNDAMENTAL FLAW IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Planners are developing instructions for people to follow *without* finding out whether it is actually possible for them to do so or whether the instructions are even the most protective action for certain groups of people to take.
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PLANNERS NEED THE PUBLIC'S KNOWLEDGE

- Without hearing from the public directly, planners can't possibly be aware of the barriers and risks that make it difficult for people to protect themselves.
 - Lacking this knowledge, they are inadvertently developing instructions that aren't feasible or safe for many people to follow.
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CONSEQUENCES OF PREPARING WITHOUT THE PUBLIC'S KNOWLEDGE

- In 2004, the *Redefining Readiness* study predicted that large numbers of people would suffer and die unnecessarily if response strategies are not based on what people will actually face when a disaster strikes
 - In 2005, Hurricane Katrina proved that prediction to be correct
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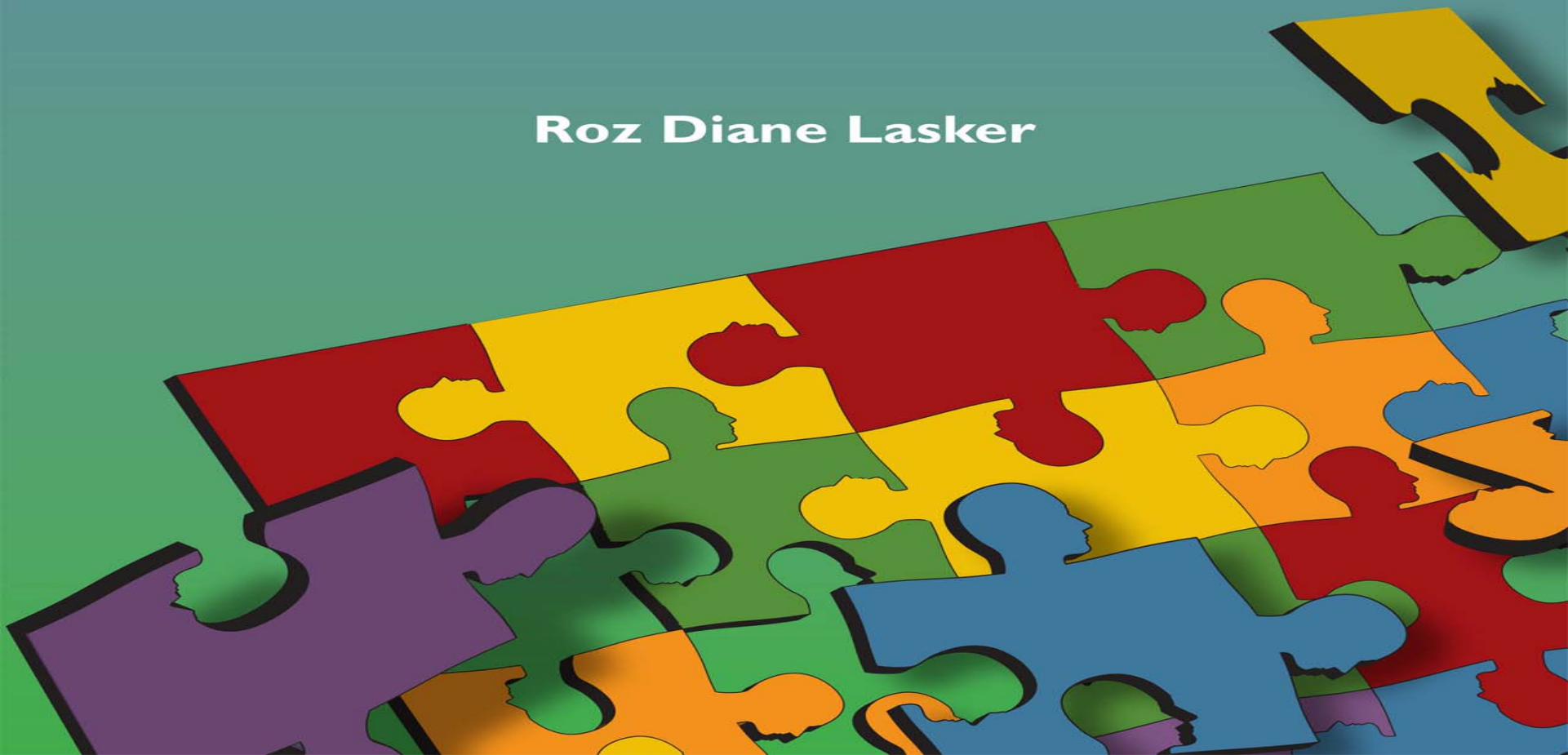
REDEFINING READINESS SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION PROCESS

- Enables “ordinary people” to contribute their essential knowledge
 - Generates products, based on that knowledge, which they and others can use as a sound basis for decisions and actions
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With The Public's Knowledge

A User's Guide to the
Redefining Readiness Small Group Discussion Process

Roz Diane Lasker



WHOSE KNOWLEDGE NEEDS TO BE TAPPED?

- People who are experiencing the problem or who will be affected by the plan, program, or policy that the process is focusing on
 - This is a heterogeneous population, including members of the groups that are likely to be impacted in different ways
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WHAT ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE DO THEY HAVE?

- What they care about and know that no one else knows directly
 - Knowledge, gained from living their lives, which is as essential as academic and technical expertise in identifying, understanding, and addressing the issues they face
 - Knowledge that experts in the field lack and may not even realize is needed
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WHAT ENABLES THEIR KNOWLEDGE TO BE CONTRIBUTED AND USED?

- Optimizing the conditions of participation
 - Asking questions in the participants' frame of reference
 - Eliciting clear and specific ideas
 - Producing an accurate and complete record of their ideas
 - Appreciating the collective body of knowledge in the participants' ideas
 - Sharing this knowledge in useful forms
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OPTIMIZING THE CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- Making sure that everyone who needs to participate in the discussions can actually do so
 - Creating safe, comfortable conditions where the ideas of all participants are valued
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ASKING QUESTIONS IN THEIR FRAME OF REFERENCE

- Focusing on what the participants care about and know that experts don't know
 - Structuring the discussions to make the topic reality-based and concrete
 - Asking simple, open-ended questions that don't constrain what the participants can say
 - Asking questions that don't generate questions on the part of participants and that they can answer without being educated first
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ELICITING CLEAR AND SPECIFIC IDEAS

- Appreciating that people often speak in generalities, assuming that others know what they mean to say
 - Recognizing what an idea needs to clarify and specify in order to be useful
 - Asking follow-up questions that help participants clarify what they are saying without challenging them, correcting them, or giving them ideas
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PRODUCING AN ACCURATE AND COMPLETE RECORD OF IDEAS

- Writing the participants' ideas on flip chart pages that everyone can see
 - Recording exactly what the participants say once they have expressed their ideas as specifically as possible
 - Giving the participants an opportunity to review and correct their written ideas at the end of the discussion
 - Creating an electronic record of each discussion incorporating all of the approved wording
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APPRECIATING THE COLLECTIVE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

- Developing a framework for organizing the participants' ideas that is based on what they actually said rather than on categories set beforehand
 - Compiling and analyzing the discussion records without eliminating or reinterpreting any ideas or losing the specificity with which they were expressed
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SHARING THE COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE IN USEFUL FORMS

Examples from Redefining Readiness:

- What Makes Protection Possible? (illustrated card set)
 - With the Public's Knowledge We Can Make Sheltering in Place Possible (policy report)
 - Shelter-in-Place Issue Sets (tailored for households, work places, schools, and governments)
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THE BOTTOM LINE

- The public's knowledge is often essential in developing plans, programs, and policies that work.
 - The *Redefining Readiness* process enables their knowledge to be contributed and used to address a broad array of issues.
 - How can this knowledge-building, collaborative process strengthen public health in Canada?
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