Empathy Interviews

Goal: To gain a deeper understanding of a user's experience of the issue you are working on.

Norms for Empathy Interviews:
- Seek to understand, not confirm
- Ask once, clearly
- Ask questions that elicit stories and feelings
- PROBE: "Tell me more…" "What was that like for you?"

Prep for Interviews (15 min):
What questions could you ask a student/practitioner/stakeholder to understand their experience of your group's problem/issue, and the factors contributing to it?
- *Question Selection/Brainstorm* (3 min): Individually**,** review the questions below. Adapt these or generate a few questions of your own.
- *Share & Organize* (5-10 min): As a group, identify/organize your top 5-6 questions. Will they help you understand what makes X challenging, or when students experience success (i.e. the root causes you need to address)?
- *Predict & Plan* (3 min): Each person shares one thing they think they will hear. If you are doing the interview with a partner, decide who will interview and who will take notes.

Consider these possible Empathy Interview Questions (ones in bold highly recommended!):
- What is **one word** you would use to describe how you feel about X?
- Tell me about a **time when you felt successful** in X…
  - What happened? What made this a success? (What did you do? What did others do?)
- Tell me about a **time when you X was hard**…
  - What happened? How did that feel? Why was that hard? What do you wish would have happened?
- What advice would you give another student/person about X?
- What advice would you give to me about X?
- What do you wish others knew about X?
- Suppose you could have **three wishes** to make X the best it could be. What would they be, and why?
- What do you wonder about X, or wish you knew?
- Draw me a picture of what you think about when you hear X… (then "Tell me about what you drew.")

Your questions:

Conduct Interviews (20 minutes):
Your notes:

Reflect (5 minutes):
Content: What did we **hear**? What are we learning about the **root causes** that contribute to the issue?
Process: Are there **questions we wish we would have asked**? Are there **questions that were particularly fruitful**? Did we **probe** effectively?