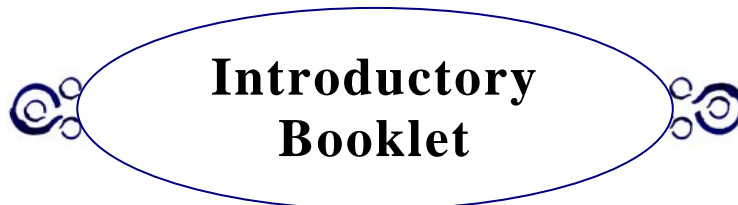




*The Integral Process
For Working On
Complex Issues (TIP) tm*

"...a breath of fresh air for the issues and people who care about them."



**Introductory
Booklet**

By Sara Ross, Ph.D.

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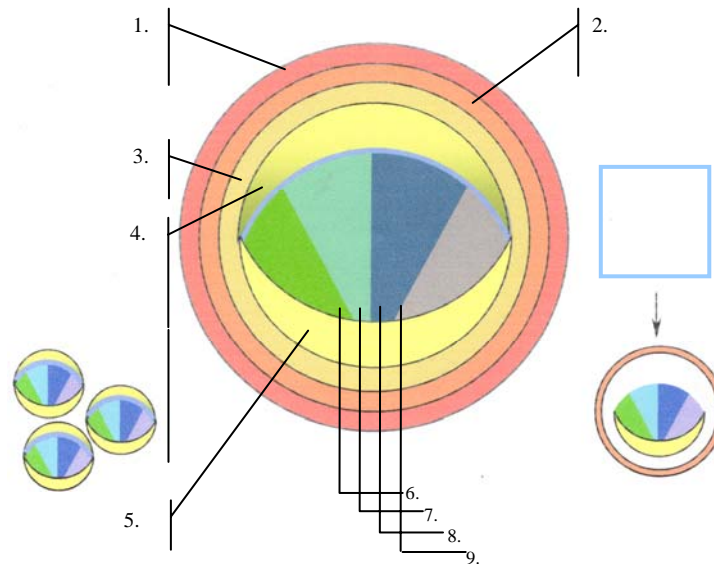
ARINA's mission is to teach, research, and implement practical integral approaches that address complex issues and foster healthy individual and social change and development.



Advantages



TIP is a System for Comprehensive Social Change
that citizens, officials, and public, private, & nonprofit organizations
can learn to use . . . and use over and over for
complex decisions and comprehensive social change



Advantages of TIP's comprehensive system ...

- Provides a coherent yet flexible set of methods
 - from initial issues, complaints, or concerns to implementation and evaluation
 - transportable to any complex decision, issue, or group of issues
 - with modularity where it is needed
- Builds capacities in individuals, groups, communities
 - training in modules can go hand in hand with progressive implementation
 - integrates learning while doing and training the trainers
 - sustains efforts with local ownership without dependence on outsiders
- Makes complexity visible *and* manageable
 - generates transparent products that turn complexity into clear, workable factors
 - so decisions coordinate multiple perspectives and stand up to scrutiny
 - so diverse actors are motivated to participate where needed
- Puts years of research at your service
 - replicable methods equip users with rapid response *and* long-term capability
 - eliminating the need to invent the wheel for different types of issues
 - while tailoring the approaches to local conditions



Introduction



We aim this introductory ‘brochure’ at a broad audience. By doing so, we hope to convey that this process is a basic approach to dealing with the complex questions and issues that people face practically everywhere—whether as individuals, groups, organizations, publicly-funded agencies, governing bodies, or communities. It provides a method that closes the gap between facing complex challenges and meeting them effectively.

The audience for this process may include citizens, officials, social services, organizational managers, consultants, activists, philanthropists, non-profits, board members, foundation program officers, legislators, and others. Regardless of which hats we wear, or where we wear them, we each seem to encounter similar challenges that this process is designed to benefit.

Generically, some of those challenges may sound like:

- What makes this problem so hard to get our arms around?
- How do we get past band-aid solutions for problems that have deeper roots?
- How do we know we are asking the right questions?
- How can we start working together instead of against each other?
- How do we get the “undiscussables” safely out in the open so we can address them?
- Why do decisions that are supposed to solve problems end up creating new ones?
- How do we get everyone heading in the same direction?

More specifically, issues that challenge us to meet them include perennial ones such as poverty, homelessness, uneven education, crime and gang activity, land use decisions, and a host of other social issues. In recent years, equally complex issues have entered mainstream concerns. These include, for example, the tugs and pulls involved in efforts to: transition to more democratic methods of governance; coordinate the environment’s welfare with our stakes in current economic impacts; develop new organizational and government cultures; and navigate many competing interests and values in order to feel secure in today’s world.

These kinds of questions and issues demand complex attention. Decisions on them—and the decisions’ ramifications—are often more complex than they get credit for being. For example, each question above could represent a tip of an iceberg. The iceberg could represent what we call a complex issue.

By their nature, decisions on such issues are complex because (a) they impact the welfare of people and the environment they live, work, and play in, and (b) people who are affected have different perspectives on *whether* anything should be done, *why* something should be done, *what* should be done, and *who* should do it.



The Integral Process For Working On Complex Issues serves those who face such challenges. It includes steps that develop our assumptions and actions so they fit the circumstances and so they get healthier, comprehensive results. Below are a few examples to indicate some of its range of applications.

Some recent examples

○ People were concerned about chronic loiterers on the main street. They feared for their safety and worried about the town's image being tarnished. As they went through the process, they understood the conditions that were behind the loitering. They chose to start with the issue of the dilapidated and unsafe rental properties, and to work on the factors that supported their existence.

○ A consultant customized the process for a school district superintendent and trustees who needed to approach citizens about replacing old school buildings. Instead of making a decision in isolation that could divide the community, she demonstrated how an alternative approach could put information and the range of options into citizens' hands. With such a strategy, citizens could deliberate about the costs of decisions that their taxes would pay for, and at the same time begin adjusting to the loss of the schools that had anchored their sense of community for generations.

○ A group of citizens was weary and concerned about the high levels of mistrust in the community. Citizens were pitted against citizens, and citizens against officials. This ailing culture had endured for many years. The process helped them identify the complicated nature of the problem, and the interconnected factors that kept the problem flourishing. Once they understood those factors, they were able to design some early strategies to begin the long-term process of changing the culture and the habits that supported it—both unofficial and official.

○ Individuals in a group believed they were all “on the same page” about their shared goal. During the process, the trained facilitator helped them notice that each person assumed that the goal would be reached by his or her preferred method. Those methods were very different and contradictory. The group deliberated about the range of ‘tones and intentions’ it could take toward reaching the goal. This enabled people to align in a new way that respected and used what was valuable to each person. They discovered how they could use their diverse preferences and concerns cooperatively while working toward the goal. This likely prevented later conflicts that could have sabotaged their effort. Another benefit was that most of them reported learning something valuable—about themselves, the group, the goal, and their potentials for reaching it.



Instead of 'business as usual'

○ “I’m real excited that there really can be a process for getting into these complex issues, that there’s a process that *recognizes* that things are complex, and it can be done. There’s appreciation that things are complex but they can be divided, and there are lenses that you look through at things and to separate them.” K.M., Ohio

○ “I definitely learned the importance of certain steps in group decision-making on a problem or big problems, the different steps to understand what people think is a problem, to look at those problems and figure out which of those are just surface parts of other problems and looking at where they originate from and who the problem affects.” G.K., Ohio

○ “I have greater appreciation that we go into these things with our own personal definitions about what’s right or wrong. It’s having a better appreciation for how complex some of those issues really are. What I thought was a fairly definable issue was a lot more complex. This process helps sort out that complexity, so there’s an understanding of what the issue really is. The whole approach was an enlightenment; enlightening from the standpoint of different ways to think about it.” S.S., Ohio



In brief, *Who, Why, What, Where & How*



Who

- Any individual, organization, community, etc. with a stake in current and future events, willing to invest in that stake—such as serious questions, issues of concern, decisions and policies, action strategies and their implementation, and the future.
- Groups of any size, where people have:
 - commitment to working on issues and answering difficult questions
 - willingness to work productively with other committed people

Why

- Because diagnoses and solutions based on simpler assumptions of “cause and effect” have failed us
- Because what is really going on is almost always more complex than meets the eye
- Because today’s systemic issues and complex questions— and decisions and actions on them—require more comprehensive, methodical, and sustained attention than they traditionally get
- Because we need to coordinate and to *use* our different perspectives, values, and priorities
- Because we cannot solve problems using the same kind of thinking, approaches, and conflicts that created them

What

- A *different way* to work on complex questions and issues while using what we already do: identifying what is important to us to change, sequencing our priorities, deliberating the pros and cons of possible approaches, decision-making, strategizing, and taking action.
- A *different way* to assure democratic inclusion of all perspectives *and* the systematic use of all perspectives
- Using what we learn, to make a difference
- Crucial steps that prevent the gaps that otherwise sabotage our best efforts



Where

- Wherever complex issues and questions are...
 - In the community
 - In the organization
 - In governing bodies and their committees
- In educational, leadership, and capacity-building programs where people want to learn how to think about and work on complex issues
- Ideally, at each layer or scale of human activity where the issues concern or affect others (e.g., departmental, local, regional, state or province, national, international)

How

The process requires trained facilitator(s) and methods to capture the discussion content. It is customized to a group's needs, objectives, and context, e.g., which steps to include, the amount of time dedicated to them, etc. When a large number of people is involved, the design includes break-out groups, report-backs, and other methods to pool the knowledge and outcomes.

Different levels of participation are possible, depending on the issue, the setting, etc. For example, within one project, it may be appropriate for some people to participate in all the steps, and for some to participate in only some of them.

Scheduling is flexible. It can allow interim time to gather information and digest the work. Sessions can be on different dates, combined as intensives, etc.

A logical sequence of activity characterizes the work, and can be summarized as follows. (The Appendix has more detail about the actual steps, their purposes, and outcomes.)

- In the first several steps, people...
 - Get very clear about the complex nature and array of factors that sustain issues as the challenges they are.
 - Identify the systemic range of actions that make up comprehensive, proactive change efforts.
 - Identify which actions need special attention in order to implement them.



How (continued)

- In the next steps, people...
 - Prepare the decision-making framework(s) for a complex issue or question
 - Deliberate all the pros and cons of possible approaches *from all* perspectives and develop appropriate decisions on that basis.

The complete process represents the entire cycle necessary for ongoing work on complex issues. Its steps help people to implement more effective, inclusive decision-making for complex challenges that are involved throughout such endeavors.

The insights and practical experience that people gain should build capacities for ongoing coordination, action, communications, feedback loops, and reflective evaluations in the midst of action.

Continued next page.



To use it and to learn it



Needs are different in various settings and circumstances. There are several ways we can help you benefit from this process. Our objective is to do what it takes so you have this vital asset “in house” and “at home” where you can use it—or parts of it—whenever you need it.

In certain circumstances, of course, it can seem valuable for outside, neutral parties to facilitate processes, at least initially. We’re here to help you weigh such decisions.

The overall process is made up of steps that produce outcomes to use in next steps. To get the greatest long-term benefit for participants and the issues they care about, we find it advisable to not rush the process.

Below is an array of ways to get this process working for you.

- ARINA-trained facilitators can conduct the process at your location, e.g., in your community or organization.

- ARINA can train people where you are, so you have resident capacities to conduct the process when and where you need to. Approaches include...
 - Training extended over a period of time to include hands-on practicum components
 - Workshop Intensives
 - Distance learning combined with in-person training

When persons with facilitation skills, or potential to develop them, have experienced the process, they may become trained to facilitate it for others. Trained facilitators may take advanced certification training in *Integral Thinking & Praxis for Complex Issues* (required for training the trainers)

Note: Coaching support for this work is included during and after training.



What people say...



“I was hoping you’d give me a magic bullet, and you’d give me a little list that I could do in my sleep and we could solve the world’s problems. I don’t know why I’d think it’d be easy, that’s just naiveté on my part.” K.M., Ohio

“I’d had the tendency to try to make things simpler so they’re easier to deal with. My thinking has changed to accept that sometimes it just needs to be messy and not everything in its place. And for public issues, that’s probably especially true: in order to come to a successful place, that’s necessary to go through. It’s probably not advisable to skirt that, or try to skirt it.” J.K., Ohio

“I very much learned how to get to all of the issues and how they are potentially interconnected. It was a new approach to that. I think we always strive to understand what an issue is, but I think a lot of times we don’t take it far enough, at least I personally probably didn’t take it far enough.” S.S., Ohio

Insights into ‘community’

“It changed my perception of *community*...it includes a lot of different parties coming from different perspectives.” S.S., Ohio

“Now I see that we as a community created this problem in our community, and so it’s our responsibility to fix it, as a community.” B.R., Ohio

“A business is a community in and of itself that has underlying issues. It was a hoped-for new approach to be able to use it in a business environment. I think on some of those tougher issues this could be very helpful, very much so.” S.R., Ohio



New perspectives

“It helped me keep in mind how the tone I take and the intention I have when interacting with people can affect the outcome, apart from what the words are actually saying...that’s been really valuable.” B.B., Ohio

“What did I learn? That I’ve got to quit looking at it like an us vs. them thing, because it’s not an us vs. them, it’s a “we.” We’ve got to do this together. And if I can minimize your responsibility and you can help minimize my responsibility, and we can get a good end result, and get everybody on the same thing, that would be tremendous. We would all be happier, and feel more secure in what we’re doing, and not worrying about having sides or building barriers and walls.” L.S., Ohio

New hope

“There’s hope. There’s a way to do it. Recognizing that it is a complex issue is a huge step forward. It’s not a question of yes or no, or right or wrong, or should we or shouldn’t we, but rather all kinds of pieces underlying it. I think it is invaluable, to just understand that that *is* the situation.” K.M., Ohio

“I got a different way of actually thinking and living. I use it every day in my way of thinking and living. It’s changing me. I’m curious to see where I’ll be in another 20 years. It kind of gave me a little spark to live, because for a long time, I just wanted to give up and die, I just wanted to get out of this world. It actually gave me a reason to live now. So, it’s changed me. It really helped me a lot. And I’m glad for it. Thank you.” L.S., Ohio



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We want to get it working for you.

info@global-arina.org



Background



This process is for addressing “hard to solve” issues and complex questions. While it does provide a relatively quick method to frame that complexity for deliberative decision-making, the overall process is a method to *work with complexity* rather than do quick-fix or technical problem-solving (for which many effective methods already exist). After all, if the issues we face today had been easy to solve, we would have already solved them. Many subjects on today’s agenda are more deeply rooted than “problems”—they are complex questions, and they involve systemic issues.

The book of process materials is generic. This means that it is re-usable, i.e., the process is replicable, for virtually any issues or complex questions that need attention. There are several reasons why the process is usable in such diverse settings and applications. Its developer, Sara Ross, has spent the last 20 years developing both customized and replicable group processes for a range of venues and purposes. She has invested the last 15 years in theoretical and action research and analysis on the nature of systemic issues, complex questions, and decision-making processes. Some of her consistent findings have been that:

1. Complex issues share common, structural features, even when their subjects and the people affected are very different.
2. Decisions generate new problems when they are made as if they did not affect a complex array of people and other factors.
3. The combination of steps in this process helps people understand the complexity of issues so the systemic roots and impacts can be addressed.
4. Complex questions and issues need certain decision-making processes and outcomes—and certain combinations of people involved in them—for efforts to be effective.

For the most part, society just has not known *how* to give systemic issues and complex questions the kind of attention they need. For us to do this, we must first have better methods to understand them. Then we must use a combination of methods that put these crucial understandings to their best, productive use. To do both, we offer *The Integral Process For Working On Complex Issues*.



APPENDIX





Process steps, purposes, and outcomes

The overall process is made up of sequential steps with distinct purposes and outcomes. Even so, which steps are used will depend on the circumstances. The table below lists the full array of steps. Following the table is a graphic overview of the entire process for those who are interested to view it.

Process steps

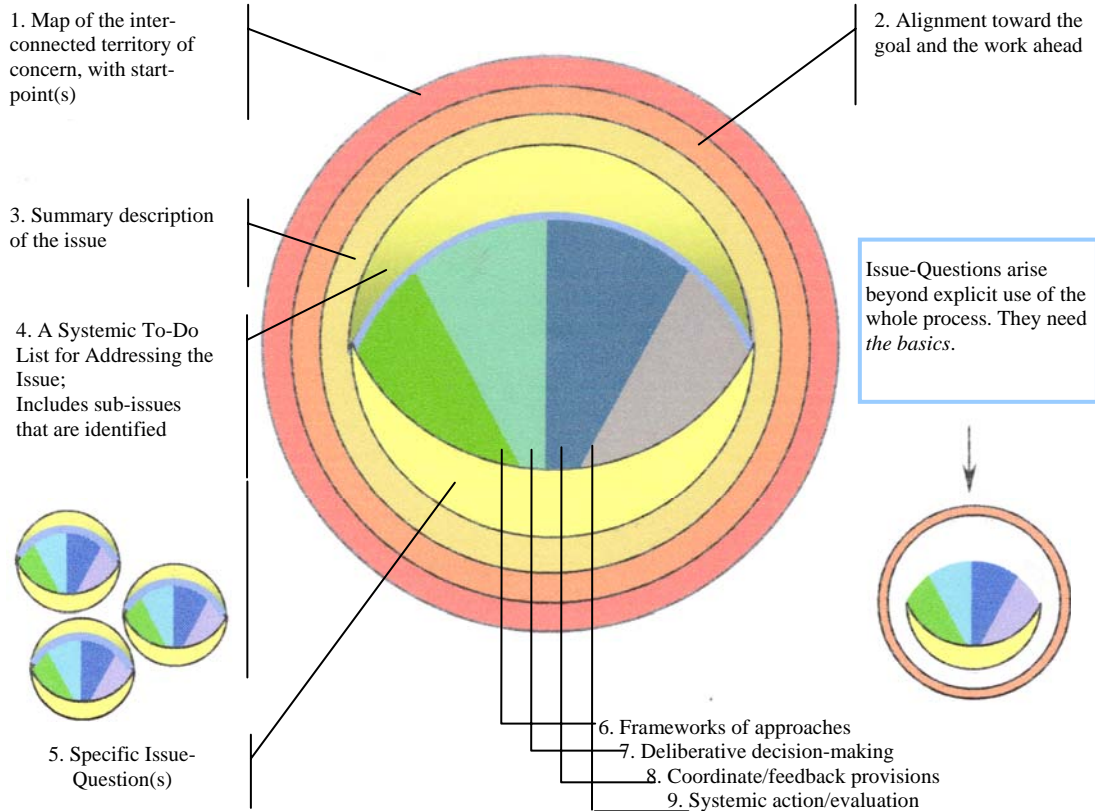
	<p>Purpose: Develop an informed basis for choosing start-point(s), which may be one-at-a-time or concurrent.</p> <p>Step: Identify all topics of concern and how they interconnect and impact each other. Use that work to inform the choice of start-point.</p> <p>Outcome: Map of the territory.</p> <p>Note: This is a one-time step in most circumstances.</p>
	<p>Purpose: Surface people’s differences in key assumptions about the work that could later confuse it or create unnecessary conflicts.</p> <p>Step: Deliberate about how to use and coordinate people’s different tones and intentions toward the work’s focus.</p> <p>Outcome: Alignment toward the goal with clarity about differences</p> <p>Note: Sometimes the “charge” of an issue requires this extra attention.</p>
	<p>Purpose: Understand the factors that produce the topic of concern so they can be worked on.</p> <p>Step: Identify the impacts and causes; decide initial issue(s) to work on; get a clear picture of the conditions behind the selected issue.</p> <p>Outcome: Summary Description of the Issue</p>
	<p>Purpose: Understand that an array of actions is necessary to make positive, systemic impacts on the issue, and what it needs to ‘look like.’</p> <p>Step: Identify the array of changes to reactively and proactively impact the issue, which can be done by an array of appropriate actors; identify which ones represent discrete sub-issues.</p> <p>Outcome: An “action-system:” a systemic “to-do list” to address the Issue</p>
	<p>Purpose: Develop the reasoning behind an Issue-Question.</p> <p>Step: Articulate the precise Issue-Question, or ‘name,’ of the sub-issue or complex decision</p>



	<p>that needs to be worked on. Outcome: The specific, open-ended question that needs deliberative decision-making to answer it.</p>
	<p>Purpose: Expose the array of approaches to the Issue-Question that are driven by different perspectives on it. Step: Use the issue-framing template. Outcome: Framework of Approaches Note: The template assures all perspectives will be included.</p>
	<p>Purpose: Create an informed basis for complex decisions. Step: Deliberate the pros and cons <i>within</i> each possible approach, and the pros and cons <i>across</i> all approaches; make decisions about which elements of each approach are needed for a thorough, integral approach. Outcome: Deliberative Decision-making</p>
	<p>Purpose: Assure coordination and continued work on sub-issues. Step: Divide into task groups, arrange oversight, develop and coordinate ongoing feedback and evaluation loops, etc. Outcome: Coordination and feedback loop mechanisms are in place. Note: This is about organizing coordination at various points in the process.</p>
	<p>Purpose: Effective systemic action, change, or development. Step: Individual and institutional action, reflection, deliberation, evaluation, communication systems, adjustments, etc. Outcome: Institutionalize a systemic array of action, evaluation, and iterative learning at needed scales</p>



A Graphic Overview: The Overall Process And Outcomes



Defining our terms...

Topic – the way we usually refer to a problem or challenge, e.g., education reform, economic development, crime, violence, land use, poverty, apathy, conflict, etc.

Issue – a ‘complex’ of *related sets of conditions* that need equally complex attention and action

Sub-issue – one of the sets of conditions within an issue, which needs complex attention, decisions, and action

Issue-Question – The neutral, open-ended ‘name’ of (1) a well-defined sub-issue, or (2) any complex decision