**Eight Key Premises of Dialogic Organization Development (OD)**

1. **Reality and relationships are socially constructed.**
   * What people believe to be “true” or “real” is shaped by their interactions and relationships with others. In organizations, the way people perceive things depends on their shared experiences and conversations.
2. **Organizations are meaning-making systems.**
   * Organizations are not just structures or systems but are made up of people who create meaning together. The culture, goals, and ways of working emerge from how people collectively make sense of their environment.
3. **Language, broadly defined, matters.**
   * Communication shapes reality. Not just the words we use, but also symbols, stories, and expressions, influence how people think, act, and collaborate.
4. **Creating change requires changing conversations.**
   * Change happens when the conversations within an organization shift. New discussions can lead to new perspectives, attitudes, and actions.
5. **Structure participative inquiry and engagement to increase differentiation before seeking coherence.**
   * When trying to solve problems, organizations should first encourage diverse perspectives and ideas (differentiation) before trying to find a common ground or unified approach (coherence).
6. **Groups and organizations are continuously self-organizing.**
   * Organizations naturally evolve and adapt as people interact and make decisions. This process isn’t always directed from the top but emerges from the organization’s dynamics.
7. **Transformational change is more emergent than planned.**
   * Major change doesn’t usually follow a strict plan. It unfolds naturally as people adapt to new ideas, challenges, and opportunities.
8. **Consultants are a part of the process, not apart from the process.**
   * External consultants don’t just stand on the sidelines giving advice. They actively participate and influence the organization’s dynamics.

**Diagnostic OD vs. Dialogic OD Chart**

This chart contrasts **traditional (Diagnostic) OD** with **newer (Dialogic) OD** approaches.

| **Diagnostic OD** | **Dialogic OD** |
| --- | --- |
| **Ontology:** Positivism, objective reality | Interpretive, socially constructed reality |
| Believes there is a single, measurable reality. | Believes reality is shaped by people’s perceptions and interactions. |
| **Organizations are:** Open systems | Dialogic networks |
| Views organizations as systems with inputs and outputs. | Sees organizations as networks of conversations and relationships. |
| **Emphasis on:** Behavior and results | Discourse and generativity |
| Focuses on measurable behaviors and outcomes. | Focuses on how language, dialogue, and creativity shape change. |
| **Change is:** Planned, episodic, developmental | Emergent, continuous, and transformational |
| Follows a structured plan to achieve gradual improvements. | Believes change unfolds naturally and is more radical. |
| **Consultants:** Stay apart, at the margins | Are immersed, part of the process |
| Act as outside experts offering advice. | Work closely with the organization, shaping its dynamics. |
| **Change process:** Hierarchical, top-down | Heterarchical, spread out |
| Begins with leadership and trickles down. | Can start anywhere in the organization and spread through connections. |

**Simplified Takeaways**

1. Traditional approaches to organizational development (Diagnostic OD) focus on structured, measurable, and planned change.
2. Dialogic OD takes a more fluid and participatory approach, emphasizing relationships, dialogue, and emergent change.
3. The consultant's role shifts from being an external expert to an active participant in the change process.

If specific sections are still unclear or you’d like help applying these ideas, let me know!

**Change Process 1:**

**A disruption in the ongoing social construction of reality is stimulated or engaged in a way that leads to a more complex reorganization.**

* **What it means**: Change happens when people’s shared understanding of “how things are” is disrupted. This could come from a new idea, event, or conversation that challenges the status quo.
* **Outcome**: The organization reorganizes itself in a more complex and adaptive way as people adjust to the new perspective.

**Change Process 2:**

**A change to one or more core narratives takes place.**

* **What it means**: Core narratives are the stories that define how an organization sees itself and its purpose. Change happens when these stories are updated, replaced, or expanded.
* **Outcome**: Shifting these narratives can transform the way people think and act within the organization, aligning them with new goals or values.

**Change Process 3:**

**A generative image is introduced or surfaces that provides new and compelling alternatives for thinking and acting.**

* **What it means**: A “generative image” is a powerful idea, metaphor, or vision that sparks creativity and inspires people to think and act differently.
* **Outcome**: These new images create a shared sense of possibility, helping the organization move toward meaningful change.

**Summing Up the Change Processes**

* **What unites them**: Each process revolves around reshaping how people think, interact, and make sense of their world.
* **How change happens**: By disrupting old patterns, shifting foundational stories, or introducing inspiring ideas, organizations evolve in ways that are more adaptive, creative, and aligned with their environment.

These processes highlight that change isn’t just about strategies or plans—it’s deeply rooted in how people perceive and create meaning together.