

Madness, Intransigence and Old Hurts: Case Studies from Australia in Dealing with Emotional Issues in Engagement in Community Renewal Projects

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URBAN LANDSCAPE

International Conference for Integrating Urban Knowledge & Practice

Gothenburg, Sweden, May 29 – June 3, 2005

Abstract

Emerging community engagement discourses focus on inclusion, community capacity building, representativeness and reducing bias. Some theorists and practitioners emphasise narrative and storytelling. But few speak candidly about dealing with strong emotions: shock, denial pain, grief, regret, guilt and suffering. This illustrated presentation, based on a practitioner's long career and recent work in community renewal projects, explores the *emotional* content of community engagement and suggests some approaches that might work well in selected situations. It reminds us that everyone brings emotional "baggage" to community engagement contexts. The guilt of a practitioner or a proponent, while not always expressed, may be as important a factor as the pain of community members facing relocation or redevelopment of their neighbourhoods.