Outline Summary of the 'S Questions Model'

S1
Subject Matter Dimension of Questions
Choose the subject matter of the question:
People, Environment, Problem or PEP Interaction

S2
Structure Dimension of Questions
'Open' or 'Closed' Questions
Do you want a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer, or do you need more information?

Choose a 3S or 4S Question,
or a combination of a 3S and a 4S Question

S3
Seeking Information Dimension of Questions
Information gathering and clarifying existing information

S4
Shift Thinking Dimension of Questions
Exploring and Focusing Thinking Questions
Connecting and Expanding Thinking Questions

New information and insight leading to a paradigm shift

The S Questions Model

S1 — Subject Matter Dimension of Questions
Encompass the subject matter that is being discussed

People
The parties' internal and external narratives, with their underlying interests and positions

Environment
The environment in which the parties are operating (physical, social, and psychological)

Problem
That which is presenting at mediation

PEP Interaction
How the People, the Environment and the Problem, influence, and impact each other

S2 — Structure Dimension of Questions
A question can be phrased as an open question or a closed question

Closed questions require a "yes" or "no" response

Open questions are introduced with Who? When? Where? Which? What? How? In what way? What if? If?

Rarely use *"Why"* as it may be judgmental and result in the party needing to justify their actions

S3 — Seeking Information Dimension of Questions
Seeking Information questions about S1: Subject Matter Dimension of questions, incorporating the People, Environment, and Problem (PEP) and PEP interaction

These questions clarify information given by parties and invite the parties' perspective on the conflict. They are a statement from the party's already held beliefs and opinions and form the pool of information about the conflict from which S4: Shift Thinking Dimension of Questions can be explored.

S4 — Shift Thinking Dimension of Questions
Uncover new information and insight, either by exploring and focusing thinking or by connecting and expanding thinking, leading to a paradigm shift

Journey of Inference Questions
Data, Interpretations, Assumptions, Conclusions, Beliefs, Actions
Purpose: To bring the thought process into conscious awareness, identify gaps in information and distorted thinking, and explore the connection between interpretations and actions.

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) Questions
Deletions, Distortions, Generalizations
Purpose: To distinguish fears from facts by linking a party's statements to their actual experience, ensuring communication is congruent with reality, not fears or interpretations.

Distinction and Difference Questions
People, Parts, Contexts, Opposites, Spatial, Comparisons, Time Span, Measurement, or Ranking
Purpose: To explore subjective reality, gain clarity and boundaries about the conflict, and broaden perspective.

Reflective Connecting Questions
Connecting with patterns and cycles of conflict, both intrapersonal and interpersonal, and in the broader context
Purpose: To raise awareness of negative patterns and cycles of conflict, to deconstruct past unhelpful patterns, and to reconstruct new healthy patterns.

Cognitive Elements Questions
Elements: Knowledge; Opinion and Thinking; Beliefs, Values and Attitudes; Behavior; Sense of Self/Identity; Environment
Purpose: To explore inner conflicts and consistencies between the above six cognitive elements and seek a paradigm shift that will restore cognitive consonance.

Other People Questions
Explore an imagined perspective from a conflict observer, the other party, a cultural norm, or outside the paradigm of the party.
Purpose: To broaden perspectives and foster insight in a safe manner, making it easier to address questions that might otherwise feel threatening.

Underlying Interests Questions
Elements: SCARF® Drivers, Values, Beliefs, Triggers, Conflict Positions, Impact, Emotions, Concerns, and Needs
Purpose: To explore the above elements to move parties from conflict positions to underlying interests and the core of the conflict.

Future Focus Questions
Hypothetical, Conditional, Consequential, BATNA / MLATNA / WATNA
Purpose: To move parties off the conflict treadmill and facilitate cognitive thinking, leading to options and solutions.

S4: The Shift Thinking Dimension of Questions

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thinking or by connecting and expanding thinking, leading to a paradigm shift

Journey of Inference Questions

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