



CHANGE TOOLKIT

Tool: Brainstorming

Used in:
GAIN ENTRY
FACT FIND
Also good for:
DISENGAGE
GENERATE OPTIONS

What is it?

Brainstorming is a creative group activity that aims to encourage people to come up with new and innovative ideas. Participants are encouraged to say the first thing that comes into their heads.

People are encouraged to expand and build upon each other's ideas. The thinking behind this method is that everyone's ideas combined will lead to more creative outcomes than individuals working alone.

Brainstorming can be done very quickly as part of a longer or larger meeting, or time can be devoted to it in its own right.

The ideas generated are then scored against previously agreed criteria and the highest scoring ideas selected for implementation.

Why use it in a change process?

Brainstorming can help to gather information from large groups of people as part of the **Gain Entry / Fact Find** stage of the change curve. You can also use brainstorming to help you find out what is and isn't working and where strengths and weaknesses lie. Bear in mind that if you use this to gather information, the levels of confidentiality are not the same as they are in individual meetings and this may affect the quality of the information that you obtain. However, depending on the group of people you are working with and the time pressures you are under this may be the most suitable option. It can also support people to Disengage by thinking of all the different ways that things can be done that would improve the current situation.

However, the tool is most commonly used in the **Generate Options** stage of the change curve in order to develop a pool of ideas to shape the future.

What do I need to do?

1. Put together a suitable and representative group of individuals.
2. Nominate one person to write down all the suggestions either on flipcharts or on a laptop that is projected onto a screen.
3. Clearly outline the topic or problem that is to be discussed and ensure everyone understands the purpose of the session.
4. Outline and agree the rules for how the session will run. This could include honesty and confidentiality, or ensuring that the group do not interrupt or criticise each other.
5. Define and agree the criteria that you will use to score the ideas generated during the session. This may be less relevant if you are using this tool as part of Fact Find, unless you want people to prioritise issues that they feel it is more important to tackle or that are more serious than others. [You could also

My Notes

look at the Traffic Light Assessment and Sticky Dots Method tools in **Select the Best Option** stage.]

6. You may want to provide some stimulation to create ideas, such as a short relevant video, some images, a voice recording, a newspaper article about the topic or the service.
7. Ask the group for their ideas – all of the ideas are to be captured on the flipcharts no matter how ‘off the wall’ they may seem. Encourage participants to say the first thing that comes into their heads. The aim is to get as many ideas together as possible, even if they are not all useable in the end.
8. Ensure that the ideas keep on topic.
9. Encourage ideas to flow, but do not let one train of thought to continue for too long.
10. Encourage all members of the group to participate.
11. Do not allow any ideas to be criticised, as this will damage the group dynamic and inhibit creativity. Don’t allow participants to be judged on their contributions – no idea should be seen to be wrong.
12. Towards the end of the session, spend some time scoring the ideas generated against the agreed criteria.
13. Finally, look at ways to implement the suggested ideas. If this becomes very complicated, or you have a lot of ideas to discuss, a further facilitated session may be necessary.