CHANGE TOOLKIT
Tool: Snowball Exercise

Used in:
GAIN ENTRY
FACT FIND
Also good for:
IMPLEMENT
TEST

My Notes

What is it?

A snowball exercise is a simple exercise used to elicit information from people anonymously that they might not otherwise feel comfortable sharing.

Why use it in a change process?

It can be used at any stage during change in order to understand how others may be feeling about the change and to bring to the surface genuine feelings about the change or indeed about other issues.

It is particularly helpful during the **Gain Entry / Fact Find** stages of the change curve as it creates a safe and confidential environment for people to raise their concerns and issues. This should provide you, the **Change Manager**, with soft data it may be difficult to obtain otherwise. Soft data is the anecdotal information about how people are feeling as opposed to the hard facts.

However, you may also find the snowball exercise a helpful technique during **Implement** and **Test** stages, as it enables people to provide honest feedback about how they are finding the change as it happens, which they might not feel able to provide otherwise.

What do I need to do?

1. Identify the problem or issue that you wish to address. This can be quite a direct or personal question as the responses will be anonymous.

2. Ensure that everyone has a pen and an identical piece of paper.

3. Ask everyone in the group to write their response on their piece of paper and then screw the paper into a snowball.

4. Pass a container round the group and collect all the snowballs. Ensure they are shaken up so an individual's contribution cannot be recognised.

5. Request that during the session people to not pry into who wrote each of the responses.

6. Once all the snowballs are in the hat pass it round again and ask each person in turn to select one of the snowballs and read aloud the response.

7. The group should then discuss and trouble-shoot the responses. It might be useful to use a flipchart to record key points and solutions discussed and agreed.