

Creative Tools

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a relaxed, informal approach to problem solving with lateral thinking. It encourages people to be creative with the ideas to solve a particular problem.

Benefits of Brainstorming

- Provides a free and open environment that encourages everyone to participate in a positive environment.
- There are no wrong answers as any idea can lead to further ideas.
- It can incorporate teams of diverse backgrounds leading to a richness of ideas to explore.
- It can help get 'buy-in' from team members for the solution chosen especially if they were involved in developing it.

Tip: To get the most out brainstorming, follow this activity with an affinity diagram (Refer to the EMPHN QI resources on how to complete an affinity diagram)

How to undertake brainstorming

1. Identify the group to attend the session. Consider inviting a diverse group to generate as many creative ideas as possible.
2. Ensure you have all the required resources such as a supply of pens, post it notes and a white board.
3. Identify a facilitator to run the session and guide the discussion.
4. Present the problem to the group – clearly define the problem you want to solve.
5. Give team members some quiet time to write down as many ideas as possible on their own. Then share the ideas with the team.
6. Once everyone has shared ideas, the facilitator guides a group discussion to develop further ideas. Capture these extra ideas as a result of these discussions.
7. Next steps – take action by analysing the ideas. Use an affinity diagram to organise ideas into themes.

Brainstorming Example

Be Well Health Clinic decided to run a brainstorming session as to why they have a data quality issue. Carol the Practice Manager asked each team member to write down their ideas. Once the team completed this task, she placed the post it notes on the board. To help clarify their area of focus, Carol then proceeded to undertake an affinity diagram (refer to EMPHN QI resources) to group the ideas into topic areas.

