

Brainstorming

Participant training objectives:

- To understand how brainstorming is used during process investigation
- To be able to conduct a brainstorming session

Target audience:

Quality improvement (QI) committee members, QI project team members, and other staff involved in the process investigation phase of QI projects

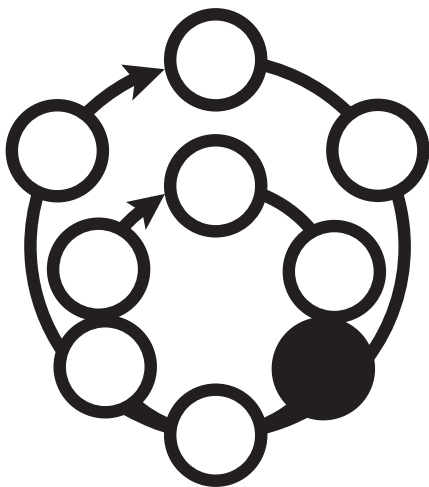
Type of exercise:

Scenario; group exercise, 60 minutes

Key concepts:

The brainstorming process, designed to help teams generate a large volume of ideas, requires that team members to:

- Write the topic statement or question in a central location
- Review general rules for brainstorming
- Establish a time limit
- Generate ideas with the group until time is up
- Review and refine ideas



The Big Picture:

Brainstorming is a useful tool at any level in the HIVQUAL model where a team needs to generate a large volume of ideas. Brainstorming is particularly important, however, during Step 3 of the project cycle: Project team investigates the process. Defined as a technique to freely and uninhibitedly generate ideas using a group approach, brainstorming helps a team identify a problem's potential causes and/or solutions.

SESSION AT-A-GLANCE	WHO	HOW LONG
1. Welcome, Learning Objectives, Agenda	Facilitator	5 minutes
2. QI Background: Brainstorming Process	Facilitator	10 minutes
3. Group Exercise: Scenario	Participants	30 minutes
4. Learning Transfer: Worksheet	Participants	10 minutes
5. Wrap-up	All	5 minutes
		60 minutes

Materials

For this group learning session, you will need the following materials:

- Participant handouts:
 - Scenario
 - Learning Transfer Worksheet
 - Copy of slide presentation
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Overhead projector/LCD panel (optional)
- Wipeboard/chalkboard (optional)

Preparation

To prepare for the group learning session, complete the following tasks:

Familiarize yourself with the session's structure and content:

- Read through the Group Exercise notes in their entirety, including the exercise answer key, presentation slides, and participant handouts.
- Practice the presentation outlined in the Group Exercise notes.

Photocopy the Scenario, Learning Transfer Worksheet, and slide presentation for each participant.

Prepare your presentation slides for display:

- Photocopy the slides, or write the slide content on transparencies or on flipchart paper.
- For display using an LCD panel, enter the content into a computer file.

Prepare the training room.

- Arrange the tables and chairs in a circle or square shape, if possible.
- Tear off flipchart paper and make sure you have enough markers for the group(s) to use during the exercise.
- Set up and test equipment (e.g. overhead projector), if applicable.
- Make sure you have enough chalk or wipeboard markers, if applicable.

Notes

Brainstorming: Group Exercise

Welcome and Introductions

To begin the group learning session, welcome participants and thank them for their participation. If necessary, ask individuals to introduce themselves to the group.

Learning Objectives

Tell participants that by the end of the session they will:

- Understand how brainstorming is used during process investigation
- Be able to conduct a brainstorming session

Agenda

Provide a brief description of the session's primary components:

- Presentation on the process of brainstorming
- Group exercise on how to brainstorm answers to a clinical question
- Learning Transfer Worksheet


Quality Improvement Background

Distribute a copy of the slides to each participant for note taking and/or future reference.

Begin by defining brainstorming as a technique to freely and uninhibitedly generate ideas about problems or opportunities using a group approach. Brainstorming helps teams harness their creativity while focusing on a common purpose in an environment free of criticism. This is particularly helpful when trying to identify potential causes for, or solutions to, a specific problem.


Introduce the basic brainstorming process:

- Write the topic statement or question in a central location
- Review general rules for brainstorming
- Establish a time limit
- Generate ideas with the group until time is up
- Review and refine ideas

 **Write the topic statement or question in a central location.** The statement or question should be clearly defined and written where everyone can see it.

Review general rules for brainstorming. Basic ground rules include:

- Go for quantity of ideas; do not censor your ideas or anyone else's
- Utilize free-association and building on previous ideas
- Record ideas as stated; do not edit—only clarify, if necessary
- Do not discuss or debate the merit of individual ideas

 **Establish a time limit.** (7 to 10 minutes is recommended).

Generate ideas with the group until time is up.

Begin idea generation by going around the group, allowing one idea per person. Participants may pass if they do not have an idea. Ideas should be written down where everyone can see them.

The process of generating ideas usually goes through several cycles. Early cycles are characterized by rapid fire answers which usually are not new. Later cycles tend to have a slower pace, but result in the most innovative ideas. It is important not to rush the process.

Review and refine ideas. Discard any ideas that are virtually identical and come to consensus around a few ideas for further discussion and follow-up.

Getting Started

Divide the participants into teams of roughly equal size, 4-6 people per group. You can assign participants to teams yourself or ask them to count off by a given number and form teams with other participants who have the same number.



Scenario Group Exercise

Distribute the scenario to each participant and provide directions for completing the exercise:

- Read the scenario individually.
- As a group, brainstorm potential answers to the project question and write them on the flipchart paper. (20 minutes)

Remind participants of the brainstorming ground rules before they begin. Assist teams who have problems getting started or become stuck on a particular point. Alert participants when 5 minutes remain so that they are adequately prepared to report back.

Reporting Back

Call time and repeat the project question. Then alternate between teams for 2-3 ideas per group. At the end, share ideas from the answer key that the teams have not mentioned.



Learning Transfer Getting Started

Distribute the Learning Transfer Worksheet and give participants 5 minutes to complete it.

Debrief

If time permits, ask participants to individually share their question/problem statement and the most innovative idea from their lists.



Wrap-up

Ask participants to provide feedback on whether or not they have achieved the objectives introduced at the beginning of the group learning session:

- To understand how brainstorming is used during process investigation
- To be able to conduct a brainstorming session

Schedule an informal follow-up session with any participant(s) who has not reached the objectives.

Brainstorming: Answer Key

The sample response does not describe how the HIV program should or would answer the question, but rather several ways the question could be answered during a brainstorming session.

Idea list:

- Make reminder calls 2 days before appointment.
- Give incentive to patients when they make their appointment on time.
- Print cards when patients leave their last appointment.
- Open clinic on Saturdays.
- Arrange transportation for all patients.
- Send clinic information out to new patients to familiarize them with the clinic.
- Give map with location of clinic to all new patients.
- Negotiate with city to provide free public transportation to clinic.
- Make several appointments for patients on the same day.
- Give free cell phones to patients and call them directly to remind them of the appointment.
- Ask the patients, What is a good time for you?, rather than telling them when to come.
- Send postcards out to patients 2 weeks before appointment.
- Provider calls his/her patients to remind them about upcoming appointments.
- Extend clinic hours until 7:00 p.m.
- Have new patients meet with a peer during the first visit to help engage them with the clinic.
- Get an 800 number for patients to call and ask for the date and time of the appointment.
- Ask for a second contact (e.g. family member, friend, etc.) so that this person can remind the patient about the appointment.
- Rather than asking patients to come into the clinic, go into the community.
- Create a policy: Come whenever you want!