

# Test of Change

## Brainstorming Activities

**BACKGROUND:** The purpose of test of change selection is to test solutions that reduce or remove the root causes and/or contributing factors identified during problem exploration. The first step is to brainstorm an exhaustive list of potential solutions. The second step is to narrow down solutions and choose one (or a few) to address using PDSA cycles.

### **DIRECTIONS: Step 1- Brainstorming Potential Solutions (15-20 minutes):**

1. Gather the team and engage in creative brainstorming. Have a facilitator lead the brainstorm. One person should record ideas; display ideas on a flipchart or whiteboard if possible.
2. Facilitator should introduce the brainstorming rules:
  - a) No criticism or judgment of ideas.
  - b) As many ideas as possible.
  - c) Wild ideas are welcome, even encouraged.
  - d) Everyone contributes at least one idea.
  - e) Improve and combine ideas of others.
  - f) **NO DISCUSSION** during brainstorm: briefly state your ideas - do not expand on details of implementation or on the merit of that idea over another.
3. Facilitator should re-read the root cause(s) and/or problem statement(s) prioritized from Problem Exploration. Then open the floor to ideas of potential solutions.

### **Creative Questions to Encourage Brainstorming:**

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|---|---|
| 1. Does someone else do the same process in a different way? What do they do better?  | 10. Make believe you are the product or information and imagine what it is like to go through the whole process.  |
| 2. What can we learn from other outside fields (e.g. behavioral health, law, schools, private business) about how to do this work well? | 11. What other person or outside agency could do all, some, or most of this process? (Outsourcing)  |
| 3. What would it look like if we did this work perfectly?   | 12. How could one (or more) steps be eliminated while still providing clients with what they need?  |
| 4. Imagine the practice or process entirely from the viewpoint of the client.   | 13. What is the most outrageous thing we could do? The funniest?  |
| 5. What would this process/practice look like in 20 years?  | 14. If everything follows the same process every time: are there solutions that could handle different situations with different resources or different priorities? |
| 6. How would a child design this process?   | 15. If everything follows a different process every time: are there similar client needs that could be met with the same solution?                                  |
| 7. If you were the director, what would you try?  | 16. If there is a clear error: what could we do to make it impossible for this error to occur? Or how could we reduce the hurt from this error?                     |
| 8. Describe the work practice/process with only the steps that build value.   |   |
| 9. Is there a technology that could address this problem?   |   |

**DIRECTIONS: Step 2- Reduce Idea List and Choose Solution for PDSA Test(s) (15-20 minutes):**

1. Facilitator reads out all identified solutions.
2. Ask all team members to check solutions they feel are not worth considering.
3. Consider each checked item (for removal), give the team 60 seconds per item for an "idea float" where the team tries to make that idea workable. Discuss whether that solution could be reduced in size or scope; identify the intent and conceive other ways to get at it. If nothing can be done and the team wants to remove the item, then remove it from the list.
4. Look at remaining items one by one - add details to them to make them more feasible.
5. Decide as a team the solution(s) to test using the PDSA model. At times, team consensus will naturally form around one or two best solutions to test. If not, try the activities suggested below or consult the Choosing the Focus of your PDSA guide for further guidance.
6. Enter your decided upon solution(s) into part 2 of your PDSA Project charter under Expected Outcomes/Deliverables.

**Activity 1:** Use an idea scoring matrix. Every team member should rate the following items: 3, 2, or 1 for each potential solution on the brainstormed list. Total all team scores for each solution and choose the highest scored solution for PDSA testing.

1. **Impact:** Benefit to client or agency and/or positive impact to the project goal. Greater benefit gets a higher score.
2. **Feasibility:** Amount of resources to implement. Low resource drain gets a higher score.
3. **Acceptance:** Likelihood workers and/or clients will accept the solution. More acceptance (less resistance) gets a higher score.
4. **Timing:** The quicker the solution can be implemented, the higher the score.

**Activity 2:** After discussion, decide on what potential solution(s) will best address the root cause and help you achieve your goal using the prompt below for discussion.

1. "If we do \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_ will happen."
2. Will that result in addressing the root cause and move us closer to our project goal?