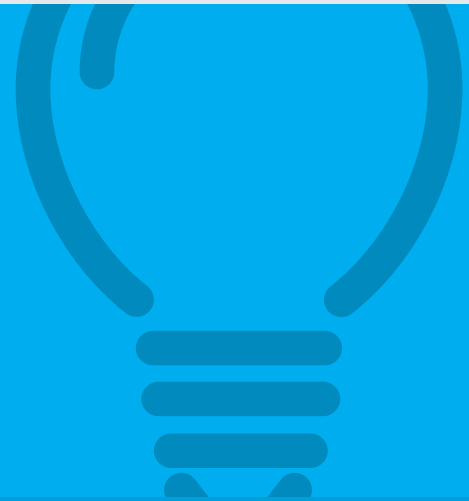




Brainstorming solutions, possibilities and project ideas

Adolescents practice brainstorming to imagine possible solutions to a problem, or ways to take advantage of an opportunity.



4/5



1/5



4/5



45 min



Activity Overview

Purpose

Practice brainstorming and the different ways to use it creatively.

Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Think critically through brainstorming.
- ▶ Think of solutions by problem solving.

Competency domains

Critical thinking and decision making; Creativity and innovation.

Works well for

Circles where adolescents can sit together, reach decisions collectively, and work on activities in small groups.

Note: This activity helps adolescents to come up with creative ideas for group initiatives, but it also can be adapted for adolescents who want to design individual projects.

Phase

Taking Action.

Before

Adolescents should have already explored problems, issues or opportunities that are important to them. The **Our challenges, Our Solutions, Our environment** and **Forming problem and opportunity statements** activities provide different ways to do this.

After

Adolescents should develop and carry out plans to address the problem or opportunity they identified. The **Forming problem and opportunity statements, Using interview skills,** and **Brainstorming solutions, possibilities and project ideas** activities are good next steps for this.

Preparation

None needed.



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1

Organize the adolescents into groups of three to five. (If adolescents have already formed groups to work on a project together, they can stay in their groups.) Make sure that each group has a problem and opportunity statement from their earlier sessions together. If possible, get them to write down the problem statement and post it nearby (e.g. on a wall or tree).

2

Discuss:

- ▶ Has anyone here ever used brainstorming? What does it mean? How does it work?
- ▶ What words do you recognize in the word brainstorming? Make sure that adolescents recognize the words brain and storming.
- ▶ Why is brainstorming a good thing when we are trying to think of ideas?

3

Facilitator says:

- ▶ "You are now going to practice brainstorming. Brainstorming is a process that helps us to think of several ideas very freely and creatively."
- ▶ "Read the problem/opportunity statement carefully, and then write down as many ideas as you can think of for addressing this issue. Place each idea near the problem/opportunity statement."
- ▶ "Choose one person to keep time, and to encourage the group to come up with as many ideas or solutions as possible. This person should also remind people not to criticize or reject any ideas, or to spend too long discussing one idea."

4

Explain:

Review the guidelines for brainstorming:

- ▶ Don't judge each other's ideas. Brainstorming is an opportunity to come up with any idea that you can think of.

- ▶ Try to come up with as many different ideas as you can!
- ▶ Build on other ideas: If someone comes up with an idea that inspires you, try to come up with your own version.
- ▶ Draw your idea or solution if it makes it easier to understand!

5

Make sure each team is ready and understands the process. Give them 10 minutes to brainstorm. Walk around the room and watch and follow each group's discussion.

6

Give a signal for adolescents to end their brainstorming. Congratulate them on using the process well. Keep note of all of the ideas they discussed.

7

Discuss:

- ▶ Did brainstorming help you to think of good ideas?
- ▶ What worked well about this process for you?
- ▶ Was there anything about the process that didn't work well for you?
- ▶ When would you use brainstorming in other parts of your life?
- ▶ If you and your group use brainstorming again, what can you do to make the process more fun? What can you do to make it work better for you?

Facilitation tip: Participants might get off topic during a brainstorming session. When this happens, the facilitator should help groups to focus their ideas. Ask them to think of different types of solutions. For example, if the problem is: "How can the community get clean water?", ask the group to think of a product solution (get a water filter), a community solution (ask the water



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company to provide filtered water).

Optional: If the adolescents want to continue to choose an idea for their group project ask them to:

- ▶ Organize similar ideas by posting or moving the cards/paper they are written on into groups.
- ▶ Give each group of ideas a name and then try rearranging the ideas into different groups.

- ▶ Vote on the idea they think would be the most interesting or enjoyable to work on as a group.
- ▶ Take note of the idea they have chosen for use in future sessions.

Do & Don't

- ✓ Encourage adolescents to practice brainstorming and to think creatively about ideas and solutions.
- ✓ Think of a few examples of ideas in advance, to help adolescents if they are having difficulty get started.
- ✗ Criticize their ideas or push them to only focus on practical solutions/ideas.
- ✗ Suggest examples if adolescents don't need help thinking of ideas, or suggest too many examples (this might limit their creativity).

Adaptation

Low literacy: Instead of writing their ideas, adolescents can draw them.

Adapt for less time, or simplify: This activity can be divided into two activities. Use the first set of steps to brainstorm, then the second set of steps to choose a project idea.

Translation: Instead of using the English word "brainstorming" use or create a comparable expression in the adolescents' own language. For example, the equivalent expression in Spanish, "llovía des ideas" literally translates as rain of ideas.

Environment

Indoor or outdoor space. Quiet.

Supplies

- ▶ At least one piece of paper or note card for each adolescent.
- ▶ At least one pen, pencil or marker for each adolescent.

Improvise

Instead of brainstorming ideas in groups, adolescents can do silent and/or visual brainstorming. For example, they can write their brainstorm ideas on small pieces of paper or index cards, or draw pictures of their ideas.

Continue

Give adolescents a chance to practice and use brainstorming in future sessions when they want to explore new project possibilities or come up with their own creative ideas.



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