Title: Brainstorming

Exercise Code: SLINTEGRA023

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| Modules: | Group size: | Duration: |
| 6. Problem Solving Strategies | Small group  Large group | 45 min |

**Purpose:**

* To teach participants the technique of brainstorming as a way of identifying several solutions to a problem
* To develop social problem solving skills

**Description:**

Ask the group, *“What is brainstorming?”*

Tell them: “*There is often more than one solution to a problem. It’s not always easy to think of other solutions, and brainstorming can help. Brainstorming means saying anything that comes into your mind, without being concerned about how others will react. It’s a great way for a group of people to come up with good solutions. Brainstorming usually doesn’t take very long—about five minutes—and it can be really fun. It’s designed to help you break out of your normal thinking patterns and find new ways of looking at things.”*

There are no limits in brainstorming—any idea is a good one at first. Everyone should try to come up with as many ideas as possible, and no one is permitted to judge or discuss these ideas. The solutions can be unusual, and they don’t even have to make sense. No idea is too wacky or ridiculous. As crazy as any idea might seem, it might make someone think of another idea or a better idea. It might even turn out to be the best idea of all!

Give the group a problem and have them brainstorm as many ideas as possible. Write their ideas on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper. If time allows, evaluate and eliminate each solution until you come up with one on which everyone can agree.

**Material:**

Blackboard or a large sheet of paper, pencil

**Methods:**

Experiental learning, mind-mapping

A good way to activate the participants by a concrete example is by exposing the problem that the participants must deal with by brainstorming. For the most efficiency, the problem can be relevant and true. In the case of a group of employees, a problem that is currently relevant can be pushed into focus.

**Advice for Trainer:**

The trainers can, in this exercise, make good use of the creativity of the participants and allow them to express themselves without limitations. The trainers first have to create a safe and pleasant atmosphere inside the group, as this will allow the participants to express themselves genuinely and spontaneously and with this they will realize what brainstorming actually means.

**Source/Literature:**

Adapted from “101 Ways To Teach Children Social Skills: A Ready-To-Use, Reproducible Activity Book” E. Shapiro, Lawrence 2004