

Ideation and Brainstorming

8. Phase 3 – Sensemaking

When the information is collated and themes identified, the co-design team can start developing solutions to address each specific theme and sub-theme. Work with team members to generate lots of ideas and to share your own. It may be appropriate to invite a few extra people along to an ideation/brainstorming session to add people with completely different viewpoints that complement the team. You may also invite experts on specific topics to be there when you tackle them.

Setting up for success

The best solutions come in an environment where people feel free to share big, crazy ideas. It's vital to create a sense that there are no limits and absolutely no dumb ideas during this process. This is your opportunity to capture a diversity of ideas and a lot of them. Unlike other steps of co-design, you should favour quantity over quality during this process. Consider:

- ❑ Establishing rules so people feel comfortable to 'think big' and share bold ideas.
- ❑ Setting up an environment of creativity. This may mean warming the group up or looking for a space that encourages innovation (go outside of your typical meeting space, do some fun and silly warm up activities).
- ❑ Withholding criticism or critical questions and suspending all judgements during brainstorming.
- ❑ Encouraging original and unusual ideas over relevant ideas.

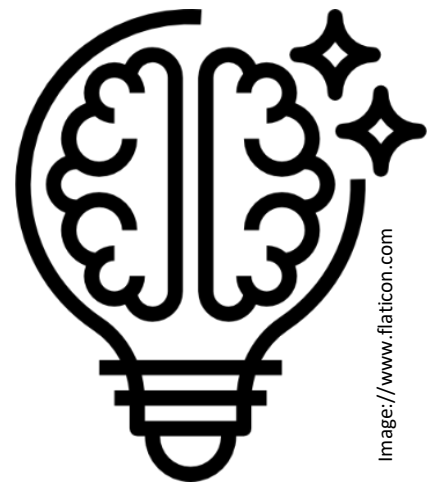


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Define the issues

Begin by turning each of the themes/sub-themes into 'How might we' questions.

These will be used to brainstorm specific solutions for action so ensure that your questions encourage tangible ideas.

Ideation/brainstorming

There are a number of methods/workshop techniques/exercises that can be used to support brainstorming and encourage innovation. Some fundamentals to consider when brainstorming:

Example:

Safeguarding Volunteering Project

Sub-theme: People wanting to join new volunteering organisations found it daunting and intimidating which prevented them from signing up to volunteer.

'How might we make it easy for people to feel comfortable to join a new group/organisation?'



- Allow time for people to build on each other's ideas. Create time for saying 'Yes and ...'
- Set time limits. The more time allowed, the more likely it is that critical thinking will get in the way of creativity.
- Make it fun and light-hearted (move around the room, play music, bring colour and objects into the room).



Ensure everyone has a chance to add ideas to each theme/sub-theme and repeat brainstorming processes if needed.

During your community conversations and other workshops with the co-design team, you may have heard specific solutions/ideas that align with the themes. Include these in the session so they aren't lost.

Check out these websites for some ideas on how to run brainstorming / ideation workshops:

- IDEO U¹
- Board of Innovation²
- Miro³
- Session Lab⁴

Choosing ideas for the next stage

There are a number of ways to decide which ideas are suitable to move into the next stage of prototyping and testing. Consider:

- Developing and using simple criteria to assess ideas.
- Taking all your solutions forward.
- Allowing a vote on individual preferences.

Don't make your criteria too restrictive as that will limit your choices and great ideas might be left behind. Some general criteria for assessing ideas could include:

- Can this have an impact?
- Is it relevant to the issue/topic and within scope?
- Is it exciting and inspiring?
- Is it something new?
- How achievable is it (affordable/realistic)?

Next Step

Now that you've decided on ideas/solutions, it's time to move on to the next phase of co-design: Prototyping and Testing.

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¹ <https://www.ideo.com/pages/brainstorming-resources>

² <https://www.boardofinnovation.com/tools/brainstorm-cards/>

³ <https://miro.com/guides/online-brainstorming/how-to-brainstorm>

⁴ <https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/brainstorming-techniques/>