

Brainstorming

This technique is useful for separating idea creation from idea evaluation. It works best with a group of 6-12 people, but can be used for larger groups. It is a flexible technique and can be used informally or in a more structured process.

Basic Rules

- Should be led by a facilitator
- Ask for positive ideas, solutions, etc.
- Generate as many ideas as quickly as possible
- Record the ideas on a flipchart or computer
- You can build on someone else's idea
- Only one person can speak at a time and reflect only one idea at a time
- No critical or evaluative remarks.

Variations

- Rolestorming: Allow participants to attribute their ideas to someone else; after giving an idea, each person then will adopt a new identity for the next idea, etc.
- Wildest idea: everyone thinks of their wildest idea; this promotes thinking “outside the box”
- Reverse approach: identify all things wrong with a specified approach; then go back and brainstorm ways to overcome the short-comings
- Round robin: ask people to go in a certain order so that everyone gets to contribute.

Brainstorming Example: How to Reach Pregnant Women and Young Children for Preventive Oral Health Interventions

- Incorporate oral health education and fluoride varnish program within Early Head Start
- Get info to OB/GYNs
- Address oral health concepts during home visits
- Integrate oral health supplies and resource lists into New Baby Kit
- Tell relatives with new babies not to lick baby's pacifier
- Integrate oral health information into ESL classes
- Teach oral health care module in teen pregnancy programs
- Schedule a Baby Fair and provide oral hygiene supplies and counseling
- Dental offices offer a New Mom/New Baby free visit
- Have xylitol gum available in dental and medical offices
- Dental offices institute a preventive recall protocol for pregnant women
- Provide a free training session for medical and dental professionals on working with pregnant women, infants, and young children
- Establish a preventive oral health section as part of a “health passport”
- Integrate oral health component into well baby check-ups
- Include more oral health information and supplies during WIC visits



Resources

Mind Tools, Brainstorming, <http://www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html>

Process Guides, Brainstorming,
<http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/staffdev/tpss99/processguides/brainstorming.html>

Graphic Organizers, Brainstorming Web, <http://www.graphic.org/brainst.html>