

# BRAINSTORMING TIPS

## WHAT?

Brainstorming is a common way of getting a group of people to generate ideas. However, they can be overused and/or badly used. A good brainstorm should be thoughtfully planned with a well-framed question.

It's important to include diverse view points and for people to be able to contribute without fear of judgement or ridicule.

## HOW?

As a facilitator you must be able to:

- ask good questions
- stimulate ideas
- probe, ask questions, clarify
- synthesise ideas
- keep the session moving

Brainstorming involves coming up with as many uncensored ideas as possible, from as many perspectives as possible. Below are guidelines for a brainstorming activity. It is important to brainstorm in a formal way rather than drift into it because the best results will be obtained when brainstorming sessions are properly structured. A brainstorming session should not feel like an ordinary meeting.



## TIPS

- Start with a warm up activity.
- Have a clear focus about the issue you are brainstorming.
- Set a time limit. Don't go over 45 minutes.
- Include people with different perspectives, users, different teams, different stakeholders, people who have different approaches to the issue.
- Keep the brainstorming group small, 3–4 people at most.
- Have ground rules. No ridiculing. Don't censor what you say.
- Have one person who acts as scribe/facilitator. They keep the brainstorm session flowing and can ask questions to prompt more ideas/go in a different direction. Others don't need to take notes.
- Number ideas as you write them down.
- Don't always write on a whiteboard. You don't want to have to rub anything out. Cover the walls with large sheets of paper and write on them.
- Include different stimuli.
- Change the pace and sometimes allow for individual brainstorms, to give more introverted people the opportunity to think quietly.
- Manage the dynamic so that everyone has equal opportunity.
- Filter and organise ideas.
- Build ideas into actionable concepts.