



# BRAINSTORMING

A brainstorming session is a structured activity with a facilitator and a group of participants working together to generate and share ideas to address a problem. Teams can brainstorm solutions for any challenge, barrier or problem they encounter. Some examples include handwashing barriers, environmental concerns with latrine designs, improving upon WASH partnerships and more. It is often helpful for teams to be familiar with the project focus, key findings, “how might we” questions, and design principles before they start brainstorming.

### OBJECTIVE

Brainstorming is a collaborative way to generate ideas based on insights and observations.

### WASH-HCD CONNECTION

WASH problems can be perplexing when continuously looked at from the same perspective. Brainstorming gives teams a chance to break outside of their normal perspective by generating lots of possible solutions, building off of one another’s ideas, and combining and refining in a way that can yield new and innovative solutions to test.

### TIMING

1-2 hours

### MATERIALS

- STICKY NOTES
- EMPTY WALL OR LARGE PAPER
- PENS OR PENCILS

### STEPS

1. **Set brainstorm goals and guidelines.** Orient the group to the brainstorm goals by sharing the project brief, key findings, and design principles. Place the “How Might We” statement in a central location of the room for everyone to see.

Establish the following guidelines at the start to foster a safe environment for participants to step out of their comfort zones and embrace the brainstorming process:

- One conversation at a time.
  - Listen to everyone’s ideas.
  - Aim for as many ideas as possible
  - No idea is a bad idea;
  - No judging or criticism allowed at this stage.
  - Say “Yes, and...” not “Yes, but...”.
  - Build on the ideas of others, instead of blocking them.
  - Encourage wild ideas.
2. **Start with silence.** Attendees should come up with solutions on their own for the first 5-10 minutes.

\*\*\*IMPORTANT: Instill creative confidence in participants by explaining that everyone is creative, because creativity is simply a way of understanding and approaching the world. Encourage participants to trust their instincts and design from their fresh, unique perspectives.





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### Continuation

- 3. Share ideas.** Allow everyone to share their ideas without interruption. While waiting to take their turn, others should write down their comments and questions on a piece of paper to remember for later.
- 4. Look for themes and build upon ideas.** Review the ideas shared, and group similar ideas together.

Further develop select ideas by talking through them. Build on each other's ideas by using the phrase "Yes, and..." to add detail and clarity to the ideas.

