

A Lateral Thinking Approach to Regional Planning – Revisiting Pandemic Flu



Session Goal

Demonstrate the benefits of a problem-solving tool that encourages lateral thinking and can enhance multi-agency decision-making for projects requiring collaboration – using regional pandemic flu planning as a sample application.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Identify directions of lateral thinking.
 - Apply lateral thinking in the context of a pandemic flu planning scenario.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify some common gaps in pandemic flu plans and some common barriers to effective community or regional planning.
- Identify the benefits of using a lateral thinking approach to solve problems and plan in a more effective, collaborative manner.

What are indicators of effective and ineffective collaboration?

Issues in Collaborative Planning

- Bridging gaps between agencies
- Resolving conflict with external agencies
- Ensuring interoperability between agencies/jurisdictions

Lateral Thinking and Six Thinking Hats



By Edward de Bono

Disclaimer: Components of the Six Thinking Hats method are introduced and discussed in this session; however, this session is not endorsed by Edward de Bono. To receive the certified training, please visit http://www.debonoconsulting.com/Six_Thinking_Hats.asp

Traditional Thinking

- Western culture relies on classical Greek thinking
 - Argument and critical thinking
- “Truth” is to be reached through argument and linear, sequential thinking
 - Example: court systems

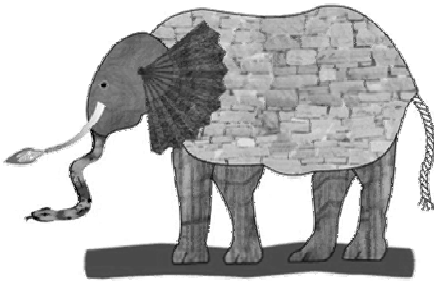
Scientific Method of Problem Solving

- Define problem
- Determine cause
- Develop alternative approaches
- Assess consequences
- Select a solution
- Implement chosen solution
- Evaluate, correct and redesign

Concepts

- Lateral thinking
 - Explores multiple possibilities and approaches in parallel instead of pursuing a linear sequential approach
 - Looks at a problem from many angles instead of tackling it head-on
- Six thinking hats
 - method for implementing lateral thinking

Activity



What are the Six Hats?

- Six colors of hats for six directions of thinking
 - Each hat identifies a direction of thinking
- You can “put on” and “take off” a hat to focus discussion in a specific direction
- Directs thinking to maximize sensitivity to, and understanding of, different perspectives at different times

Six Hats

- Separates thinking into six directions:
 - Objective, neutral
 - Emotional
 - Careful and cautious
 - Positive
 - Creative
 - Organization of the process

Six Hats



White: objective facts & figures



Red: emotions & feelings



Black: downside, flaws & risks



Yellow: upside & positive outcomes



Green: creativity & new ideas



Blue: organization of thinking

Why Lateral Thinking and Six Hats?

Vertical thinking	Lateral thinking
Looks for right approach	Looks for as many approaches as possible
Rightness	Richness
Proceeds if there is a direction	Proceeds to generate directions
Is analytical	Is provocative
Is sequential	Can make jumps
Uses negative to block off certain pathways	There is no negative
Excludes what is irrelevant	Welcomes chance intrusions
Explores most likely paths	Explores least likely paths
Is a finite process	Is a probabilistic process

Benefits of Lateral Thinking

- Examines problems, decisions, and opportunities holistically
- Decreases meeting time and increases meeting productivity
- Reduces conflict among meeting participants
- Simplifies the thinking process

More Benefits

- Goes beyond the obvious to discover effective alternate solutions
- Spots opportunities where others see only problems
- Elicits all sides of a decision before it is finalized
- Fosters collaboration

Real World Results

- Successfully used by organizations ranging from public service agencies to major corporations.
- Has shown significant increases in productivity through clearer thinking, improved communication, greater creativity and improved decision-making.

General Hat Issues

- Not categories of people
 - Not: “I’m a black hat thinker.”
 - Everyone can and should use all the hats
- A constructive form of showmanship
 - Show off by being a better thinker
 - Not destructive right vs. wrong argument
- Use in whole or in part

Using the hats

- Use any hat, as often as needed
- Sequence can be preset or evolving
- Not necessary to use every hat
- Can be used by individuals and groups

Blue Hat Thinking



- Use this hat to organize the process of thinking
 - Think about thinking
- Define the subjects toward which the thinking is to be directed
- Begin & end thought processes with blue hat

Begin with the Blue Hat



- Define the current situation or problem
- Are there alternative definitions?
- What is the end goal?
- What hats will you use and when?

End with the Blue Hat



- Did you reach your goal?
- What was the outcome?
- Evaluate the
 - Conclusion
 - Design
 - Solution
- Identify next steps

White Hat Thinking



- Use this hat to focus on available data
 - Facts and figures
- Look for gaps in knowledge
- Questions to ask:
 - What do we know?
 - What don't we know?
 - What do we need to know?
 - How do we get the information we need?

Red Hat Thinking



- Use this hat to explore emotions & feelings
 - Hunches, intuitions, impressions
- Not necessarily logical or consistent
- Should not attempt to justify feelings or provide logical basis

Yellow Hat Thinking



- Use this hat to offer upside perspective
- Think about the positive aspects or the benefits
- Examine the opportunities
- Questions to ask:
 - What is the best-case scenario?
 - What are the benefits?

Green Hat Thinking



- Use this hat to explore new ideas, concepts, perceptions
- Search for alternatives and more alternatives
- Generate new approaches to problems
- Create an open-minded environment deferring criticism of ideas

Black Hat Thinking



- Use this hat to spot fatal flaws, risks, and barriers
- Logical negative – why it might not work
- Critical judgement, downside perspective
- Separates logical negative from emotional
- Helps to “bullet-proof” a plan or decision and makes it more resilient

Ground Rules

- Only one hat can be worn at a time, meaning everyone in the group can only think in one direction at a time.
- Everyone on the team does the same type of thinking at the same time. Everyone wears the same color hat.

Ground Rules

- When the hat changes, the direction of thinking changes.
- Use the hats/colors terminology in discussion.
- The facilitator will always wear the blue or organization hat but may also contribute to the discussion.

Facilitator's Role

- Clarify the focus of the team's thinking.
- Plan the sequence and timing of the thinking.
- Ask for changes in the thinking if needed.
- Manage requests from the group for changes in the thinking.
- Facilitate periodic or final summaries of the thinking for consideration by the team.

Participant's Role

- Follow the lead of your facilitator.
- Use and understand the nature of each direction of thinking.
- Work within the time limits.
- Contribute fully and honestly under each of the hats.

Assignment

Should we implement six thinking hats in regional planning meetings?

Aspects for Consideration

- Organization of thinking process
- Known and unknown facts about six thinking hats
- Barriers to implementation
- Benefits to implementation
- Creative ways to implement
- Feelings about implementation

Regional Pandemic Influenza Planning – Challenges & Barriers



The Problem

- The potential for an Influenza Pandemic is high
- The effects of a pandemic will be profound and long-term
- Impact will be felt by every sector of society and at multiple levels
 - Health
 - Social
 - Emotional
 - Economic
 - Other ???

The Mandate

- Developing and exercising pandemic influenza plans that will:
 - ensure an effective and orderly response to a pandemic
 - minimize health, social and economic impacts of a pandemic
 - promote public trust

The Challenge

- An effective pandemic influenza response at **every** level will require close collaboration between key federal, state, regional and local partners ...
 - integrated plans
 - agreement regarding key components & responsibilities
 - cohesive & coordinated implementation
 - consistent messaging

The Challenge

- Close collaboration must occur between diverse partners that have not traditionally worked together
- Partners cross disciplines, organizations, jurisdictions, political affiliations, and ???
- Partners have their own mandates, understanding of issues, concerns and emergency response strategies

Issues

Attitudes and Knowledge

- Beliefs
- Skepticism
- Hysteria
- Trust
- Understanding
 - Science/epidemiology of pandemic influenza
 - Resources available
- Misconceptions

Issues

Practice

- Impacted by constituents, community needs, political reality, resources, professional discipline and ???
 - Priorities
 - Response patterns
 - Communication processes

Potential Gaps

- Incompatible platforms
 - Technology
 - Communication
- Unsynchronized processes and systems
 - Surveillance
 - Data input and utilization
- Poor Communication
 - Language: use of jargon, different meanings
 - Conflicting messages
- Inadequate resources
 - Unfunded mandates
 - Inequitable distribution

Moving Forward

- Bridging
- Discussing
- Resolving
- Consensus building
- Coming together to develop an integrated, cohesive plan to:
 - prepare for
 - respond to
 - recover from

. . . a Pandemic

Moving Forward

*"Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
Willing is not enough; we must do."*

--Goethe

Six Hats Summary



White: objective facts & figures



Red: emotions & feelings



Black: downside, flaws & risks



Yellow: upside, positive outcomes



Green: creativity & new ideas



Blue: organization of thinking
