Brainstorming is a relaxed, informal approach to problem solving that encourages people to come up with solutions that can, at first, seem a bit crazy. Sharing such ideas can help you solve problems more effectively.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:
- Discuss old proverb: “There’s more than one way to skin a cat”
- When was the last time you had to find a new way to solve a problem? How many solutions did you come up with?

Exploration Activities:
Activity #1: Give each participant a sheet of paper and display a random object.
- Brainstorm all of the possible uses for this item. Don’t limit yourself to just its intended uses: what else could it be used for? For example, you can use a fork to eat food, comb your hair, open cans, mix ingredients, clean pans, stab your enemy, etc. Write down creative ideas on paper.
- After a few minutes, share all ideas, looking specifically for the ones no one else thought of.

Facilitator Tips:
- Encourage participants to be creative and “think outside the box”.
- During brainstorming, people should avoid criticizing or praising ideas. Judgment at this stage stunts idea generation and limits creativity.

Activity #2: Shiritori is a game in which players have to think of a word beginning with the final letter of the previous word to create a long word chain. The first player who can’t think of any more connecting words loses.
- Put students into teams and assign each team a first letter to begin their first word.
- Alternating players, teams write words on the board following the shiritori pattern. [Example for D Team: donkey - yacht - trip - parent - tea - apple - elephants...]
- When time is up, count the number of words each team has written to declare a winner.

Key Objectives:
- Understand and Practice Brainstorming “outside the box” ideas.
- Determine situations when Brainstorming is appropriate.

What You’ll Need:
- A few random household items
- Blank paper
APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Have a group discussion about when Brainstorming is important.

  - Where will you use this skill?
  - How can you practice Brainstorming?
  - Why is it important to share all your ideas no matter how crazy?
  - What jobs require Brainstorming?

REFERENCE QUESTIONS:

- Talk about what happened during each activity. You may pause in between the activities to reflect on the first, or reflect on both activities at the end.

  - What was hard about this activity?
  - How did Brainstorming help you?
  - What did you learn about Brainstorming?

CONCLUSION:

You will encounter a lot of problems that need solutions in your life, and if you can call on your friends and co-workers to help you brainstorm to solve them, you’re going to be a lot happier and more successful. Brainstorming is useful in all kinds of situations. The trick is to remember not to make judgements while you come up with ideas - just let them come. Then you have more possibilities to choose from and you haven’t limited your options. Practice using Brainstorming to strengthen your problem solving skills!

REFERENCES

- https://www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html
- https://allesl.com/brainstorming-activities/