

# Team Building: Shared Problem Solving

## Purpose

This activity allows people to help each other anonymously. Sometimes we may feel stuck or wonder what we could do to improve our behaviour or skills. We may however not feel comfortable to directly ask others about them. This exercise sets the scene for people to open up and help each other without fear of being wrong or obvious.

## Objective

Provide solutions to problems recorded on a paper for others.

## What You Need

- Papers and pens.

## Setup

- Distribute one sheet of paper to each delegate.
- Ask each person to write a 4 digit number on the back of the sheet at random and make sure they remember their number. This is simply used later on to identify the sheet and helps to keep the system somewhat anonymous.
- Ask each person to write a problem they have or something they want to improve on, on top of their sheet. Examples of problems are:
  - I am having problems getting dominated in meetings
  - I am late for meetings more often than I like
  - I don't feel my clients/bosses/colleagues understand what I do for them. There is no appreciation.
  - When the phone rings, my colleague almost always leaves it for me to pick up
- Ask everyone to stack up their sheets faced down at the centre of the table.
- Shuffle the stack.
- Nominate one person to pick the first sheet and then clockwise for others to follow suite.
- Ask each person to consider the problem and write a solution, advice or suggestion on the paper.

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- Once finished, each person should hand over the sheet to the person on their left. Continue until everyone has answered everything.
- Explain that if you came across your own question, simply try to answer like everyone else. If you ask the right questions, you can always come up with potential solutions.
- At the end, collect all the sheets. Use the numbers written at the back of the sheets to distribute the sheets back to their original owners.
- Owners can now read through the solutions and get inspired by the suggestions. Allow time for them to absorb this.
- Some people might be happy to have a group discussion about their issue. Encourage them to approach others for more details on provided suggestions and get more ideas.
- Monitor the time people spend in this stage and make sure everyone gets a fair chance to talk and review their cases if they want to.
- If you have time, you can have another round.

## Timing

*Explaining the Exercise:* 2 minutes

*Activity:* 5 min identification of issues + 10 min giving solutions = 15 minutes

You may need more time for the giving solution if you have a larger group.

*Group Feedback:* 15 minutes

## Discussion

Simply facilitate the discussion based on the issues raised.

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