

Creative Solution Development  
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The following principles are accepted by everyone participating in the solution development process:

1. The process can involve a single individual, a couple, two or more parties having issues, or a whole group, and moves beyond control to mutual agreement or majority decision.
2. Do not judge, criticize, or evaluate any ideas as you engage in the solution development process.
3. Do not use attempts to exercise power or control, such as anger, name-calling, put-downs, threats or intimidation or manipulation of any kind.

**Step One: Identifying Issues**

1. The group leader invites group members to say “what issues and challenges need to be addressed.”
2. The group leader writes these issues in a numbered list on a chalk board or flip chart. (As the issues are being stated, the group leader uses reflective listening as needed in order to clarify meaning. In the event a strong emotion is expressed or a group member becomes too verbal, the group leader uses reflective statements, checks if the person feels understood, then directs the group back to the issue.)
3. The group leader then asks members to say the number of one of the listed issues that he thinks needs to be addressed first.
4. The group leader makes a tick by the number of each listed issue selected by group members, then circles the one with the most ticks; this becomes the first issue for solution development.

**Step Two: Creating Solutions**

1. Writing the issue on the chalkboard or flipchart, the group leader makes a numbered list below it and says, “Now I would like us to brainstorm as many solutions for this issue as you can think of, and as you state them I will write them down on this list without judgment, criticism or discussion.”
2. The group leader stimulates ideas with the following statements (To increase the number of ideas and with writing material, large groups can break into small groups or dyads and brainstorm using the following statements presented by the small group leader):
  - a. Let’s write down what’s happening now, because that is always a choice.
  - b. What’s the opposite of what’s happening now?
  - c. What is a fantasy of what you might like to see happen but you don’t think is possible?
  - d. Think of an approach that seems silly or ridiculous.
  - e. Imagine what someone you respect (a relative or other wise person) might say as a solution.
  - f. I can think of a possible solution that would work well and that no one has mentioned. Can anyone guess what it is? (the group leader writes down ideas the group guesses)
  - g. My idea is ..... (group leader adds his solution to the numbered list)

**Step Three: Reaching a Creative Agreement**

1. The group leader says: “Now using your writing material, I would like each of you to take a separate sheet of paper and privately write down the number of up to three of the listed possible solutions or approaches that you think would be most practical or workable to address the challenge or issue.”
2. The group leader says: “Now tell me the number of the listed solutions you have chosen, and I will make a tick by each of the solutions.”
3. The three solutions most selected by the group become the creative agreement or solution strategy for the issue addressed.
4. Depending on the issue, volunteers can be invited and a time can be determined to implement the strategy.
5. Repeat *Step Two* and *Step Three* for the second, third, fourth, etc. issue selected most often by the group.