

Generating and organising ideas: a 4-step process

Mental Health Safety Improvement programme



1. Nominal Group Technique (NGT): Generate Ideas

- a. Agree on the topic and objective of the nominal group session e.g. ideas to improve staff well-being.
- b. Each member of the team is given a pile of sticky notes and time to think about ideas. Members write one idea per sticky note.
- c. Once everyone has written down their ideas, work clockwise round the table, taking it in turns for each person to share an idea. Repeat until all ideas are shared. There should be no discussion or interruption until all ideas are shared.
- d. Remove any duplicate ideas.
- e. Using the chart on page 3, write ideas in the “ideas” column. Do not rationalise and resist combining ideas. Differentiate similar ideas.



2. Multi-Vote: Reduce a long list of ideas (11 or more) to a manageable number (5 to 10)

- a. Agree on the criteria against which ideas are chosen, such as ‘low cost, feasible and easy to implement’.
- b. Decide on how many ideas you want members to vote on e.g. 5.
- c. Members are given a different coloured pen or symbol, and keeping the criteria in mind, place a mark next to their selected ideas in the column called ‘multi-vote’. Vote for each chosen idea only once.
- d. Review the voting results. Circle the 5–10 ideas with the most votes to take to Rank Ordering. If a person feels strongly about their left-behind idea, include it in the next round.
- e. If you still have a lot of ideas that get only a few votes (e.g., 15–20), you can do another round of Multi-Vote to reduce the initial set of ideas to 10 or fewer.



3. Rank Order: Reduce a list of 10 or fewer to the vital few ideas for further discussion

- a. Write the initials of each team member in the columns under ‘rank order’ so that each member has a column.
- b. Using the chosen criteria, members individually and silently rank all ideas with a ‘1’ being the first choice, a ‘2’ the second choice, and so on. All ideas must be ranked. No double or omitted ranking.
- c. After everyone has ranked the top ideas, sum the rows in the ‘total’ column.
- d. The team review the results and, looking at the total, selects and marks the ideas with the lowest totals. These ideas will now receive further consideration.
- e. If considerable disagreement among members exists, a second ranking may be carried out.



4. Structured Discussion: Discuss the vital few ideas to arrive at a consensus decision

- a. Remind the group of the criteria for choosing ideas.
- b. Each member decides which idea they think should be chosen from the shortlist. Members state their position (what) and rationale (why). These are recorded on a flipchart/post-it notes. This is not a debate, so each person presents their views without rebuttal or debate.
- c. When everyone has had a chance to present their views, the notes are reviewed and questions or added thoughts are aired. Open discussion and debate is held. Agreements are summarised, and a consensus is reached.
- d. If consensus cannot be reached, another structured discussion round is held by repeating steps 2–4.

Multi Vote	Ideas (to improve staff well-being)	Rank Order						Total
		ZL	KP	AO	RC	NE	PJ	
◆□	More quiet spaces to work in							
◆□●	Walking meetings	4	3	4	3	2	5	21
●■	Better understanding of career progression/development opportunities							
●◆○■	Peer support for employees with mental health difficulties	3	2	1	1	5	4	16
○□	On-site counselling sessions (drop-in)							
❖□○■	Mental health awareness training for all	2	1	3	2	1	3	12
	Team-led initiatives							
❖○	Dedicated room for exercise or games							
○	Regular review of job descriptions							
◆	In-house mental health support (volunteer team)							
●❖◆	Mental health first aid trainers	1	4	2	5	3	1	16
□	Practical guidance helping colleagues with mental health difficulties							
❖	Wellbeing activity with SEC							
■	Monthly director's surgery							
❖□●	Wellness recovery action plans	5	5	5	4	4	2	25

