The Strategy Unit.

Breaking the rules

NHS
Midlands and Lancashire
Commissioning Support Unit

Objective

To identify the underlying assumptions, unwritten rules and thinking that maintain the status quo...

...then deliberately break them to create innovative ideas for service delivery.

Breaking the rules is useful when you need to generate new ideas to solve a problem.

Often the solution is not obvious in the first instance, as we are constrained by 'rules' of the system.

Different types of rule...

1. **Habits or myths** that are perceived to be rules but might not be

2. **Administrative rules or policies** that organisational leaders have the power to change

3. **Rules that are in place due to regulations** or policies beyond the control of the organisation

Step 1: Define your problem

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

Define your problem as a statement:

- e.g. How do we...prevent overcrowding in the car park

- e.g. We want to...improve people's health and wellbeing

We are not thinking of solutions yet, so be careful not to make your statement too narrow.

https://www.johnhembree.com/2015/09/13/problems-ahead-be-ready/

Step 2. Identify the rules of the problem

Process map your problem and question it:

- Why is that step here?

- What are the rules behind what is happening here?

- Why do we need to do that?

This will help identify your rules and constraints. Keep it factual!

https://guardian.ng/guardian-woman/the-rules/

Step 3. Break the rules

One by one go through the rules and think about how you could break them!

What if...

Why don't we...

There may be some rules that you can't break, if so identify why and move on.

Sometimes, you just have to break the rules

https://donmcalister.com/2013/06/05/project-managers-must-know-when-to-break-the-rules/

Some examples (from primary care)

Problem	Old	New
Not enough GP's	Patients need to see a GP to access secondary care	Patients can self-refer to consultants
	GP's are the first port of call for health concerns	Advice and guidance can be provided by other professionals.
Patient list size increasing	Patients need to be registered with a GP to access services	Patients are registered nationally and can attend any GP they choose
High proportion of unnecessary appointments	The system is reactive to demand	The system is proactive in managing care
	Care is delivered through appointments	Care is delivered virtually or remotely

Step 4. Create your new world

Identify an idea to develop...

Then draw your new process and capture further ideas as you go – **be creative!**

https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/654710864555069579/

References

NHS Improvement (2018), Simple Rules and Breaking Them
https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/quality-service-improvement-and-redesign-qsir-tools/

Institute for Healthcare Improvement (2017), Breaking the Rules for Better Care
http://www.ihi.org/Engage/collaboratives/LeadershipAlliance/Documents/Breaking-Rules-Better-Care-Resource-Guide.pdf