

# **Edward de Bono's 6 Thinking Hats**

# Objective

**To think of other perspectives to a solution or problem – this is done by exploring the issue at hand from a range of different angles.**

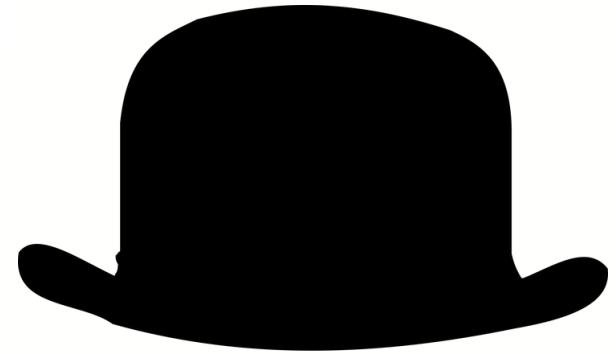
This tool is particularly useful when problem solving or to improve decision making.

When discussing your problem or solution, either:

Assign everyone a hat. They then participate in the discussion representing the views of that hat.

**OR**

As a group work through each hat in turn thinking how they would approach the issue.



# White hat

## Objective thinking

"I need the facts and only the facts"

I focus on numbers and information:

- What information do we know?
- What information do we need?
- What data is available to us?



# Red hat

## Emotional thinking

I go on feelings, hunches and intuition.

When looking at problems I focus on the emotional element and am open to sharing my fears, what I like, what I dislike, what my gut reaction and intuition are telling me.

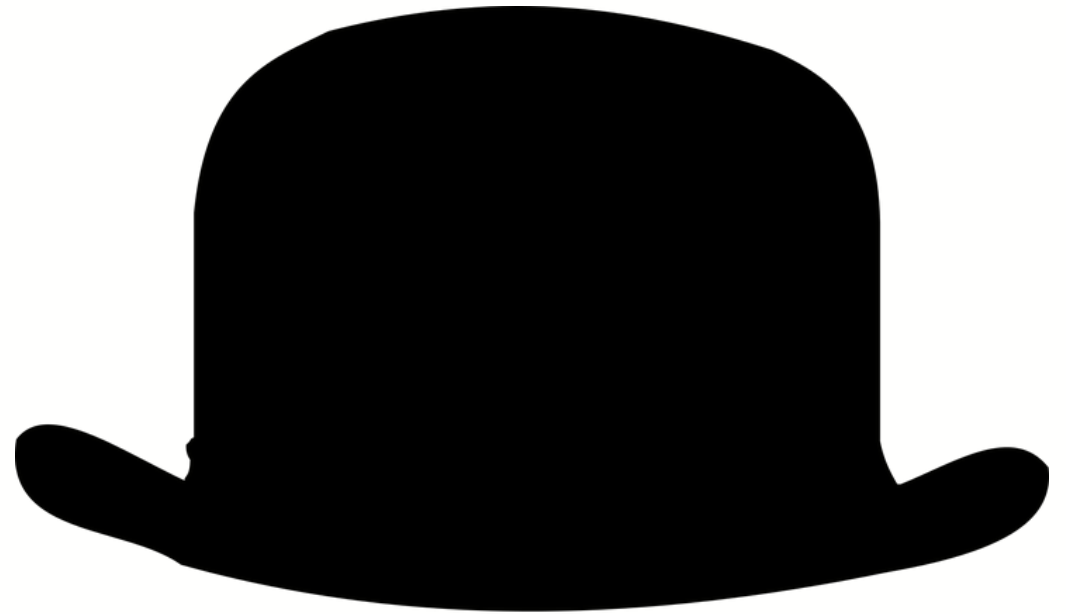


# Black hat

## Negative thinking

I will act as the devil's advocate, pointing out all of the reasons why the idea won't work.

I pick out all the flaws in the plan, spot the potential difficulties and dangers.



# Yellow hat

## Positive thinking

I am optimistic in every situation.

I will look for the benefits of the decision and/or idea, be constructive and probe for value.



# Green hat

## Creative thinking

I will always focus on the possibilities.

I will suggest new ideas and alternatives to overcoming the problem.





# Blue hat

## Thinking about thinking

I am the hat who directs which hats are required in the thinking process.

I keep an overview of discussions and identify where efforts should be focused.



# Template

Hat	Opinion
White (facts)	
Red (feelings)	
Black (negative)	
Yellow (positive)	
Green (creative)	
Blue (direction)	

## **Others' points of view**

***"The best ideas start as conversations"***

***Jonathan Ive***

# Objective

Another tool that is similar to thinking hats, and can be used in conjunction, is the other points of view tool.

**This tool will help you to approach a problem from the view of different individuals which may help identify further challenges or think of innovative solutions.**

Working as a group, identify your challenge or solution and work through each role one by one – using post-it-notes to suggest what they might say about it.

This provides constructive challenge and feedback and can be helpful in identifying other avenues that you may not have previously considered.

# Method

In order to avoid coming up with the same solutions to the same problem, it is helpful to look at it from others' points of view:

## **In healthcare we should always consider:**

- Service users
- Families and friends of service users
- Clinicians
- Staff

**But....**

# How might these people describe the issue?

Role	Opinion
A 6 year old child	
A pilot	
A comedian	
A banker	
A structural engineer	
A business expert	
A teacher	

**Use the opinions to help challenge and further develop your proposal or understanding of your problem.**

# References

NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement (2007), Thinking Differently,  
[http://www.innovationagency.nhs.uk/media/documents/PIP/thinking\\_differently%20Book%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.innovationagency.nhs.uk/media/documents/PIP/thinking_differently%20Book%20(2).pdf)

De Bono E. (1999) Six Thinking Hats, Boston: Back Bay Books.