
Solve This... Using only These

This is a very versatile and fun exercise that works brilliantly on Virtual Sessions. You can revisit the exercise a number of times throughout a long session simply as an energiser OR you can use it to explore problem solving, creativity, decision making and (with a small modification) teamwork.

Preparation

Ask delegates to go around their home and collect 5 or 6 objects that they think are useful (or however many you decide upon). Don't give any more guidance than that. Maybe give them 5 minutes to go away and do this.

You can ask each person to share what they've collected verbally or in chat if you wish and if time allows. This isn't essential though.

The Activity

Explain they throughout the session, you will share a number of problems that you need them to solve using ONLY the objects they've collected.

Once an object has been used, it is not available for use again.

Problems can be quite general e.g:

- It's raining and I need a way of staying dry
- I'm thirsty but I need something to collect water in
- I need to leave a note, but I have no pens or paper
- I need to serve hot food to people but have no utensils
- I've just had a shower but forgot my towel. I need to pass an open window to get to my clothes
- I need to keep a toddler entertained for 15 minutes

Or you can devise more work specific issues.

Ask each person to select an object, hold it up and explain how they would use it to solve your problem. Depending on group size you may ask one or two people to explain verbally and the rest to type in chat.

You can play all rounds at once, or throughout the day if using more as an energiser.

You COULD award points if you wanted to – but be mindful that some people will then start to take it very seriously. Alternatively, people could vote, or you could leave it with no scoring at all.

Alternatives

Intended to run individually, you can put people into small teams or pairs and ask them to select an object from their pool OR combine objects to solve the problem to draw out teamworking themes.