



Action Storming

What is it for?

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This is an action process to enable participants to try out new behaviours, particularly in difficult situations.

Time & People

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1 - 3 hours
6 - 30 people
Ideal: 12 - 18 people

Materials

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None

Source

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Johnnie Moore, Viv McWaters and Simo Routarinne
Also known as: The Helsinki Method, Problem Theatre

And...

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Action Storming works best when there is a very clear moment of conflict or difficulty, captured in a couple of lines of dialogue. Other participants may be reluctant to participate. In this case have 3 or 4 people always lined up to step in and try something. Fast iteration is the key, and a willingness to try out a range of things.

There is a slideshow about Action Storming here
<http://www.slideshare.net/vivmcwaters/action-storming>

- Ask the group to identify actual inter-personal situations that they have found difficult
- Select one situation that someone (the protagonist) is willing to explore further
- Isolate the interaction to about 2 or 3 lines of dialogue - ask the protagonist to explain exactly what was happening at the time they felt uncomfortable, or were having difficulty
- Invite another participant (or more if the situation requires it) to play the various roles in the scenario
- Play the scenario exactly as it occurred
- Ask the protagonist if that captures the situation. If not, ask them what needs to change, and play again until the protagonist says that it is okay
- Then ask the protagonist to leave the scene and come back in playing it differently (the other participants maintain their role)
- Suggest the protagonist try something they would not normally do, try something much larger, or much smaller - encourage rapid experimentation
- Avoid analysis
- If someone in the audience makes a suggestion, ask them to tag out the protagonist and come and try it
- Keep trying different behaviours until something happens that suggests the last behaviour works
- It is important to check in with the original protagonist to see if the 'solution' works for them
- There is no way of knowing how long this might take
- Repeat with a new scenario and new protagonist

Use your judgment on when to stop and debrief as this is a visceral, action method - a debrief takes people back into their heads. If you do want to debrief the activity the following questions may help:
- What was it like to try radically different behaviours in response to this situation?
- How is it different trying the behaviour compared to talking about what you might do?