

# Action Storming

Source: Johnnie Moore, Viv McWaters and Simo Routarinne [www.edgesofwork.com](http://www.edgesofwork.com)

Also known as: The Helsinki Method, Problem Theatre

## Overview

An action process to enable participants to try out new behaviours in difficult situations.

## Purpose

- Communication
- Assertiveness
- Flexibility
- Spontaneity
- Problem Solving

## Time

- 15 – 90 minutes

## Number of participants

- Any number, ideal, between 12 – 30

## Activity Flow

- 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

## Debrief

- A debrief may not be necessary 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?

## Further Information

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