



VIRTUAL COLLABORATION BEST PRACTICE

SABOTAGING OURSELVES

Dissolving the Walls Preventing Action: Meeting Practice, Working Practice

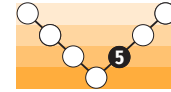
OBJECTIVE: Participants name and assess risks and identify mitigating factors; facilitator allows space for expressing concerns.

When people create visions and plans for the future, it's natural to think about roadblocks and problems that might be encountered along the way. This activity invites participants to examine the internal factors (within their group, team, or department) that could derail their plans. To keep it from being a problem dump, participants take another pass after naming potential issues—this time, with an eye to prevention and mitigation. This activity is often humorous and fun, but with a serious perspective on what could go wrong. Ending with mitigations also tends to lift the group's mood.



TIME
30-60 minutes

Facilitation Model
Stage 5
Supporting Action



Steps

1. If planning is complete, then briefly review the plan or vision. If not, then describe the context for doing this activity before planning (to pre-consider the pitfalls and take the first steps to prevention).
2. Ask participants to work independently, in pairs, or in small groups to name potential problems that will keep them from carrying out their plans or reaching their vision. Frame the brainstorming by asking specifically for factors that are within the group's power to control: *Knowing ourselves as we do, in what ways could we ourselves sabotage our own efforts?*
3. Collect and cluster the ideas using a virtual sticky note board, a shared document or with digital graphic recording.
4. Once the ideas are organized and understood, take another pass through them. This time as a whole group, list actions that the group can take either before it begins work or while it is engaged in it that will prevent or lessen the effect of each cluster of problems.
5. Close the session.

Tips

- Choose the brainstorm groupings based on the size of the group and whether you prefer a diversity of ideas or an indication of where there is alignment around a concern or group of concerns. For instance, if alignment is important, choose singles, pairs, or small groups so that duplication of ideas is likely.
- If the group is very small, do the entire activity as a whole group. Consider graphic recording instead of using virtual sticky notes and simply cluster as you go.
- If any action items arise that the group wants to do right away, note them in a separate list. It's common for groups to do some norm-setting during this activity.
- If the group is having trouble getting started, ask, "What's the absolute worst thing we could do—what would damage our chances of success the most?"
- If people start to name external factors over which they have no control, capture them to the side but gently bring them back to the main idea: how might we sabotage ourselves?

Supporting Tool Types

Audio Conferencing, Graphic Recording, Shared Documents, Sticky Note Boards, Web Conferencing