**Hot Potato**

Pass the problem and receive a heaping helping of solutions!

| Type | Workshop |
| --- | --- |
| Purpose | Problem-solving |
| Topics | Teambuilding, communication, creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration, fun |
| Audience | General |

## **About this activity**

A study by McKinsey & Company found that collaborative problem-solving can reduce the time to resolve issues by up to 50%, leading to more efficient operations.

In this engaging and collaborative workshop activity, participants form a dynamic circle where they collectively tackle a wide range of problems by passing them from one person to another. Each participant not only presents their unique challenge but also receives creative solutions and insights from their peers within the circle. Now that’s gravy!

Hot Potato is designed for a general audience with groups of 4-6 people, up to an unlimited number of participants, in an in-person setting.

#### Important details

| Best for groups of | 4-6, up to unlimited total participants |
| --- | --- |
| Preparation time | 5 minutes |
| Duration | 20 - 30 minutes |
| Required materials | * Paper * Pen/pencil * Timer |
| Required location | * Indoors |
| Noise level | Medium |

## **How it works**

#### Instructions

Before conducting the activity (5-10 minutes):

The facilitator will read the instructions and distribute blank paper and pens/pencils.

Conducting the activity:

Introduction (5 minutes):

The facilitator will share with participants a result from a study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology that suggests that groups are better at detecting subtle issues or problems that might go unnoticed by individuals. By a show of hands, the facilitator should ask participants if they agree with this finding.

Pass the Hot Potato (5-10 minutes):

The facilitator will divide participants into groups of 4-6 seated in circles and ask participants to think about a work-related problem they are currently facing. Each participant should write their problem at the top of their paper in the form of a question.

Once everyone has finished, the facilitator should inform participants that they should think of their sheet with their problem as a “hot potato” and pass it to the person on their right, who will read their question and have 1 minute to jot down as many solutions as they can think of to the problem. When the facilitator calls time, each person should pass their “hot potato” on to the right and the process will be repeated. This will continue until everyone in the circle gets their own sheet back.

Participants should read through the group members’ suggestions and note any ideas that are helpful for follow-up.

Wrap-Up (10-15 minutes):

The facilitator will gather the small groups back together. With the remaining time, the facilitator should discuss the following questions as a group and allow for responses as time allows:

1. Did anyone suggest a solution to your problem that you had not previously considered?
2. Did some of the suggestions cause you to think about other solutions to your problem that might work?
3. What does this exercise teach us about reaching out to others for ideas and solutions?

#### Rules

Every participant should keep writing solutions until the time is up for each turn.

#### Example

None

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## **Materials**

#### For facilitator

Timer

#### For attendee

Blank paper

Pen/pencil