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# BRAIN WRITING FOR TEAM COLLABORATION

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Anchoring change is critical to successful outcomes. We love when our clients reach out to us after our work is “officially” done. It might be for advice on how to achieve a particular goal or sustaining the changes they’ve put into place.

Recently Lynnette Johnson, Administrator of Atrium Post-Acute Care of Menominee, sent us an e-mail asking for some guidance:

*“I have asked that all managers think of a short term goal that they can work on over the next three months to make their department better... I wonder if you have a couple of really specific pointers for me on how I might guide this meeting tomorrow for the best results.”*

## **Our Advice?**

Brain writing is an alternate method to brainstorming that gets the creative juices flowing and encourages team collaboration. In a short period of time it generates lots of ideas that build upon each other. There are a variety of ways that you can conduct brainwriting, but the one that we recommended to Lynnette is outlined below:

### **Basic Instructions**

1. Have each participant write in an objective or problem statement on their own activity sheet (shared at the end of this article). This person will be the one responsible person committed to implementing the plan of action that is developed as a result of all the gathered ideas.
2. In spaces 1 – 9, shown in grey, have each person write their own ideas for meeting their objective. Any idea is acceptable!
3. After approximately ten minutes, ask each person to place their sheets in the center of the table. Mix them around and then have each person pick up an activity sheet, making sure they are not selecting their own sheet.
4. Ask the group to add ideas to the sheet they selected. This should last approximately five minutes.
5. Continue to swap sheets with different team members every five minutes until all white spaces are full on each person’s activity sheet.
6. At the end of the activity allow each responsible person time to review the ideas they gathered on their sheet.

7. Request that each person share with the group what idea they believe has the greatest potential for impact. While it is possible that all ideas will be realistic and impactful, have each person commit to one specific action item.

Brainwriting is an easy way to promote shared ideas and keeps a small amount of anonymity for those who might have hesitation or fear about speaking up in a crowd. It's also a great way to encourage participation without micromanaging the efforts!

### **The Results:**

The team from Menominee selected short-term goals that are three months in length. Their plan is to review progress weekly, and they have committed to having quarterly luncheons to report on the completed goals and set new goals. One participant shared, "It is really interesting to read goals from the other department heads. It makes you think from a different perspective."

Pictured right, Atrium Post-Acute Care of Menominee department heads are hard at work on their goals and interventions.



***“Thanks for your help in relaying this Brainwriting exercise!  
It was just what I was looking for!”***

***Lynnette Johnson***

If you are feeling stuck, looking for a resource or need a little bit of extra inspiration to achieve your goals, the team at Denise B. Scott is here to help.

*This article was written by staff member, Allison McAllister Duda.*

Visit our website and [sign up](#) to receive more ideas to inspire!

## Brain Writing Worksheet

**Objective:**

**Person responsible:**

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18
19	20	21

The idea that has the greatest potential for impact is: