



ED PIP: Diagnostic Phase

Guides: Six Thinking Hats

Six Thinking Hats® – Overview

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| Outcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand the complexities of a problem from different perspectives ■ Facilitate team thinking to generate ideas for improvement |
| Definition: 'What is it?' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A technique that uses the analogy of 6 different colour hats to represent six different perspectives (or ways of thinking) ■ A structured technique that helps refocus the team`s thinking and approach problems from different perspectives |
| Objectives: 'What is it used for?' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategic planning ■ Problem solving ■ Meeting management |
| Benefits: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage and empower all stakeholders ■ Level the playing field – all participants can and should wear each hat ■ Save time by organizing thinking ■ Use a common language ■ Encourages diversity of thought ■ When change is necessary and resistance to change is likely |
| When to use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Anytime a problem needs to be understood, good solutions need to be generated and decisions need to be made ■ Anytime parallel thinking is required (need to have everyone looking in the same direction) |

Tip for integrating Lean principles into healthcare:

- *Part of successfully implementing Lean in healthcare is adopting common language that may have originated in manufacturing and internalizing how it is used in a healthcare environment.*
- Six Thinking Hats® use the analogy of a hat to represent a way of thinking to help articulate different ideas.

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

WHITE HAT

Hat: neutral

Thinking: objective, fact finding



RED HAT

Hat: passion

Thinking: feelings, emotions



BLACK HAT

Hat: serious, somber

Thinking: Logical caution, careful



YELLOW HAT

Hat: sunny, upbeat

Thinking: Logical positive, hopeful



GREEN HAT

Hat: new, growth

Thinking: Creative, parallel



BLUE HAT

Hat: cool, clear

Thinking: Organized, detail oriented



Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

General Comments for using hats

- Direction, not description
 - Set out to think in a certain way or direction
 - “Let’s have some black hat thinking”
- Resist the temptation to categorize people
 - “He’s not a blue hat thinker”
 - All participants are encouraged to wear all hats
- A productive way of showcasing new thinking skills
 - “Show off” by becoming a better thinker
 - Avoid destructive right versus wrong judgments
- Use all hats, or just a few – customize use and sequence according to specific needs
- Ensure all participants have an opportunity to share their thoughts under each hat before moving to the next hat



- Use any hat as often as needed – no need to use all hats at all times
- Sequence can be preset or evolve
- Spend a short amount of time under each hat (< 5 minutes)
- While under each hat, stay committed to the idiom
- Can be used by individuals or teams

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

BLUE HAT

- Control of thinking and the process
- Hat often worn by the facilitator
- Organize thinking and discipline
- Open and close a creative thinking session or meeting with the blue hat
- Open with blue hat:
 - Introduce hats and sequence of use
 - Set agenda, scope and rules
 - What are we trying to answer or accomplish?
 - Define and clarify the problem
 - Ask the right questions
- Close with the blue hat:
 - Summarize
 - Outcome
 - Solution design or data request
 - Next steps



- The ability to ask the right questions to guide discussion and use hats properly is a critical skill of a facilitator – consider using the 5 why's

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

WHITE HAT

- Seek objective facts and figures
- What do we know? What don't we know? What do we need to know?
- Exclude opinions, judgments and hunches
- Remove feelings or perceptions
- Two levels of facts:
 - Perceived or believed
 - Verified and checked



- Be careful not to get bogged down in what you don't know or whether the information is available. These details can be worked out later in the process

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

RED HAT

- Emotions and feelings
- Impressions, intuition and hunches
- No logic or consistency needed
- Justification or rationale not required



- Avoid the temptation to stay under the red hat for longer than a few minutes – individuals and teams can easily get “caught up in the moment” and get bogged down

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

YELLOW HAT

- Logical positive – why it will work
- Speculative
- Hopeful, positive thinking
- Look at best case scenarios and benefits
- Exploration - look for opportunities
- Reason and justification is required



- Hint: Work under the yellow hat before the black hat when resistance to change is likely – focusing on the positive before the negative may reframe the discussion and reorient the group
- Document all benefits and opportunities

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

BLACK HAT

- Logical negative – why it won't work
- Cautious and careful
- Critical judgment and risk assessment
- Separates emotion from logical negative
- Focus on errors and evidence
- Honest, but not always fair
- Reason and justification is required



- Document all risks, issues and evidence generated
- Hint: be vigilant for 'red hat' tendencies. Steer individuals and the team away from assigning blame or casting judgment
- Just the facts – not the emotion

Six Thinking Hats® - Overview

GREEN HAT

- New concepts, new thinking
- Deliberate idea creation
- New approaches to problems
- Seek alternatives to the status quo – harvest ideas
- All ideas are considered



- Write down all ideas, alternatives and approaches generated

Tips & tricks for using the Six Thinking Hats®

- Use any hat as often as needed – no need to use all hats at all times
- Spend just a few minutes under each hat – more time can be dedicated to the green hat discussion
- Document all opportunities, benefits and positives generated during the yellow hat discussion
- Document all concerns, risks and problems identified during the black hat discussion
- Document all ideas generated during the green hat discussion
- Circulate feedback a summary of the discussion to all team members as soon as possible following the six thinking hat exercise – invite feedback



- Resist the temptation to categorize people
- Avoid the temptation to let individuals move through all, or multiple, hats in 'one turn'. Ensure each participant wears the same colour hat before moving on to the next colour
- Avoid the temptation to enable some individuals higher in the hierarchy (perceived or actual) to skip hats or dominate the discussion – the goal is to level the playing field

Hypothetical sequence # 1: Using the Six Thinking Hats®

Blue Hat

- Open discussion, clarify and validate the problem to be discussed

Red Hat

- How do we feel about the problem? How does it impact our patients and us, as individuals and the organization?

White Hat

- What do we know about the problem? About the past? About the future?
- What solutions have been tried before – what were the results? What else do we need to know?

Yellow Hat

- Proposals, opportunities for improvement
- What benefits can we see if this problem is minimized or eliminated?

Black Hat

- What do we need to be aware of – what risks should a solution consider?
- What groups or individuals may be negatively impacted by a potential solution?

Green Hat

- Given what we know and how we feel, what solutions might work?

Revisit yellow hat, black hat, red hat to create a 'top 10' list of solutions to consider

Blue Hat

- Summarize, next steps, 'to do' lists

Hypothetical sequence # 2: Using the Six Thinking Hats®

Blue Hat

- Open discussion, clarify and validate the problem to be discussed

Green Hat

- Generate new ideas and concepts

Blue Hat

- Organize ideas and details

Red Hat

- How do you feel about the ideas and concepts proposed – are we moving in the right direction?

Yellow Hat/ Black Hat

- Logical positive and negatives about the ideas and concepts proposed

White Hat

- What information do we need that will help us make a decision?

Blue Hat

- Summarize, next steps, “to do” lists

Hypothetical sequence # 3: Using the Six Thinking Hats®

Blue Hat

- Open discussion, clarify and validate the problem to be discussed

Yellow Hat

- Positive and logical assessment of known viable alternatives

Black Hat

- Challenge the alternatives
- Screen for unusable or improbable solutions

Green (and yellow) Hat

- Remove weaknesses, create better solutions that address concerns

Black Hat

- Further scrutiny. Fine tune

Yellow/ Green Hat again, if needed

Blue hat

- Summarize, next steps, “to do” lists