

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Thinking Spaces



The Thinking Spaces method promotes better and more efficient collaboration by creating a thinking space within an organization and by paying attention to 10 critical components.




The goal is for organizations to become thinking spaces that allow everyone space for more independent reflection and thought, since the quality of what we do relies heavily on the quality of the thinking we do. Thinking spaces can be created everywhere: during physical or virtual meetings, phone calls or social settings. The right kind of thinking leads to better forms of communication, listening skills and thus collaboration and outcomes. This means that we need to change the thinking to change the organization. 10 components have to be fostered to create a thinking space:

- Attention
- Equality
- Ease
- Feelings
- Place
- Incisive questions
- Appreciation
- Encouragement
- Information
- Diversity











We like to use a self-assessment in a workshop setting to initiate the reflection process. The results will then serve as a trigger, indicating how we can contribute to creating a thinking space on an individual level. However, more background knowledge might be necessary to implement the tool successfully, so simply contact us if you would like more information.

Duration 45–90 min	Participants unspecified	Facilitation printed self-assessment forms for participants
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Thinking Spaces | Process

Self-assessment 15–20 min 	Individual reflection 20 min 	Exchange in pairs 15–20 min 
<p>Every team member is asked to take a couple of minutes to fill out the self-assessment, which presents the 10 elements of thinking spaces.</p> <p>Important: Remind the participants to provide only truthful answers; this tool only provides an impact if they answer the questions truthfully. For the assessment, prepare the questionnaires printed out for each team member.</p>	<p>Give each person time to individually reflect on the results by using the following guiding question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the questions that you have rated with 1 or 2: Can your effectiveness and acceptance as a manager and a person be even better if you try out the suggestions contained in the formulations?• What do you want to try out first?	<p>In pairs, participants exchange the insights they gained during the exercise. Of course, they should only talk about the topics they feel comfortable discussing. This should be made clear by the facilitator.</p> <p>Questions that promote exchange:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What insights did I gain?• What lessons did I learn that help me in my present role and areas of development?• How can I apply what I have learned in practice? <p>In a workshop setting, the insights could then also be shared in plenary.</p>

Thinking Spaces | Elements

Attention 	Incisive questions 	Equality 	Appreciation 	Ease 
<p>Attentive listening promotes intelligence and problem-solving. This allows individuals to access their own solutions. Key elements include refraining from interrupting, maintaining eye contact and being patient with silence.</p>	<p>These types of questions can be asked to identify limiting assumptions and replace these assumptions with their positive opposite. Example: If everything in this situation were right for you, what would have been different?</p>	<p>Colleagues are viewed as thinking partners and equals. Everyone is given uninterrupted time to speak, fostering equality and preventing intimidation. Respect and equality form the foundation of such an environment.</p>	<p>Opportunities and new ideas flourish in environments where praise and recognition are prevalent. Genuine appreciation, conveyed through attention, respect and non-verbal cues, boosts intelligence and creates a positive atmosphere that supports innovation.</p>	<p>If you want to support people in their thinking, it sometimes makes sense to do nothing. A feeling of comfort enables people to open up and think more freely. Take your time and free yourself from the sense of haste and urgency.</p>
Encouragement 	Feelings 	Information 	Place 	Diversity 
<p>Competition often fosters a mentality of being “better than” rather than generating truly good ideas and solutions. Cultivating an environment of ease, respect and allowing everyone to have their say encourages individuals to develop their own innovative thoughts.</p>	<p>Suppressing emotions can hinder clear thinking. By expressing and acknowledging emotions without fear, we can facilitate clear thinking and support others in their own emotional processing, enabling them to recover and think independently.</p>	<p>Providing information at the right time is crucial for effective thinking. Withholding information can be a display of intellectual power. Creating a complete and accurate picture of reality requires access to correct information.</p>	<p>Choosing the right and suitable place is essential for the thinking process. Create an environment that clearly expresses: “You are important to me!”</p>	<p>Recognized differences are a source of high quality of thought. Diversity increases the intelligence of groups, and homogeneity is a form of denial, which leads to limiting assumptions.</p>

Thinking Spaces | Survey

How well do I manage to implement the following suggestions?

1 = (almost) never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = often, 4 = (almost) always

Nr.	Text	1	2	3	4
1	I remain attentive to what my conversation partner is saying and am not immediately preoccupied with my own answer.				
2	I like to look at the same issue and/or content in different ways.				
3	As a rule, I switch off electronic devices such as my cell phone, laptop or TV and other disruptive factors when I am having relevant conversations with people.				
4	I am convinced that all people are equal to me in their thinking.				
5	I can perceive my emotional reactions well during a conversation.				
6	In meetings, I pass on all the information available to me to those involved in order to support their thought processes.				
7	I can usually manage my time and energy well, so I rarely have a lot of stress.				
8	I am firmly convinced that striving for "better than" does not necessarily lead to good things.				
9	I treat feelings/emotions as facts to be taken seriously.				
10	I can also hold back sometimes and don't always have to tell people what to do and how to do it.				

Nr.	Text	1	2	3	4
11	When we have a problem to solve in our team, I ask my col-leagues for their questions and suggestions without immediately offering my own solutions.				
12	I do a good job of ensuring that everyone involved in a meeting has an equal opportunity to speak.				
13	Before I make a decision, I usually consult with people with different expertise and different professional backgrounds.				
14	In meetings, I encourage people to think beyond their own limits or to think in alternatives.				
15	I give myself enough time to think.				
16	I often tell the people around me what I think is good about them.				
17	In meetings, I express both what I think and what I feel.				
18	In conversational situations, I look the person speaking in the eye, even if they are not looking at me.				
19	I try to make my decisions on the basis of "truth".				
20	I always hold important meetings in pleasant surroundings so that everyone involved can relax.				

Thinking Spaces | Survey

How well do I manage to implement the following suggestions?

1 = (almost) never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = often, 4 = (almost) always

Nr.	Text	1	2	3	4
21	I can encourage people to be themselves, to say what they really think, rather than asking them verbally or non-verbally to agree with me.				
22	I urge people to reconsider their own conclusions.				
23	As a rule, I look for ways to promote and support the confidence and self-worth of the people around me.				
24	For me, it is natural to trust people who are older than me and have more authority.				
25	I can take my own physical needs into account in meetings.				
26	I don't interrupt people and let them finish their sentences.				
27	I know quite well what is constructive and already good in a conversation situation, but also what still needs to be improved.				
28	I am able to reduce competitive behavior among friends and colleagues.				
29	As a rule, I can keep a low profile and don't have to solve other people's problems.				
30	I like to be challenged by others to reconsider my own point of view.				

Nr.	Text	1	2	3	4
31	I actively encourage others to say what they really think.				
32	If an employee wants to talk to me, I give the conversation the appropriate amount of time.				
33	I am not afraid to say thank you on all sorts of occasions.				
34	I like to ask "what if..." questions.				
35	I try not to interrupt others when they are speaking.				
36	I try to maintain a relaxed attitude in meetings.				
37	I really try not to put my authority, position, status in the fore-ground in meetings.				
38	I try to ensure that others can also feel comfortable in our conversational situations.				
39	When others express their feelings and emotions, I can remain calm and relaxed.				
40	I prefer to look at the strengths of my conversation partners rather than their weaknesses.				

For the questions that you have rated 1 or 2, consider whether their effectiveness and acceptance as a manager and a person can be even better if you try out the suggestions contained in the formulations.