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PURPOSE This activity allows a group to use its creativity while working together. The game tests imagination, and challenges members to come up with a solution by using methods they may not normally employ.

TIME 45 to 60 minutes depending upon the number of groups.

SUPPLIES Flip chart paper, a large number of coloured wide-tip felt pens, overhead.

PARTICIPANTS 10 to 30 people.

METHOD Place an overhead that states:
You are a team of explorers who has discovered a conch shell the size of a large cathedral. Your team of explorers is preparing to travel inside the shell. Using a mind-map, describe what you encounter on your journey inside this shell, from the edge of the shell to its innermost regions.

Form groups of five or six. Advise the groups that they are to solve this problem using a mind-map.

Hand out instructions for mind-mapping.

Quickly demonstrate how to do a mind-map using an unrelated subject. Check that participants know what they are supposed to do.

Allow participants 20 to 30 minutes to complete their mind maps. Observe their problem-solving processes.

After 20 to 30 minutes, call time.

Have each group explain their mind-map.

DEBRIEFING Ask participants how they arrived at their descriptions (several should say that they had to imagine themselves inside the shell to describe it).

Relate how looking at a problem visually can help solve complex problems (it was essential to Einstein formulating the Theory of Relativity; Mandelbrot, da Vinci and others used images extensively to come up with innovative solutions to seemingly impossible problems).

MIND MAPPING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using coloured felt pens, draw a small picture (or write a phrase) in the centre of the flip chart paper representing the issue you want to solve, in this case what you see as you explore the giant shell;
2. Draw lines out from the main problem (it helps to use different colours for each line). Each line should represent a different aspect of your problem or issue;
3. Write down what each line represents either on top of or on the line or draw a picture illustrating each line;
4. Add other lines flowing off these main lines;
5. Write a word or short phrase on the smaller lines indicating what each new line represents (you may find that mind mapping works best for you if you write down the phrases or draw the images first and then connect them with the lines); and
6. Draw images next to those items that have the most meaning for you.