

Six Thinking Hats

Edward De Bono

What is Six Thinking Hats?

In traditional thinking we constantly find ourselves in conflict. Each side seeks to criticise the other point of view. The Six Thinking Hats method, however, encourages **Parallel Thinking**, where everyone explores all sides of an issue at the same time.

- Putting on one of the hats defines a certain type of thinking
- It allows participants to separate emotion from logic, creativity from information
- It allows participants to conduct their thinking in a systematic way

Why are they important?

There have been arguments that staff need to be nurtured and supported in their role and that increasing communication between staff and increasing opportunities for peer support can help to promote teacher well-being in schools.

There is a need for a safe space to collaborate with one another, to think together and share good practice, and problem solve for the benefit of not only the staff themselves, in terms of their well-being, but also for the children they are working with. This is an area that our team can support and facilitate, offering a formal and structured approach to enable teams to make better use of this time.

Feedback received

"very informative"

"loved the thinking hats strategy"

"enjoyed the hats – easy to structure thoughts"

Contact the EPS if you would like more information



When might you use Six Thinking Hats?

The Six Thinking Hats is a flexible approach that can be used across a variety of contexts, including: in SENCO meetings, with year group staff, with support staff or senior leadership teams, to help to address a wide variety of topics. This might include: unpicking a problem to arrive at the best approach or intervention for a specific child or group of children, or thinking around school policy development and implementation. The Educational Psychology Service can facilitate group discussions using this approach.

What happens when using the Six Thinking Hats?

Each of the Six Thinking Hats represents a different direction or type of thinking, which is identified by a colour:

- **White Hat Thinking** (neutral): is concerned with data, facts, known information
- **Black Hat Thinking** (cautious): is concerned with difficulties, potential problems
- **Red Hat Thinking** (emotions): is concerned with feelings, hunches, gut instinct, intuition
- **Green Hat Thinking** (creativity): is concerned with creativity, possibilities, solutions
- **Yellow Hat Thinking** (optimistic): is concerned with values and benefits
- **Blue Hat Thinking** (organisation): is concerned with managing the thinking process, next steps.

Helpful pointers

- The blue hat is useful to use at the start/end of a session to help manage the process
- Time allocated to the red hat can often be short as it is a request for feelings
- Set a specified amount of time per hat, to ensure there is structure and focus, for example one minute per person for each hat
- It is helpful to remain disciplined when using the thinking hats. Switching frequently and quickly may disrupt the flow of the thinking process

NB timings can be adjusted to fit your requirements.