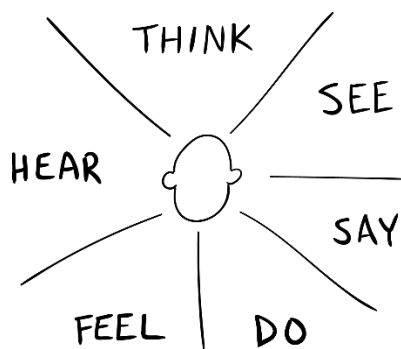


EMPATHY MAPPING



WHY IT MATTERS

When designing solutions for people you need to know what the experience is like for them. Empathy mapping is a powerful way to understand the richness of people's experience and communicate that experience to others. It gives you a way to look at all of the details that make up an experience and discover unexpected insights.

WHAT IS IT

Empathy mapping is a quick, easy visual tool to help you understand a person's experience. It focuses your attention on things that might get missed using more traditional engagement techniques (i.e. surveys, focus groups). It is typically done using a pen and paper or markers and large paper, if you are doing it with a group.

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE IT

Empathy mapping can be used in almost any context. It is a great way to engage with people to understand their experience. You can do it by yourself, with an individual or as a group. If you can't talk to the stakeholder you want to directly, you can also use empathy mapping to think about what things might be like for them. You can use it to understand the experience of people you serve, staff, leaders, funders, board members, or anyone else who has an experience with your organization.

HOW YOU DO IT

STEP 1: Figure out what experience you are trying to understand.

An example might be: "We want to understand what it is like for people to wait in our waiting room"

STEP 2: Go to the people who actually know about what you're trying to understand.

Actually visit the places and spaces where people are. Empathy mapping is best done face to face, but could be done over the phone if necessary. If you can't find people to do that, then go yourself to the places/spaces where people would be and use your own empathy to put yourself in their shoes.

STEP 3: Tell people what you are trying to understand and ask if they'll help you.

Ask them if you can talk to them about their experience and let them know it might take about 20 minutes. An example might be:

"We want to understand what it is like for you to wait in our waiting room. Would you be willing to share some of your wisdom with us? I will ask you some easy questions and the whole thing might take about 20 minutes to finish."

*Be sure to figure out any consent issues before you start

STEP 4: Ask people a question for each of the sections on empathy map and really listen to their answers.

Have a conversation with the person about each of the sections on the map. Some examples might be:

"What are you thinking as you wait in our waiting room?"

"What are you doing when you're here?"

"What do you see?"

"What were you trying to do? What got in your way?"

STEP 5: Write down what people say on the empathy map.

Write down people's responses in the relevant area on the empathy map. Try to use their exact words whenever possible.

STEP 6: Thank them for their wisdom and time!

STEP 7: Repeat the process until you keep hearing the same things over and over again.

There is no magic number of empathy maps that you have to do to get meaningful information. You can do 1 or 100+. You can feel good that you've done enough when you start hearing the same things over and over again. This means that you likely have a good representation of the types of experiences people are having.

WANT TO EMPATHY MAP AS A SMALL GROUP?

Just use the same process and ask everyone to give their answers. This can be a great way to get people thinking differently about a problem.

Put yourself in their shoes

Which persona are you thinking of?



What are their desired outcomes for their healthcare experience?

1.

2.

3.

What do they need to achieve these outcomes?

1.

2.

3.

What do they perceive to be obstacles?

1.

2.

3.

What single change would make the biggest impact?