CaHMW – Moderator Guide

**WHO SHOULD PLAY CaHMW?**

Often in government we experience blockers that a ‘How Might We?’ (HMW) question could unlock. It’s our hypothesis that teaching and practicing this skill to everyone could help empower people in their own organizations to help create the conditions for change. It is a great activity in the context of other group sessions focused on change or innovation.

**THE GOAL:**

This game was created to help people practice the art of forming how might we questions (HMWs) as a response to common blockers. There is no way to “win or lose” at this game, but rather to help a group learn together and practice.

**THE MODERATOR:**

As a moderator, you’re there to help the larger group work through the game. People will still want to “win” or be right... your job is to facilitate the collaborative nature of unblocking opportunities. You’ll set up and introduce the idea and help the teams de-brief afterwards. During game play, you can circulate and help keep teams moving through the content. If it’s a small group, maybe you’re just playing alongside them.

**BEFORE THE GAME:**

Ensure you have enough sets the game for each group. The game flows best with 4 to 6 players so divide participants roughly and have a game set for each group.

The room should be set up so groups can play around a table without being too close to other groups.

Each game consists of a set of instructions, a set of situation cards (black) and blockers (white), and a cheat sheet handout.

(You can also have a cheat handout as a “take away” for everyone, but don’t give these out at the start)

You can also provide a sheet of “just right” HMW examples for each table.

**INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

Plan for a few minutes to introduce the idea of HMW’s to the group before they play.

You can use the slides provided or create your own.

Some groups find it useful for the facilitator to “demonstrate” a round of play at the beginning.

**DURING PLAY (30 minutes):**

The first few cards are usually the slowest, but then groups begin to get the idea. A good suggestion is to ask people to look at the blocker and try to figure out what are the underlying assumptions that might not be true.

Circulate and listen in at tables. Are people stuck? Too narrow? Too broad? Offer encouragement and suggestions.

If a HMW sounds really prescriptive towards a specific solution (i.e. HMW implement the blockchain to make people follow the law), ask “why” that is a good idea... often that step back will help frame the HMW at the right level.

If a HMW is really broad (ie HMW communicate better) ask the group what’s one specific way to answer the question… suggest they review the examples…

Collect feedback on the cards and cheat content. If there’s a new scenario, blocker, or insight be sure to capture that so it can be incorporated in future versions.

**WRAPPING UP (10-15 minutes):**

After about 30 minutes of play see how groups are getting along. Have they worked through most of the content? Are they getting the hang of it?

In the larger group ask each of the tables to report back their reflections on the game.

Did the situations and blockers seem familiar?

How did they find “flipping” blockers into How Might We?

Did they have other insights related to certain blockers?

Is anyone going to try using HMW? in a situation they’re encountering?

Participants will often report that it’s hard. We like to acknowledge this and describe it as a muscle that you need to exercise... it can get stronger... you need to practice.

One suggested way to start practicing is by catching when you block yourself and trying to reframe as a HMW.