

WHAT is the Empathize mode

Empathy is the centerpiece of a human-centered design process. The Empathize mode is the work you do to understand people, within the context of your design challenge. It is your effort to understand the way they do things and why, their physical and emotional needs, how they think about world, and what is meaningful to them.

WHY empathize

As a design thinker, the problems you are trying to solve are rarely your own—they are those of a particular group of people; in order to design for them, you must gain empathy for who they are and what is important to them.

Observing what people do and how they interact with their environment gives you clues about what they think and feel. It also helps you learn about what they need. By watching people, you can capture physical manifestations of their experiences - what they do and say. This will allow you to infer the intangible meaning of those experiences in order to uncover insights. These insights give you direction to create innovative solutions. The best solutions come out of the best insights into human behavior. But learning to recognize those insights is harder than you might think. Why? Because our minds automatically filter out a lot of information without our even realizing it. We need to learn to see things “with a fresh set of eyes,” and empathizing is what gives us those new eyes.

Engaging with people directly reveals a tremendous amount about the way they think and the values they hold. Sometimes these thoughts and values are not obvious to the people who hold them, and a good conversation can surprise both the designer and the subject by the unanticipated insights that are revealed. The stories that people tell and the things that people say they do—even if they are different from what they actually do—are strong indicators of their deeply held beliefs about the way the world is. Good designs are built on a solid understanding of these beliefs and values.

Prioritization/Brainstorming Resources

IN PERSON OPTIONS:

- Consider established groups that may already be meeting that you could join in with to ask a few questions. Ask for time on their meeting agenda.
- Hold a gallery walk.
 - Put large post it notes/sheets of paper with the question you need answered written at the top. Provide clean markers or pens for participants to write their answers to the posed questions.
 - To vote in a gallery walk format, have the ideas already written out and ask people to mark their preferences with a marker/sticker/etc. Count the stickers to see which ideas got the most votes.
- Use nominal group technique. This works best when a smaller number of ideas need to be prioritized. Consider another tool if you are working with more than 15 -20 ideas.
 - As a group, make a list of issues to be prioritized. As the group makes the list, be sure to clarify any statements where the meaning is unclear.
 - If you have a group not as willing to brainstorm out loud, ask individuals to do silent brainstorming and then have everyone take turns sharing their ideas with the group. If ideas are duplicative, they do not need to be written on the list more than once. Seek consensus from the group that the ideas are truly duplicative before moving on.
 - Once all ideas have been identified assign each idea a letter. For example,
 - A. Mental Health Access
 - B. Diabetes Education
 - C. Safe bike routes
 - D. Access to fresh fruits and vegetables
 - Participants should then rank individually each statement in order of importance. The highest number of points should go to the most important statement. For the example above, the individual would rate their top priority a 4. Second priority a 3. Third priority a 2. Fourth priority a 1.
 - The group leader then records each individual ranking and finds a total for each statement on the list. The item with the highest score is the group's top priority.

VIRTUAL OPTIONS:

- Use a conference call or webinar format to pull people together to brainstorm. Use a camera whenever possible so people can see you. Use Powerpoint, [Trello](#), or [Idea Boardz](#) to record brainstorming ideas.
 - If on a conference call, be sure to send out the ideas after the call so that participants can comment on collected feedback. To do that, you'll need to gather contact information from participants.
 - If on a webinar, people can use the chat function as well as speak. The chat function is useful for participants who are hesitant to speak out in groups.
- Use a survey tool to gather feedback. Include both close-ended and open-ended questions in your survey. [Survey Monkey](#) has a free tool you can use for up to 40 respondents. You can ask unlimited questions in your survey. Once you have the responses you can send out the results in a separate survey to be prioritized.
- Use [Idea Boardz](#) (free resource) for voting as well as brainstorming. For voting, add the post it notes you want people to vote on, and provide people with the link to the board along with directions for voting. For brainstorming, ask participants to put their ideas on virtual post it notes within the program.
- As part of a focus group, use word clouds to gather responses/themes. You can do this using [Poll Everywhere](#). This program is free for an audience size up to 25. Get instant responses by sharing the link with participants. You can also pose questions over this format with predetermined or open answers.

Problem Statement

What is a problem statement?

A problem statement is the description of an issue currently existing which needs to be addressed. It provides the context for the research study and generates the questions which the research aims to answer. The statement of the problem is the focal point of any research. A good problem statement is just one sentence (with several paragraphs of elaboration). The paragraphs could cover present persuasive arguments that make the problem important enough to study. They could include the opinions of others (politicians, futurists, other professionals); explanations of how the problem relates to business, social or political trends via presentation of data that demonstrates the scope and depth of the problem.

A well articulated statement of the problem establishes the foundation for everything to follow in the proposal and will render less problematic most of the conceptual, theoretical and methodological obstacles typically encountered during the process of proposal development. This means that, in subsequent sections of the proposal, there should be no surprises, such as categories, questions, variables or data sources that come out of nowhere: if it can't be found in the problem section, at least at the implicit level, then it either does not belong in the study or the problem statement needs to be re-written.

Problem statement should be confined in 1 page but if there is a need to increase pages then it must not be more than 3 pages. Problem statement contains following components:

- **What is Problem:** First thing to mention in problem statement is to describe the problem clearly.
- **Where it happened:** After mentioning the problem, there is also a need to identify and describe the place where problem happened in a society or in an object.
- **When it occurred:** Time of problem is also an essential thing. For writing problem statement, it is necessary to indicate when problem occurred. At this stage not only time but circumstance, environment, etc. are also important factors which should be discussed. If there are some specific factors whose appearance or existence may cause the problem that also must present there.
- **To what extent:** Problem statement is considered as most important part of the study. It is considered as base of the study which should be written properly and clearly. So it must be written with full of its extent and intensity that reveal study must be conducted on this problem.
- **How I know:** At this point there is a need to mention how you know about the problem and extent of the problem, present references there.
- **Conceptual Framework:** Present conceptual framework which you assumed in the light of above discussed problem. Also explain construct and variables and their relationships.
- **Gap:** Gap of the study is an essence of problem statement. So showing gap at this stage is very important. Gap will show how your conceptual framework is unique and researchable.
- **Evidence/Logic:** What is the need to conduct this study? Provide logics and also support from literature regarding the need of the study.

- **Consequences:** What will happen if you don't conduct the study? In short at this stage explain the need of study.
- **Purpose:** Write purpose of the study and also mention about methodology of the current study.

Components of problem statement?

Problem statements often have three elements:

1. The problem itself, stated clearly and with enough contextual detail to establish why it is important.
2. The method of solving the problem, often stated as a claim or a working thesis.
3. The purpose, statement of objective and scope of the project being proposed.

These elements should be brief so that the reader does not get lost. One page is enough for a statement problem.

Criteria for Research Problem Statements:

- The statement of the problem should clearly indicate what is to be investigated.
- The actual statement may be in a declarative or in a question form.
- The statement should indicate the variables of interest and the specific relationship between the variables that are to be studied.
- Please note: In some qualitative methodologies, a statement of variables will not be possible and should not be done. However, an explanation of the qualitative methodology and the parameters of the research methodology should be explained.

4. We prefer Research Problem statements to have an outcomes based verb at or near the beginning. Some good outcome based verbs are:

Identify	define	relate	describe	review	justify	indicate
formulate	explain	compare	contrast	suggest	interpret	analyse
assess	construct	apply	demonstrate	illustrate	categorise	deduce
create	resolve	debate	propose	differentiate	construct	argue
derive	design	evaluate	establish	conceptualise	suggest	integrate
compile	develop	challenge	consolidate	clarify	criticise	formulate
ascertain	appraise	calculate	recommend			

5. Verbs such as “understand”, “explore”, “investigate”, “examine” and “discuss” are poor verbs as they describe processes, not outcomes, eg you can discuss something endlessly without ever having to make recommendations, draw conclusions or offer a result. You might be exploring, examining or discussing as part of your process, but they cannot be the end result of your research, which should be more tangible.
6. If your Research Problem contains two or more concepts / ideas, then break it down into sub-problems, so that each sub-problem consists of one idea only. Each sub-problem should contain key words that you can use in your literature search (using the electronic library databases and Google Scholar) on that sub-problem.
7. Your Research Problem statement should be your sub-problems added together – no more and no less. Do not introduce any new ideas when you write your sub-problems. For example:

The Main problem is to

Analyse and evaluate the role of entrepreneurship in the establishment of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and ascertain the value of the economic contributions of these firms in emerging markets.

Sub-problem 1

Analyse and evaluate the role of entrepreneurship in establishing SMMEs in emerging markets. (Here your key search terms for your literature review could be “entrepreneurship”, “SMME” and “emerging markets”)

Sub-problem 2

Evaluate the economic contribution of SMMEs to growth and development in emerging markets. (Here your search terms could be “economic contribution”, “economic growth”, “emerging market development”)