**Activity- Guided Brainstorming Techniques to Generate Solutions for a Specific Product Challenge**

**Activity Title:**

**Guided Brainstorming Techniques to Generate Solutions for a Specific Product Challenge**

**Objective:**

To help participants apply **guided brainstorming techniques** for generating **creative, user-centered, and feasible solutions** to a specific product or design challenge.

The activity focuses on **structured ideation**, ensuring that ideas are both **divergent** (creative and wide-ranging) and **convergent** (practical and focused).

**Duration:**

90 minutes (can be adapted to 60 minutes)

**Materials Required:**

* Whiteboard or flip chart
* Sticky notes (multiple colors)
* Markers and pens
* Timer or stopwatch
* Printed copies of the **product challenge brief**
* Idea evaluation matrix sheets (Feasibility vs. Impact grid)
* Dot stickers (for voting)

**Group Size:**

4–6 participants per team

**Pre-requisites:**

* Participants should have **basic understanding** of the product or problem area.
* Facilitator should prepare a **clear, real-world product challenge** (e.g., “How can we improve the user onboarding experience for our app?” or “How can we reduce cart abandonment in e-commerce?”).

**Activity Overview:**

This activity guides participants through a **structured brainstorming process** using techniques that encourage both **creative thinking** and **focus on user needs.**  
It combines methods from **Divergent Thinking**, **Lateral Thinking**, and **Convergent Thinking** to move from broad idea generation to practical solution selection.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

**Step 1: Introduction and Briefing (10 minutes)**

Facilitator introduces:

* The purpose of brainstorming — to **generate ideas without judgment**.
* The difference between **unstructured brainstorming** (free flow of ideas) and **guided brainstorming** (structured steps to deepen thinking).
* The **product challenge** statement.

**Example Product Challenge:**  
“How might we improve user retention in a fitness tracking app for new users within their first 7 days?”

Facilitator explains that teams will use **guided techniques** to explore and refine solutions systematically.

**Step 2: Set Ground Rules for Brainstorming (5 minutes)**

Before starting, establish basic rules:

1. Defer judgment — no idea is “bad” during brainstorming.
2. Encourage quantity — aim for many ideas before evaluating.
3. Build on others’ ideas — use “Yes, and…” instead of “No, but…”
4. Stay focused on the problem statement.
5. Keep ideas user-centered and solution-oriented.

**Step 3: Warm-Up Exercise (5 minutes)**

A short creativity warm-up helps participants break mental barriers.  
**Example:** “List as many uses as you can for a paperclip in 60 seconds.”  
The goal is to set a free-thinking mindset before the main activity.

**Step 4: Guided Brainstorming – Divergent Thinking Phase (30 minutes)**

Facilitator guides participants through **three structured brainstorming techniques**, each lasting about 10 minutes:

**Technique 1: “How Might We” (HMW) Questions**

Transform the challenge into open-ended questions beginning with “How might we…?”

* Example: “How might we make new users feel accomplished on their first day?”
* Each group creates 3–5 HMW questions.
* Participants generate ideas for each HMW question on sticky notes.

**Technique 2: SCAMPER Method**

Use the SCAMPER framework to generate new ideas by modifying existing ones.  
SCAMPER stands for:  
**S – Substitute** (What if we replaced a component or process?)  
**C – Combine** (What if we merged two features?)  
**A – Adapt** (Can we apply something from another context?)  
**M – Modify** (Can we change size, shape, color, or function?)  
**P – Put to another use** (Can we reuse existing functionality?)  
**E – Eliminate** (What can we remove or simplify?)  
**R – Reverse/Rearrange** (Can we do it backward or in a different order?)

Teams apply SCAMPER to their challenge and write down new solutions on sticky notes.

**Technique 3: Brainwriting (Silent Idea Generation)**

Instead of speaking ideas aloud, each participant silently writes 3 ideas on a sheet and passes it to the next person.  
Each participant builds on others’ ideas by adding new thoughts or refinements.  
This technique helps introverts contribute and encourages building upon others’ creativity.

**At the end of this phase:**  
Each group should have **at least 20–30 raw ideas** on sticky notes.

**Step 5: Organize and Cluster Ideas (10 minutes)**

* Teams group similar ideas into themes or categories (e.g., onboarding experience, gamification, user motivation, technical improvements).
* Label clusters with descriptive headings.
* Eliminate duplicates while keeping unique variations.

This step transitions from **divergent thinking** to **structured convergence**.

**Step 6: Evaluate and Prioritize Ideas (15 minutes)**

**Step 6.1: Apply the Feasibility vs. Impact Matrix**

* Draw a 2x2 grid:
  + X-axis: Feasibility (Easy to Hard)
  + Y-axis: Impact (Low to High)
* Place each idea cluster on the grid.

**Interpretation:**

* Top-right quadrant (High Impact, Easy Feasibility) = “Quick Wins.”
* Bottom-right (High Impact, Hard Feasibility) = “Strategic Bets.”
* Bottom-left (Low Impact, Hard Feasibility) = “Avoid.”

**Step 6.2: Dot Voting**

Each participant gets 3–5 dot stickers to vote for ideas they believe have the highest potential.  
The ideas with the most votes move forward for further exploration or prototyping.

**Step 7: Presentation and Reflection (10 minutes)**

Each group presents their top 3 concepts in a 2-minute pitch.  
Facilitator leads reflection using questions:

* Which technique helped you most in generating ideas?
* Did any unexpected insights emerge?
* How did collaboration influence creativity?
* How can we take these ideas forward into prototyping?

**Summary**

This activity helps participants move beyond unstructured idea generation by using **guided brainstorming methods** rooted in creativity science and design thinking.  
Through structured guidance, participants learn to think **broadly and deeply**, evaluate collaboratively, and translate creativity into **practical, user-centered solutions**.