

Simplify Your Organizing Decisions: **Six Hats Thinking Tool**

Courtesy of Organize DIY
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The concept of lateral thinking and the six hats technique was created by Dr. Edward de Bono. This technique helps promote different types of thinking on the same topic by encouraging you to look separately and individually at each perspective when making a decision. For our purpose, I have altered this technique to help you overcome emotion-based organizing decisions and barriers by reminding you to evaluate the problem from multiple perspectives. Each hat color represents a different perspective of the same decision.

As an added bonus, when organizing with someone else, the hats help you take the emotion or blame out of your discussion by encouraging you to use phrases like, "From your comment, you must be wearing a black hat - let's wear our green hat first to identify all the possibilities". Or "We'll first gather information with our white hat, identify possibilities with our green hat, then hash out reasons why this won't work (black hat)."

Tips for using: There's no specific hat order. You may not need all hats for each project. You could set a timer so that you are able to allot time to each hat. When working with someone else, you could actually wear a hat or hold up a picture of the hat so that everyone remembers which hat is being discussed. This is such a fun and useful tool!

	Hat Color	Represents	Reminder	Questions to ask
	White Hat Information	White hat thinking focuses on non-emotional, objective, and descriptions, helping you identify what is now or current. The basics of who, what, when, where and how. Other white hat traits are factual information, data, trends, analytics, and identifying gaps in knowledge.	No color or Neutral	What information do we have and what do we need? Who else uses this space? Who would like to be involved? Which Ask Yourself questions will be helpful?
	Red Hat Feelings	Wearing the red hat, you look at problems using intuition, gut reaction, and emotion. All emotions are legitimate and don't require justification (danger, anger, frustration, happiness, and serenity are examples). Think about how other people will react emotionally. Try to understand the responses of people who do not fully know your reasoning.	Red Heart or Red Rose	What is your gut reaction? How does this space make you feel? Will I be happy about this in the future? What memories are triggered with this space? How will others feel standing here? How do I want them to feel?
	Black Hat Judgment	Using black hat thinking, you look at all the negatives, weaknesses, or concerns of the decision or plan. Black represents cautiousness and defensiveness and helps you spot fatal flaws. This hat is important because it highlights the weak points so that they can be eliminated.	Gloom and Doom	What are the problems? What are the risks? What could cause this to fail? What negative comments will others say? Will everyone use the item or process? Will we incur extra spending, clutter, or waste more time using this item or process?
	Yellow Hat Strengths	The yellow hat is the positive, optimistic viewpoint that helps you to see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it. This hat helps to create your vision for your space.	Bright Sunshine	What are the benefits, strengths and good points? How will this help us? Why does it work? What are the benefits of the green hat suggestions?
	Green Hat Creativity	The Green Hat stands for growth, creativity, possibilities, and solutions. This hat represents change and new ideas without judgement. A green hat discussion is a great for brainstorming possible organizing solutions.	Tree Branching Out & Growing	What can happen? What is possible? How can it be done differently? What would happen if? Who else could benefit from this? Is there another way to fix this? What ideas or suggestions do others have?
	Blue Hat Thinking	This hat runs the process and focuses on the overall picture when defining the problem and establishes which thinking hats we need to wear. A blue hat discussion is appropriate for mind mapping and problem identification. If we were working in person, I would be wearing the blue hat while stepping you through this process.	Blue Sky Overhead	What's the process? Big picture? Which hat should we put on? Are we on the same page and wearing the same hat? Which hat have we forgotten?