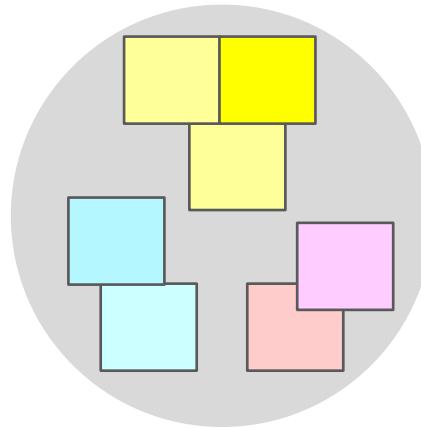# Continuous Improvement Toolkit

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Think of situations where you needed to organize many ideas or information to **make sense** of them.
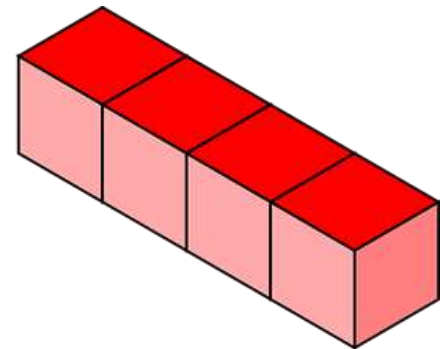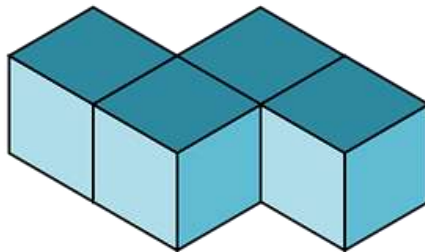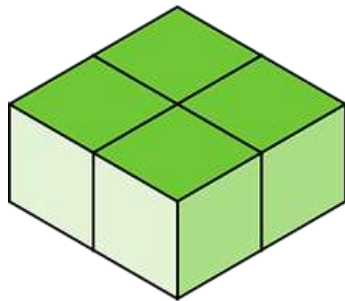
Such information and ideas are important, and you need to make sure that you wouldn't miss any them.

What would you do?

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

An affinity diagram is **grouping method** that is used to classify items together into meaningful categories.
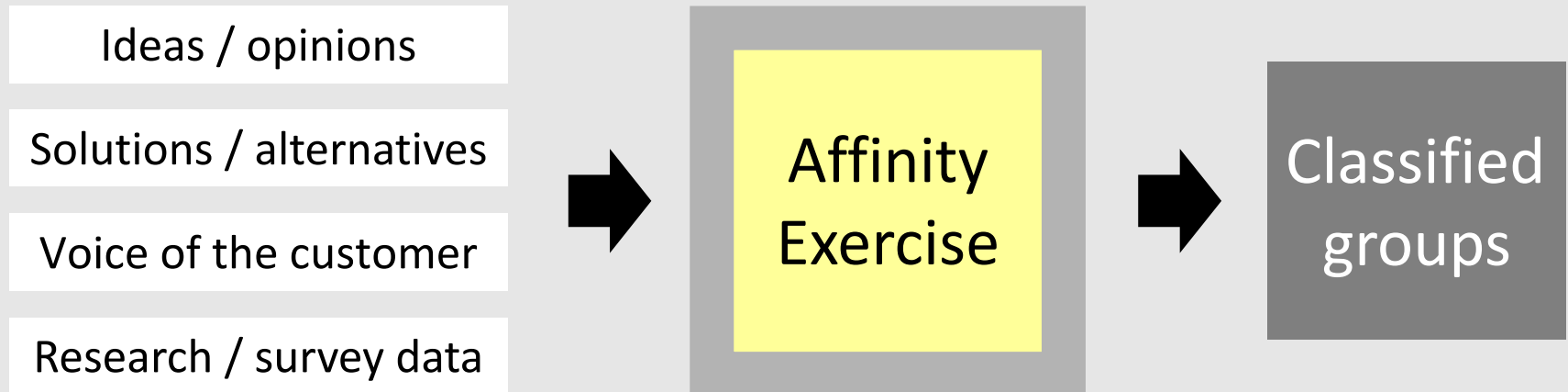
AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Often used to **capture** and **group** the output
of brainstorming and problem-solving meetings
in order to provide better understanding of the topic.

The outcome is a better **understanding** of the problem or topic.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Allows to classify many **thoughts** produced by a team or customers for further review and analysis.
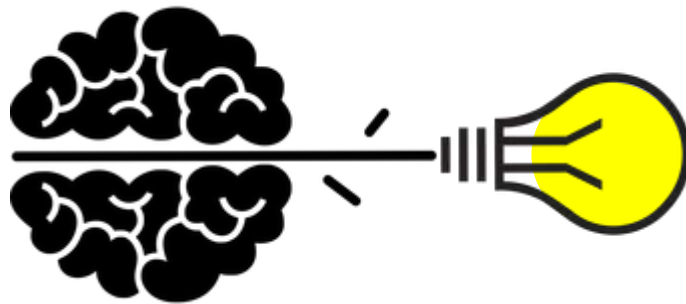
| Ideas / opinions |
| Solutions / alternatives |
| Voice of the customer |
| Research / survey data |

➡️ **Affinity Exercise** ➡️ **Classified groups**

Information can be written, verbal, or both

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

When to Use?

During idea-generation and **brainstorming** sessions

Usually conducted **after** brainstorming, nominal group technique, etc.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

During **problem-solving** sessions

When the problem is **subjective** and held in the minds of many people

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

When to Use?

At any stage in **research** and in verbatim/text analysis

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Can be used to organize the **voice of the customer**

Feedback from customers is valuable information and needs to be organized in an appropriate manner to be **useful**

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Used to find useful messages in **customer statements** which may come from different sources (discussions, complaints, interviews, etc.)
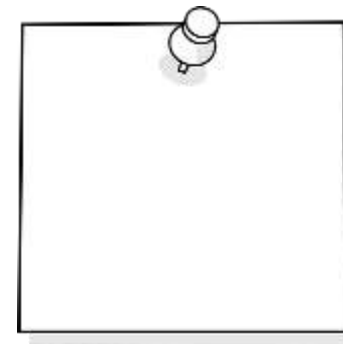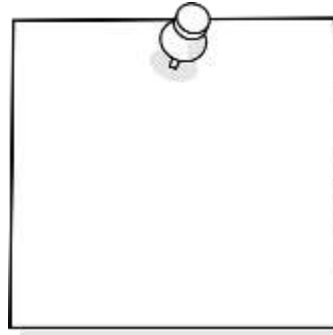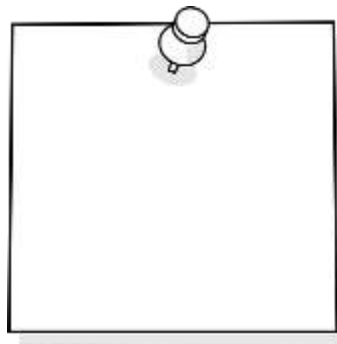
AFFINITY DIAGRAM

BENEFITS

Helps organize ideas and information and see how they are connected

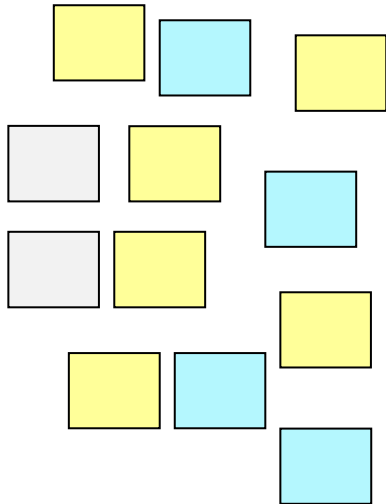Helps identifies the characteristics that distinguish each category

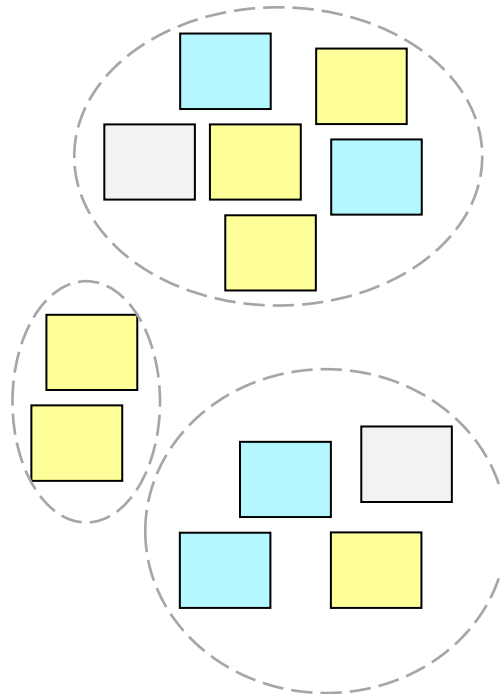Helps bringing out the best ideas and leads to better results

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Three Basic Steps . . .
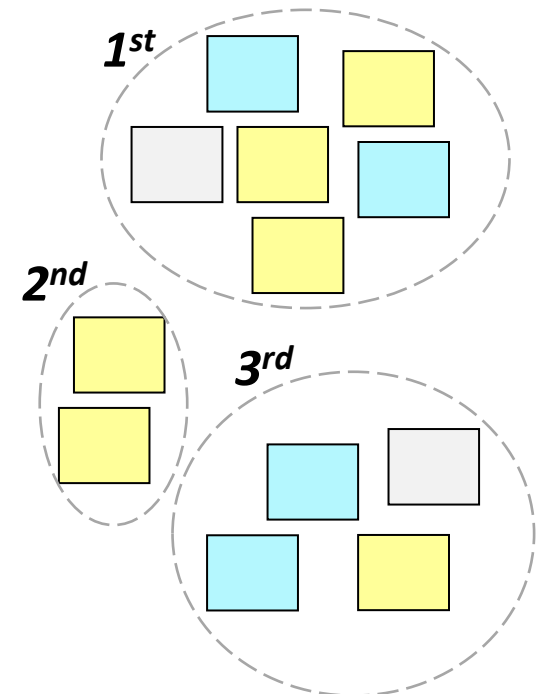
COLLECT

GROUP

LABEL

1st

2nd

3rd

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

How to Conduct an Affinity Exercise

You will need to hold an affinity mapping **workshop**

You will also need to assign a **facilitator** to lead the discussion
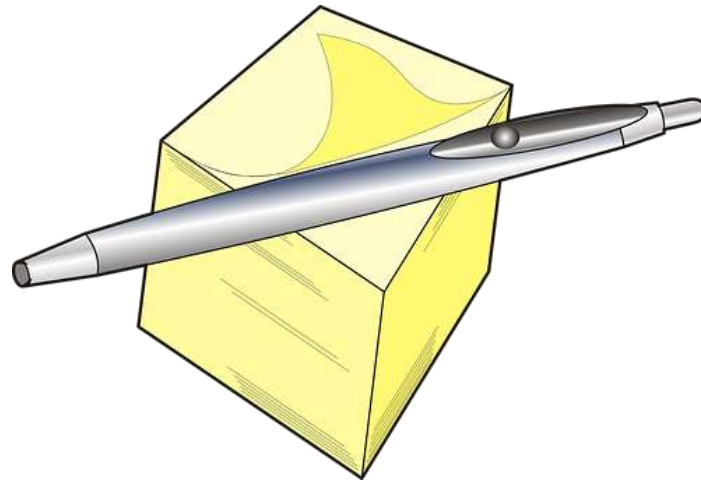
AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Gather the team, then **present the topic** or define the problem clearly

Give them sticky-notes then ask them to **write one idea** or response per sticky-note
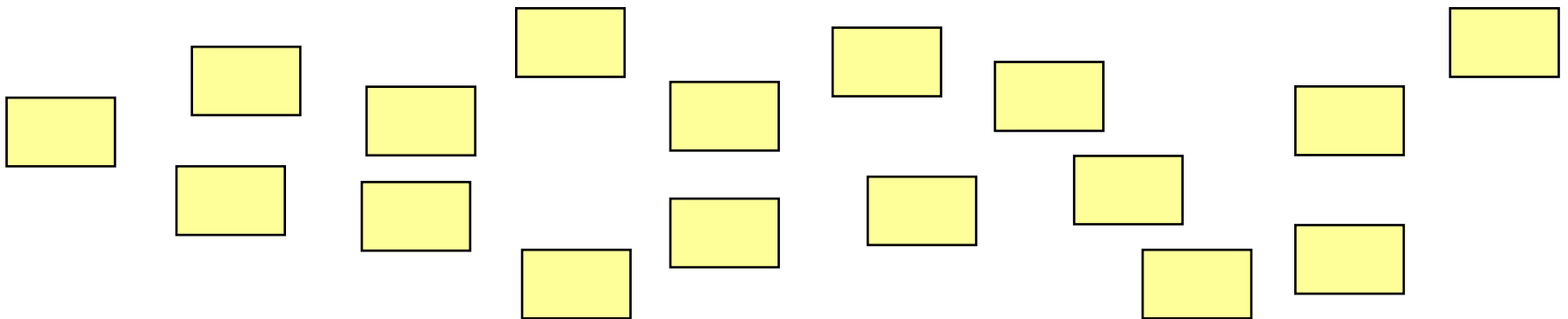
AFFINITY DIAGRAM

How to Conduct an Affinity Exercise

Collect the sticky notes and stick them randomly on the wall or a table

Do not organize them initially on any sort of order
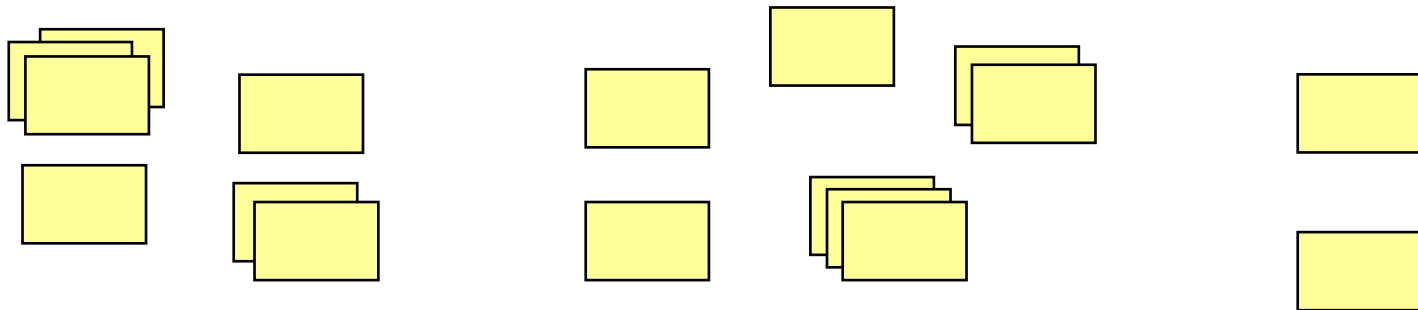
You will organize the information into categories that make sense in a later step

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

How to Conduct an Affinity Exercise

Lead the participants to **group** the ideas into categories

Make sure that people are **collaborating** in the categorization process
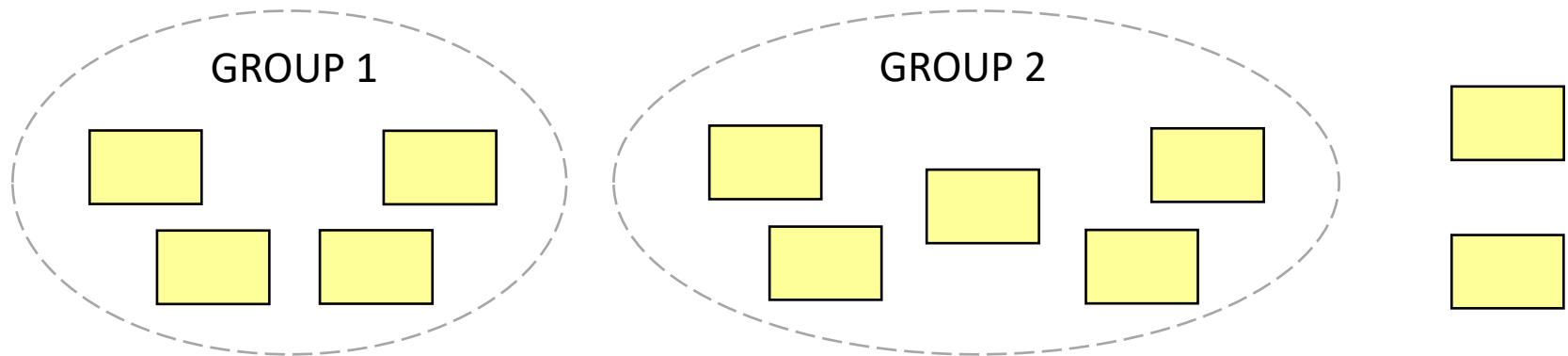
Start small by looking for just two items that are related to one another, then group them together

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

How to Conduct an Affinity Exercise

Lead the participants to **label** the categories

Use the produced affinity diagram to guide future planning and analysis
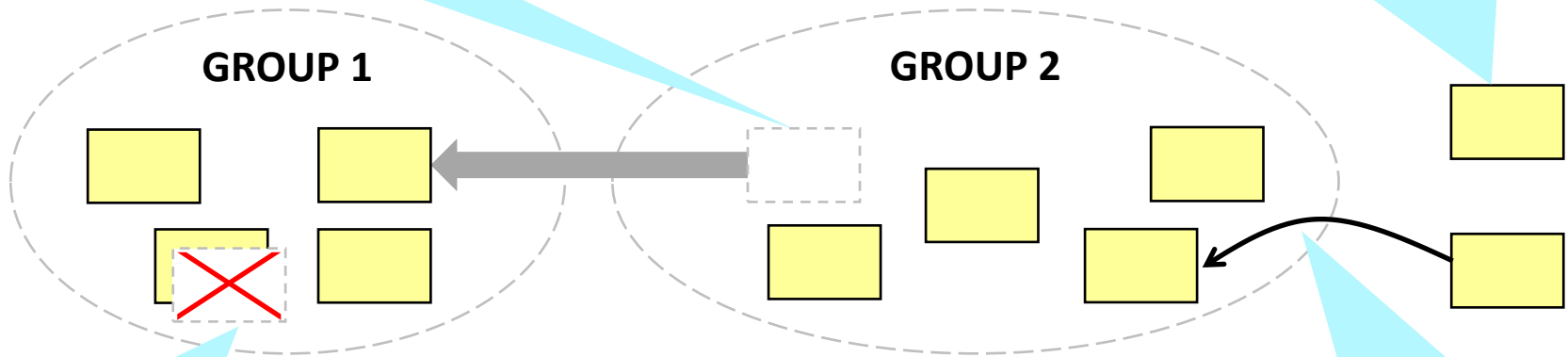
GROUP 1

GROUP 2

Share the affinity diagram with relevant stakeholders

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Move items between groups if required

There may be a few items left uncategorized which do not fit into any groups
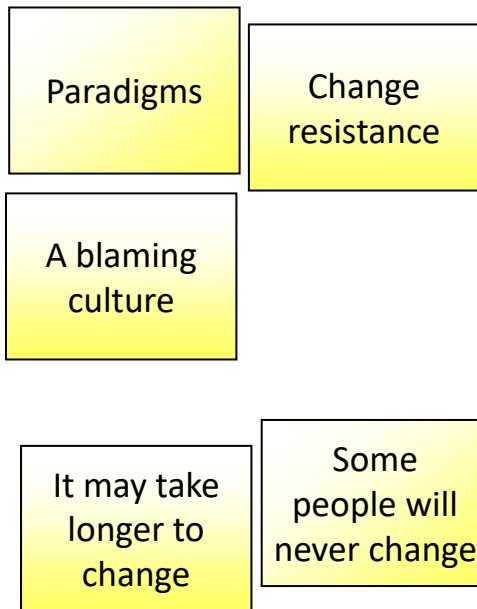
GROUP 1

GROUP 2

Eliminate duplicate items and the items that are not worth keeping

Add arrows between items and groups to show relationships

AFFINITY DIAGRAM
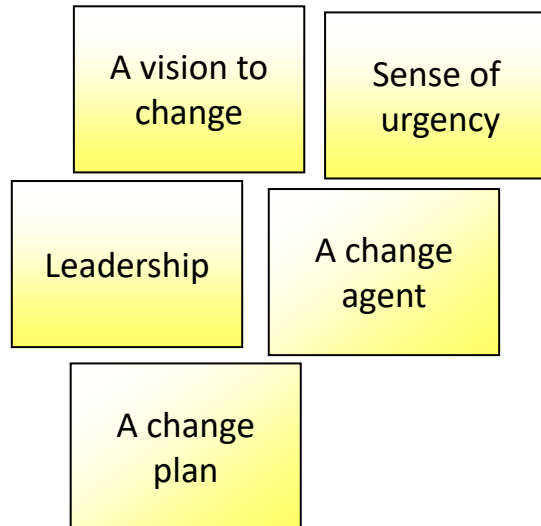
Example - Identify How to Successfully Implement Change

Change Obstacles

Paradigms

Change resistance

A blaming culture

It may take longer to change

Some people will never change

Planning

A vision to change

Sense of urgency

Leadership

A change agent

A change plan

Implementation

Communicate change vision

Encourage personal development

Training at all levels

Performance management

Quick wins

Empower -ment

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Further Information

There should be no **discussion** or evaluation of ideas of any kind until the final affinity diagram is complete.

During interviews, record the actual spoken words if the information to be collected is verbal.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

Further Information

When grouping items, use feeling rather than conventional classifications.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

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The Continuous Improvement Toolkit
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