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Robust, resilient decision making is the hallmark of an effective leader and a high performing team. This type of decision making requires a structured approach that uses diverse ways of thinking to attack the problem, discuss all possible solutions and come to a wise, informed agreement.

De Bono's Six Thinking Hats should be brought to every meeting. The "hats" can be worn by individual people, or the way of thinking can be adopted by the whole group in a sequence that arrives at a rounded, rigorously considered decision.

Below is an appropriate sequence for most meetings. Note the red, yellow, green and black hat ways of thinking can be re-ordered in the middle section of the meeting, but it is important that ALL hats are used.



- Facts and figures
- Neutral and objective
- Process oriented

What do we know?
 What do we need to find out?
 How and where do we get this information?



- Intuition, based on experience
- Emotional and empathetic
- Informal

What do I like/not like about this?
 How will others feel about this?
 How do I feel?



- Constructive and optimistic
- Speculative and exploratory
- Focussed on what will work

What are the strengths and opportunities?
 What will the benefits be?
 How do we make this work?



- Critical and judgmental
- Challenging of facts and figures
- Focussed on why it won't work

What if the worst happened?
 What are the downsides and weaknesses?
 How do you know that for sure?



- Creative and imaginative
- Open to change and new ideas
- Focussed on growth & learning

What if we tried this?
 What else could we do?
 Why have we always done it like this?



- Big picture
- Keeps the group focussed & on track
- Thinks about the thinking process

Where are we now?
 What have we learnt?
 What else do we need?
 What's next?