

Stress-o-meter cards

Used to rate how things are going at the moment



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Instructions

- This pack consists of a set of “stress-o-meter” cards that team members can complete in a retrospective or team meeting
- The cards act as conversation prompts by allowing the team to subjectively score “mojo” or other feelings
- The pack also contains a set of “games” or formats for using the cards to lead a discussion



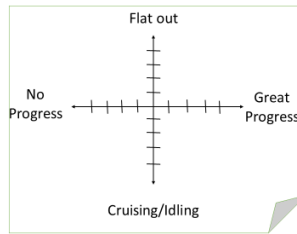
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Example

- Jen works in an agile team and she is running a retrospective with Ben and Zen.
- Jen decides to use one of the stress-o-meter cards, to see how people viewed the last sprint.
- She gives one card each to Ben and Jen. All three place an X on the card and then they share where they scored the sprint.

Energy

E1



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Flat out vs Cruising/idle:
Are you running on pure adrenalin with sleep and break times a distant memory.
Alternatively, are you relaxed, working at a nice pace ... or even blocked and sitting idle.

No progress vs Great progress:
Have you hit all your goals and feel like everything is coming together?

Do you feel as though nothing meaningful has been achieved? Maybe you are hitting a wall or context switching the whole time.

JAMES KING

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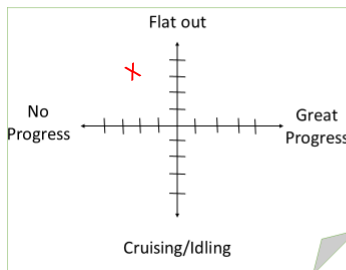
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Example

- Ben has been flat out all week but had had to stop start work constantly and feels that he has not made progress
- Ben places an X on the card, roughly in the middle of the “no progress and flat out” quadrant.

Energy

E1



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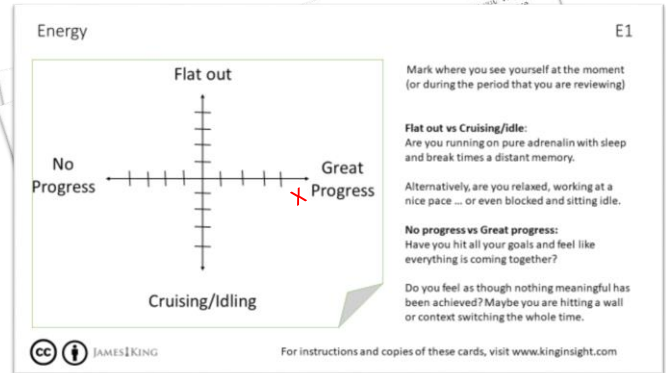
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Example

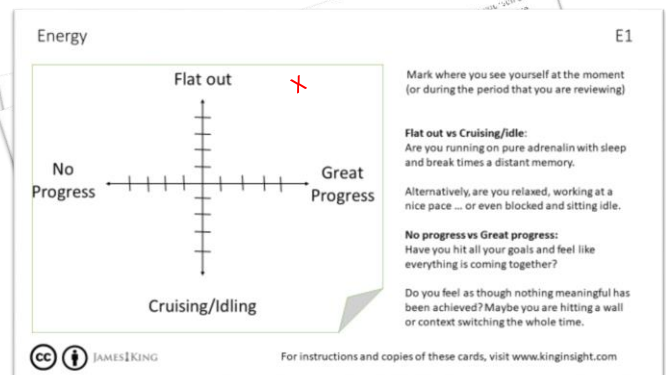
- Zen has been in a state of flow and barely noticed that the sprint was over. Her focus groups all met, they raised interesting ideas and she now has a complete set of new findings, without having to do anything except meet with people and eat some snacks.
- Zen places an X on the card, to show things are flowing automatically.



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Example

- Jen has been flat out and had to skip several lunches, her weekly tennis game and some less important meetings. But she feels as though she got a lot done.
- Jen places an X on the card and sits back feeling heroic.



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Example - What does it mean?

- Ben, Jen and Zen compare cards. It has been a different sprint for all three of them. But what does it mean?
- Unfortunately the team will have to interpret the details themselves.
 - It is great the Jen is feeling heroic, but maybe she will start to wear down if the next two weeks are like this too. Zen has had a great time too, but feels a little guilty that it was so easy. Having said that the last two sprints were hard work setting things up and it showed this week.
 - Ben says he needs to get some kind of breakthrough next sprint, or he will go mad. Zen suggests that he needs something small and achievable to work on.
 - All three agree that it is better to be busy, rather than blocked, or “constipated” as Ben describes the bottom left sprint.
 - The team identify some impediments and discuss how they might clear the road for Ben, while also pre-empting similar issues for the rest of team.



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Cards

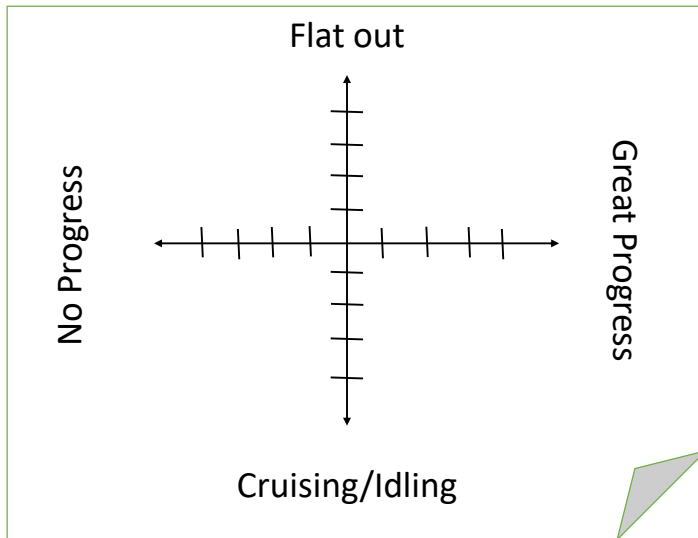
The stress-ometer-cards



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Energy

E1



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Flat out vs Cruising/idle:

Are you running on pure adrenalin with sleep and break times a distant memory.

Alternatively, are you relaxed, working at a nice pace ... or even blocked and sitting idle.

Impact:

Have you hit all your goals and feel like everything is coming together?

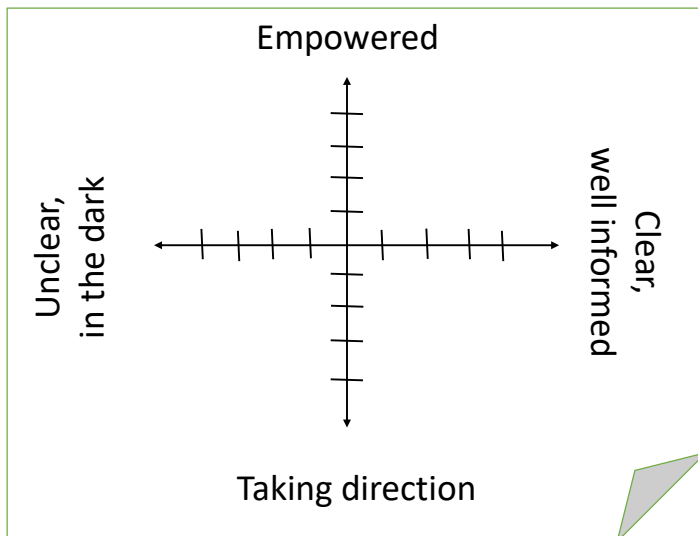
Do you feel as though nothing meaningful has been achieved? Maybe you are hitting a wall or context switching the whole time.



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Energy

E2



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Decision authority:

Are you empowered to make all the decisions involved in the work you are doing, or are you taking direction from someone else at the moment?

Information:

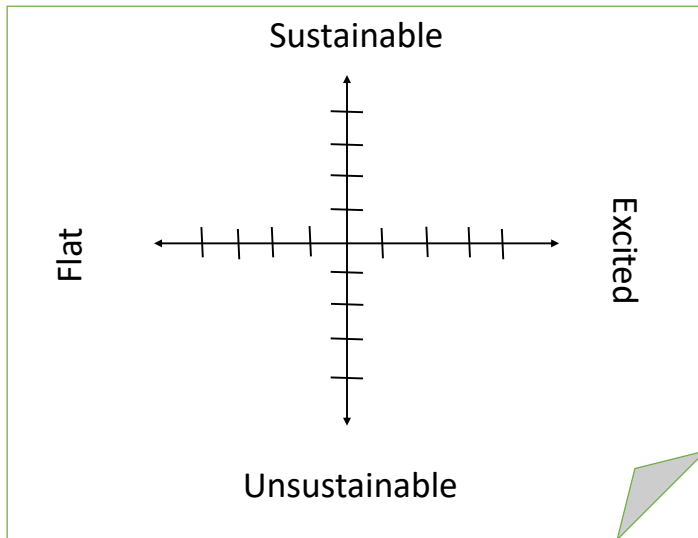
Are you clear on the purpose of what you are doing and well informed about what is going on, or are you unclear on why you are doing things and not sure what is going on?



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Energy

E3



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Sustainable pace:

Could you maintain your current pace indefinitely or are you going to need a change in pace soon to recover?

Thrill level:

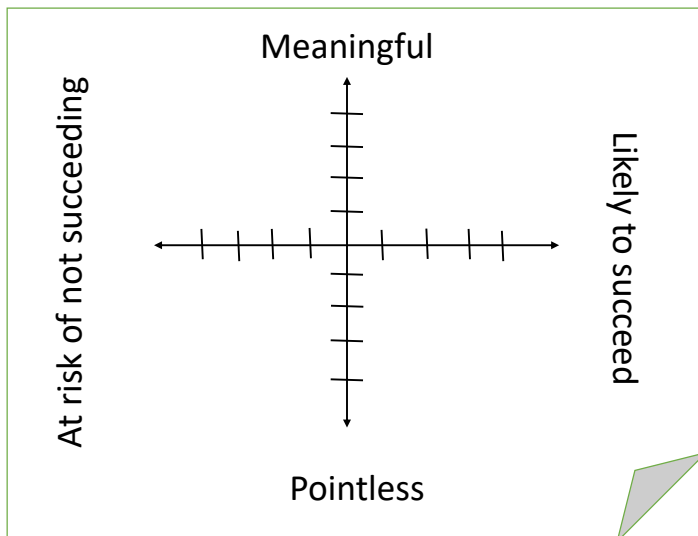
Is your work exciting at the moment or is it leaving you flat, bored or just plain worn out?



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Energy

E4



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Meaning:

Are you working on something that you see as important and meaningful? Are you distracted by "administrivia," or things that do not really matter much?

Confidence:

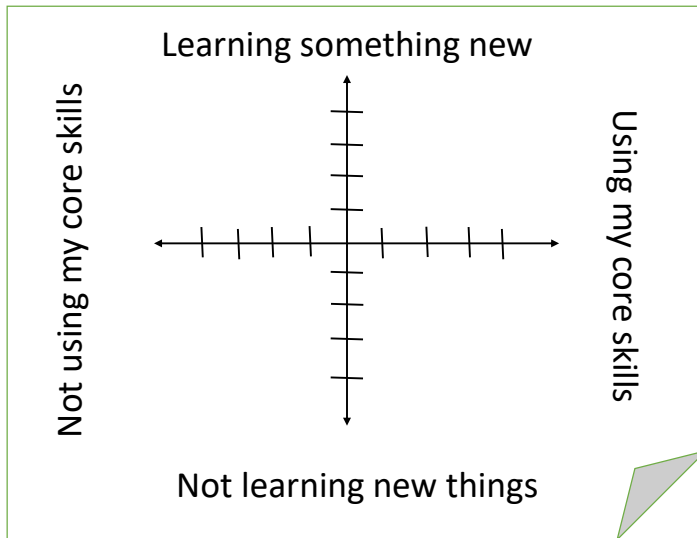
How confident are you that we will succeed in what we have committed to? Are we likely to succeed or seriously at risk of falling short?



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Mastery

M1



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Making good use of you existing skills:

Are you really applying the skillset that you have at the moment, or are you doing things that don't make use of you real capability?

Learning something new:

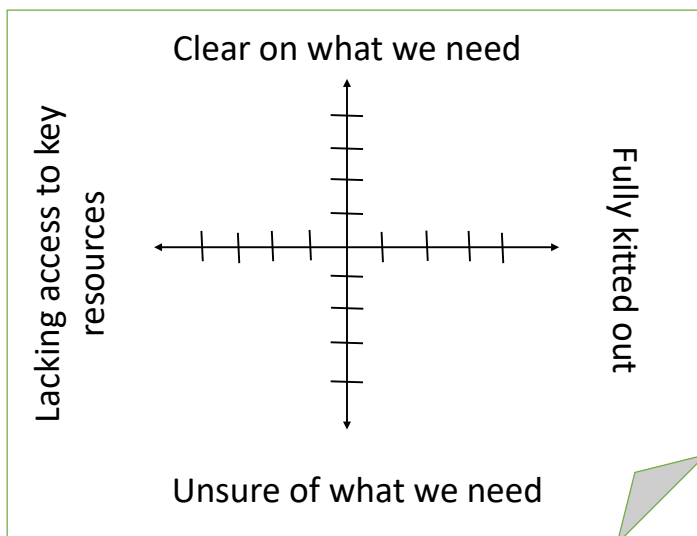
Are you getting access to learning that supports you growing new skills and capabilities, or are you comfortable doing what you are doing within your existing capability?



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Mastery

M2



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Resource clarity:

Are you clear on what you need to get the job done, or are you unsure of what you need?

Resource availability:

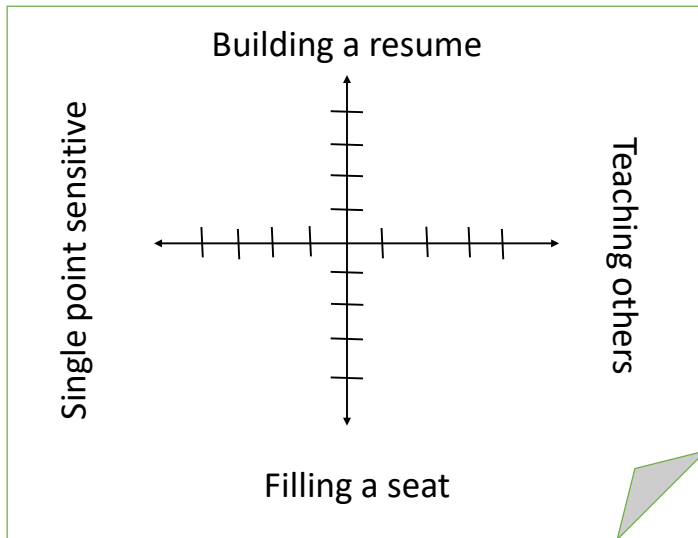
Do you have access to everything you need, or are their key things you don't have in place? For example access to resources, the right equipment, air support when needed?



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Mastery

M3



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Becoming more marketable:

Are you building valuable skills and experience that support future opportunities? Are you just filling a seat so that things can get done?

Teaching others:

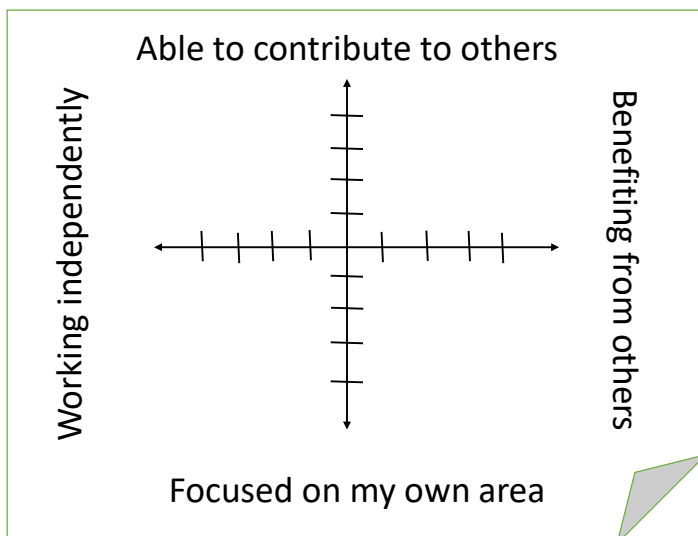
Are you passing on your wisdom and experience or are you becoming more specialised and single point sensitive?



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Community

C1



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Able to contribute to others:

Are you sharing your skills, providing support and generally able to help the others in the team, or are you just focused on your own work for now?

Benefiting from others:

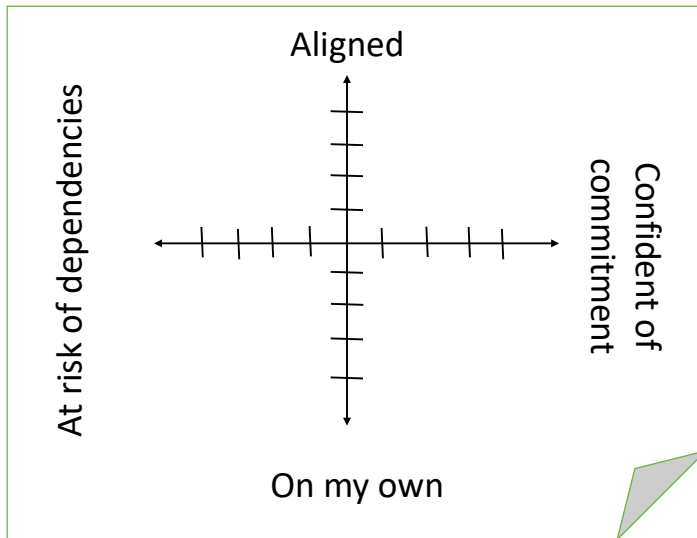
Are you getting the support you need from others? Are you really gaining something from being in a team, or are you pretty much being left to work independently?



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Community

C2



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Aligned:

Is your current work well aligned to a shared goal that the rest of the team are striving for, or are you working on your own work that has a purpose not aligned to what the others are working on?

Interdependent:

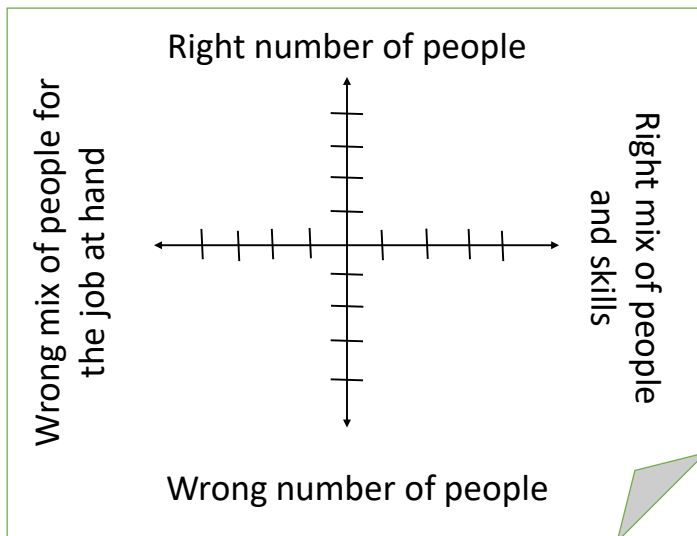
Are you confident that you can commit, knowing that you will receive what you need from others when you need it, or are you concerned that you are not getting what you need from others in time to meet your own commitments?



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Community

C3



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Number of people:

Do you have the right number of people involved in what you are doing? Are there too few to get the job done, or too many getting involved and complicating things?

Diversity and applicable skills:

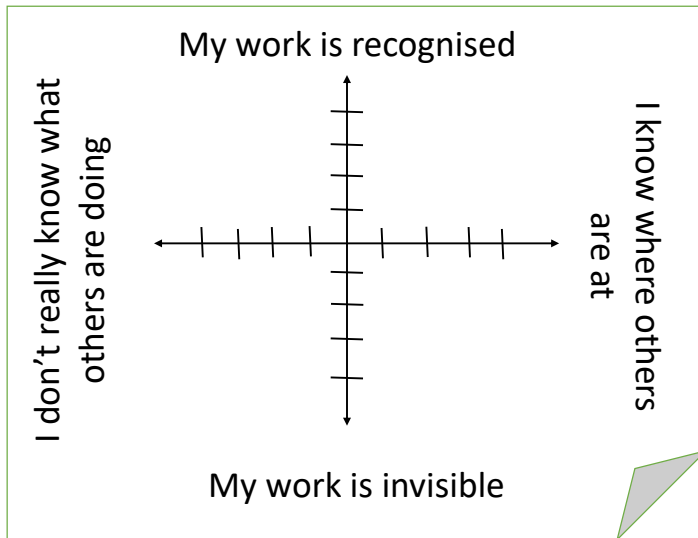
Do you have the right mix of people and skills to be successful. Is there duplication, skill gaps, misallocation of people or other things that might impact our success?



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Community

C4



Mark where you see yourself at the moment (or during the period that you are reviewing)

Recognition:

Do you feel that your work is recognised by others? Could the team give you feedback? Are you work, your challenges and your progress mostly invisible to the rest of the team?

Transparency:

Do you feel like you understand what others are doing today? Can you (and do you) give them feedback and recognition?



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Games

Suggestions on how to use the stress-ometer-cards



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Simple check-in

G1

- The most basic way to use these cards is to spend a couple of minutes during a meeting to have a check-in
- Pick a card and have people put an X where they see themselves today (or this week/this sprint)
- Discuss where they put the X and if there is anything to discuss in more detail



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Think – pair – share

G2

- The think – pair – share approach is something that my daughter does at school.
- Each person is given the same card or set of cards.
- Everyone fills out the card by themselves and spends a couple of minutes thinking about what it means and what they can do to improve or build on their insights
- People break into pairs to discuss what they learned
- Each pair then shares their views with the rest of the team
- You can find a good description of this by googling “think pair share” or accessing the following site:
 - <https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/how-think-pair-share-activity-can-improve-your-classroom-discussions1704.html>



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Whiteboard

G3

- Instead of filling in cards, create a whiteboard online and just draw the lines and headings there for one card
- Have everyone put their own mark on the picture to show where they are at and then discuss the result as a team
- You can also put 2-3 different “cards” or topics next to each other and have people score them all before discussing the overall result



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Rolling retro

G4

- Use the cards during the week to score your meetings or your feeling during the day.
- Score each meeting or day on the same card and then have people share what they found at the end of the week (or in the next meeting).



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Sprint planning with mastery

G5

- Use the cards during sprint planning. When work is being planned, ask people to score the work items with how they anticipate it will be like working on the stories that they expect to be involved in.
- This works best with the “mastery” cards to give people a chance to rate work in terms of development (self improvement) rather than just urgency and priority.



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Mind reading

G6

- Have everyone score the card for themselves and then predict where the most common place will be for the team.
- Then share and find out if people were close or way off. My experience is that they are often quite far off in their expectations.
- You can also combine this with “think – pair – share” where each person scores themselves and their pair-partner.



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Card sorting

G6

- Have people fill out multiple cards (about 6 works well)
- Have people sort them from “most useful to discuss” to “least useful”
- Discuss the top card or the top three by sharing each persons score and discussing what to do about it
- You can find more information about different card sorting approaches at this link
 - <https://kingsinsight.com/2016/04/29/card-sorting-agile-ba-technique-158/>

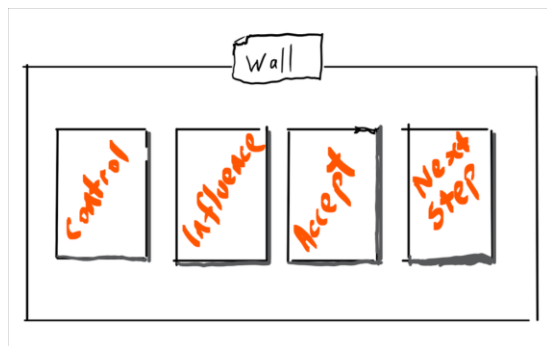


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CIA

G7

- Use another game to surface thinking and then agree on what should be fixed or improved
- Explore what the team believe:
 - They can do or Control themselves
 - They can Influence but not control
 - They will need to Accept (and therefore take into account without feeling guilty)



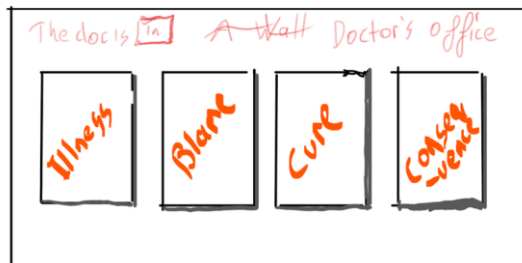
Learn more about CIA: <https://kingsinsight.com/2018/05/08/its-a-catastrophe-the-kindergarten-approach/>



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The doctor's office

G8



- Use another game to surface thinking
- List what the team see as a problem or “illness” that has been revealed
- Discuss what cause/blame is creating the illness
- Suggest possible cures
- Discuss the consequences of implementing the cure (action to take, dosage, side effects)

You can see an example of using this technique here <https://kingsinsight.com/2018/05/01/its-a-catastrophe-the-doctors-office/>



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How might we?

G9

- Use one of the other games to gather views and then use this approach to come up with ideas for action
- Discuss the results of the scoring and then have people create some questions that the team can answer. Each question must be of the format “How might we ...”
- You can learn more about this approach here
 - <https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/how-might-we-questions>
- Or on my blog
 - <https://kingsinsight.com/2018/04/24/its-a-catastrophe-option-2/>



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Thanks

Thank you and some background information



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Thanks for reviewing these cards

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