



TEAM SOLUTION FINDING (TSF) with **Strategyfinder**

Why use **Strategyfinder** for resolving complex issues in teams or groups?

The **Strategyfinder** software tool and method combines all essential aspects of an issue in a highly efficient and effective manner. Team members can take a high-quality decision based on considerable expertise and with less risk of being obstructed by group dynamics – for example, “who shouts the loudest”.

Strategyfinder is especially helpful, when

- the issue is complex and messy and needs a range of expertise
- an urgent solution with commitment from a team is needed
- the team don't have to be located in the same meeting space

Strategyfinder tool combined with the TSF method is fast to use

with **Strategyfinder**, a group can *explore and define the problem and agree on the best solution in about 2hrs.*

TSF - The 4 Steps to a high-quality Solution

Strategyfinder – following the manual, the software combined with the method is simple to use – and means that:

- 1. Gather perspectives on the problem:** participants can rapidly and simultaneously gather views of the problem – typically 50-60 views in 20 minutes. All participants share their ideas and thoughts anonymously as the manager/facilitator organises these into groups. This process stimulates further essential contributions.
- 2. Create a structure of the problem** by causally linking the statements. The means-ends structure (causal map) provides a focus on action and its consequences and clarifies goals, potential strategies and potential actions. This linking process enables participants to better understand the different views and create a shared understanding of the problem.
- 3. Make sense of the problem:** integrated **Strategyfinder** analysis tools make it possible to identify sub-parts of the problem, reveal critical elements of the problem which have high potency on the goals (considering both the number of goals impacted as well as the diversity of paths of impact), and identify vicious and virtuous cycles to be mitigated or exploited and which loops have the most significant impact on the problem (loop potency).
- 4. Prioritise and agree on actions:** the integrated judgment tools allow the group to assess the impact and practicality of potential solutions.

Summary

This 4-step method enables a group to find a more intelligent and negotiated decision with a high degree of group ownership – increasing the chance of practical implementation. **Strategyfinder** – a combination of well-established tools and methods - offers a structured way of agreeing, or agreeing on the basis for, a practical decision in a 1-2hrs meeting.



TSF-EXAMPLE: Deterioration of mental health across the population during COVID

This example is derived from a much bigger exercise relating to managing Covid. The causal map (figure 1) is one of many sub-systems that make up the total problem definition. The work was done by an interdisciplinary group of 16 people, each contributing from various locations in the county. The example has been simplified for illustrative purposes.

The sub-system (step 1&2) revealed that mental health was an essential potential issue with consequences for many other parts of the problem of managing the Covid Pandemic. Figure 1 shows the initial Strategyfinder view of the sub-system (the numbers in front of each statement are simply reference numbers).

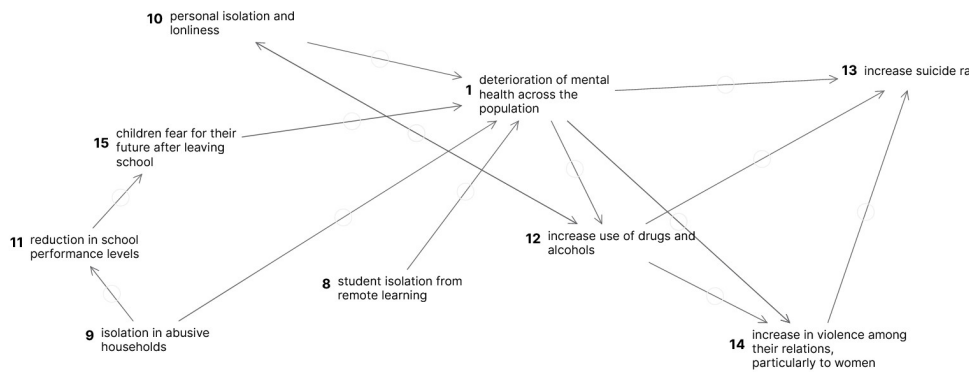


Figure 1

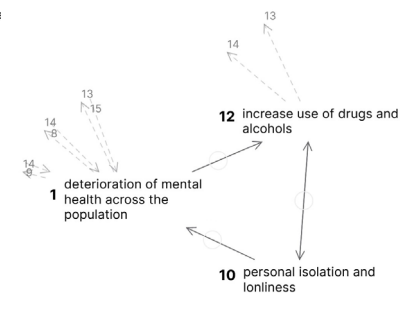


Figure 2

Analysis of the initial structure (step 3) revealed that deterioration of mental health across the population (#1) might lead to increased use of drugs and alcohol (#12) which may cause personal isolation and loneliness (#10), which may escalate the deterioration of mental health (#1) – creating a vicious cycle (shown in figure 2: the additional dashed-arrows indicate the broader context).

The group saw this vicious cycle as significant and elaborated the map's structure to develop ways of managing the situation. They focused particularly on mitigating the vicious cycle.

The group identified 14 possible options and their impact on each other and other aspects of the problem structure. Some options had multiple consequences. The further analysis enabled an understanding of how potent some options were relative to others and so providing help in evaluating options.

The group next evaluated the options (step 4) in terms of their likely impact and practicality on reversing the deterioration of mental health. This enabled them to prioritize and agree on 3 key actions: make more effective and better use of their child protection unit, address immigrant groups digitally and with more interpreters, and keep child protection services fully operational.

Structuring the problem and developing options and evaluation took about 45 minutes. These agreed actions were implemented and believed to have had the desired impact.

