



## DESCRIPTION

An affinity diagram is a tool used to organize large number of ideas into common themes or groups based on their natural relationships.

### STRENGTHS

- Helps organize qualitative data and identify the most important ideas.
- Great for brainstorming new ideas.
- Allows the user to look at many different perspectives.
- Helps see relationships between ideas.

### WEAKNESSES

- May not accurately reflect the needs of all impacted individuals if the team is not diverse or representative of the target audience.
- May not provide enough context to fully understand the process being discussed.

## APPLICATIONS

1. After a brainstorming exercise to help organize data.
2. When there are too many possible choices and group consensus is necessary.
3. When large data sets need to be organized.
4. Helps prioritize ideas.

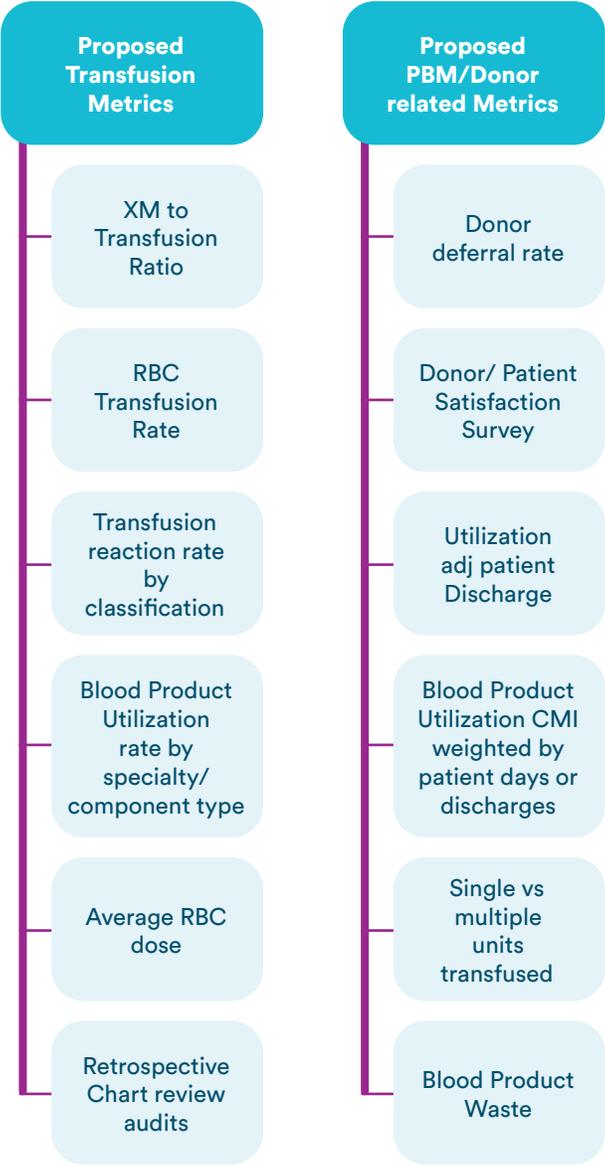
## HELPFUL HINTS

To Construct the Sticky Note Method:

1. During a brainstorming session, have each team member write ideas on a sticky note.
2. Once all the ideas have been generated, spread the sticky notes on a large surface so all the ideas are visible.
3. Have the team look for relationships among the ideas and then sort the ideas into groups. Note: it is okay to have a few ideas that don't fit. In addition, if an idea fits into more than one group, make a second sticky note and place it in the second group.
4. Begin the discussion with your team and attempt to define the categories by creating a header for each group of ideas. Move ideas to another group if need be. The header should capture the meaning of the group and identify the general topic that all the items share.
5. Review final groups and finalize the header. If more than one header is similar, combine the groups.

Alternately, there are templates in word and Excel that can be used to help construct the Affinity Diagram. In addition, the brainstorming session can be performed using a virtual meeting platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex).

## EXAMPLES



• XM = crosssmatch