

## Summary of de Bono's Six Thinking Hats

There are six metaphorical hats and the thinker can put on or take off one of these hats to indicate the type of thinking being used. This putting on and taking off is essential. The hats must never be used to categorize individuals.

### White Hat thinking

This covers facts, figures, information needs and gaps. "I think we need some white hat thinking at this point..." means Let's drop the arguments and proposals, and look at the data base."

### Red Hat thinking

This covers intuition, feelings and emotions. The red hat allows the thinker to put forward an intuition without any need to justify it. "Putting on my red hat, I think this is a terrible proposal." Usually feelings and intuition can only be introduced into a discussion if they are supported by logic. Usually the feeling is genuine but the logic is questionable. The red hat gives full permission to a thinker to put forward his or her feelings on the subject.

### Black Hat thinking

This is the hat of judgment and caution, the devil's advocate. It is a most valuable hat. It is not in any sense an inferior or negative hat. The black hat is used to point out why a suggestion does not fit the facts, the available experience, the system in use, or the policy that is being followed. The black hat must always be logical.

### Yellow Hat thinking

This is the logical positive. Why something will work and why it will offer benefits. It can be used in looking forward to the results of some proposed action, but can also be used to find something of value in what has already happened.

### Green Hat thinking

This is the hat of creativity, alternatives, proposals, what is interesting, provocations and changes.

### Blue Hat thinking

This is the overview or process control hat. It looks not at the subject itself but at the 'thinking' about the subject. "Putting on my blue hat, I feel we should do some more green hat thinking at this point."