

# Problem-Solving

What is problem solving? Problem solving is the process or act of finding a solution to a problem.<sup>i</sup>

## Problem Solving Skills

Active listening – helps gather valuable information for problem-solving. A good problem solver can identify everyone involved and encourage them to get involved. Actively listen to different opinions to understand the problem, its root cause and workable solutions.

Analysis – Analyse the situation to help understand problems and effectively develop solutions. Analytical skills during research helps to distinguish between effective and ineffective solutions.

Research abilities - are an essential skill related to problem-solving. As a problem solver, you need to be able to identify the cause of the issue and understand it fully. Gather more information about a problem by brainstorming with other team members, consulting more experienced colleagues or acquiring knowledge through online research and courses.

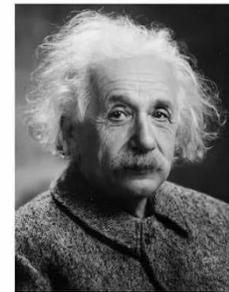
Creativity – problem-solving requires a balance between logic and creativity to find the cause of the issue. It also requires creativity to develop innovative solutions. Creative people bring unique perspectives and give a new direction.

Communication – When identifying possible solutions, know how to communicate the problem to others and know what communication channels are the most appropriate when seeking assistance. Once you find a solution, communicating it clearly will help reduce any confusion and make implementing a solution easier.

Dependability – dependability is one of the most important skills for problem-solvers. Solving problems promptly is essential. Employers highly value individuals they can trust to both identify and then implement solutions as fast and effectively as possible.

Decision-making – Decide how to solve problems that arise and make decisions quickly. Solid research and analytical skills can help those who have less experience in their field. There may also be times when it is appropriate to take some time to craft a solution or escalate the issue to someone more capable of solving it.

Team-building – Problem solving involves teamwork. Ask people about their perspective on the problem, involve them in developing effective solutions, seek their feedback on the chosen solution and rely on team members to implement the process. It is essential to involve or motivate all members of the team for effective problem solving.<sup>ii</sup>



“The only way to solve a problem is to change the thinking that created it.”

- Albert Einstein

## Problem Solving Strategy in Counselling

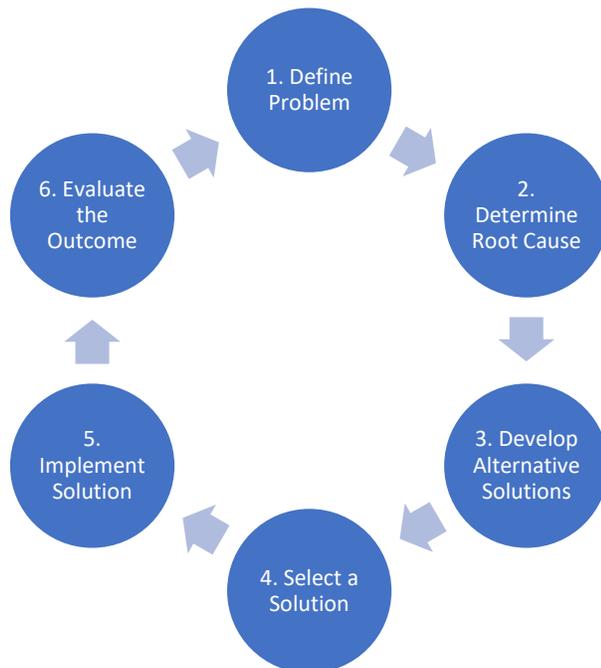
**First** - calm yourself with a breathing exercise.

**Second** - check in with yourself - your emotional needs and your innate resources. When your emotional needs are in balance, you'll be able to make good use of your inborn resources.

You need to be at your best if you are going to be effective at helping others. These two steps should be the basis of your problem-solving strategy.<sup>iii</sup>

### Steps to Problem Solving

Take your time to gather essential information to help identify the problem and to understand the magnitude of the problem. Answer who was involved, what happened, when, where and how? And then, follow the six steps to solving the problem.<sup>iv</sup> After following the steps, if the desired outcome has not been attained, begin the process again.



### Ten Point Problem-Solving Plan

1. Decide what the ideal solution could be.
2. Decide what you can live with.
3. Decide on an alternative solution.
4. Decide on the steps to take right now to bring about some change. This will help you to feel more positive and in control.
5. Decide who you need to ask for help.
6. Decide what you think other people might need from you and check with them.
7. Decide who you need to have a conversation with, what you would say and when that might be possible.
8. Make a list with exact timings of your planned actions. This is one of the most important techniques.
9. Set a review date to hold yourself (and maybe others) to account.
10. Sleep on it. You may come up with a brilliant idea.<sup>v</sup>

## Tips to Problem Solving in the Workplace

- ✚ If a problem arises which requires a solution, be confident in not only identifying the problem, but also in understanding the problem.
- ✚ Having a good understanding will help to find the best solution.
- ✚ It may be necessary to read or re-read the policy manual (if there is one) or check with other colleagues to see how the situation has been handled in the past. The solution may be apparent.
- ✚ Consider that circumstances surrounding an identified problem may require a different solution than in the past.
- ✚ When communicating the solution, it may be necessary for those involved to agree to the solution. Agreement may be necessary if the relationship/partnership is expected to be ongoing.
- ✚ Document your action. Revise the policy manual if necessary.
- ✚ It may be necessary to garner the support of the employer (supervisor, human resources or both).
- ✚ Be aware that workplace decisions can have implications into the future.
- ✚ Seek legal advice as necessary.

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<sup>i</sup> "Problem-solving." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/problem-solving>. Accessed 28 Mar. 2022.

<sup>ii</sup> [Problem-Solving Skills: Definitions and Examples | Indeed.com Canada](#). Accessed 28 Mar. 2022.

<sup>iii</sup> [Discover an effective problem-solving strategy in counselling \(professional-counselling.com\)](#). Accessed 28, Mar. 2022.

<sup>iv</sup> [The Six Step Problem Solving Model \(free-management-ebooks.com\)](#). Accessed 28 Mar. 2022

<sup>v</sup> [Discover an effective problem-solving strategy in counselling \(professional-counselling.com\)](#). Accessed 28, Mar. 2022