

# Problem Solving Worksheet

We all deal with problems almost every day of our lives. Fortunately, we can solve most of our daily problems by thinking up a solution on the spot or using a strategy that worked for us in the past.

## Step 1: How do I know I have a problem?

### Using your feelings

What emotions am I having? (Frustrated? Anxious? Depressed?)



### What is happening? Describe the situation.

What is happening that is making me feel this way?

### Make a List

Write out a list of problems that come up again and again.

### Look for Opportunities

What are the positive aspects of the problems listed above?

## Step 2. What's the problem?



**What is going on right now? What is making me feel upset?**

For example: I have too much work to do in a day

**What would I like the situation to be?**

For example: I would like to have less work to do in a day

**What is the obstacle standing between what I would like the situation to be and what the situation is right now?**

For example: The boss wants me to do all the work

**Describe the problem as a question.**

For example: How can I get the boss to assign me less work?

### Step 3: How will I know when I get there?

This step helps us to figure out how we will know when the problem is solved. To do know this, we can ask ourselves questions about what we would like to change about the situation and imagine our ideal outcome.



What would need to be different for this problem to be better? If you don't know the steps to get there, we could sometimes use the SMART goal to to identify how we get there.

#### What could I change about this situation?

#### What's the ideal outcome?

## Step 4: What are some possible solutions?



Brainstorm as many different ideas as you can without judging them (be sure to include some wild and silly examples).

## Step 5: What's the best solution?



Use the questions from the problem-solving module to help you decide which solution is the best for you. You can give each solution a score from 0 to 5 for each question. The solution with the highest score is probably the BEST solution for your problem.

### Possible solution #1

Will this solution help me reach my goals and solve my problem?  
(0=not likely; 5=most likely)

If I choose this solution how good or bad am I likely to feel?  
(0=the worst; 5=the best)

How much time and effort will this solution require?  
(0=the most; 5=the least)

Does this solution have more benefits than costs if I choose it?  
(0=mostly costs; 5=mostly benefits)

### Possible solution #2

Will this solution help me reach my goals and solve my problem?  
(0=not likely; 5=most likely)

If I choose this solution how good or bad am I likely to feel?  
(0=the worst; 5=the best)

How much time and effort will this solution require?  
(0=the most; 5=the least)

Does this solution have more benefits than costs if I choose it?  
(0=mostly costs; 5=mostly benefits)

### Possible solution #3

Will this solution help me reach my goals and solve my problem?  
(0=not likely; 5=most likely)

If I choose this solution how good or bad am I likely to feel?  
(0=the worst; 5=the best)

How much time and effort will this solution require?  
(0=the most; 5=the least)

Does this solution have more benefits than costs if I choose it?  
(0=mostly costs; 5=mostly benefits)

### Possible solution #4

Will this solution help me reach my goals and solve my problem?  
(0=not likely; 5=most likely)

If I choose this solution how good or bad am I likely to feel?  
(0=the worst; 5=the best)

How much time and effort will this solution require?  
(0=the most; 5=the least)

Does this solution have more benefits than costs if I choose it?  
(0=mostly costs; 5=mostly benefits)

## Step 6: Put your solution into action



### Plan of action

Laying out a step-by-step plan can be helpful by breaking up a task into smaller, more manageable tasks. Use the boxes below to write out your action plan in steps.

Write down the steps needed to carry out your solution, making each step a SMART goal. The SMART principle can help you set goals that are clear, realistic, and actionable.

**Specific**  
**Measurable**  
**Attainable**  
**Relevant**  
**Timely**

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

## Step 7: Check up on your progress

Did I solve my problem?

If not, what went wrong?

If the problem isn't better at all, try the following:

- Ask yourself if anything is different; has anything changed?
- Maybe try another one of your solutions.
- Check if you followed the steps in the problem-solving approach correctly.

Remember to be proud of yourself for taking these steps and for any progress you've made, no matter how small! If you keep using this approach it will get easier.

keep  
going