



# Solving Problems

*Everyone has problems from time to time.  
Facing and solving problems is a part of life.*

It is easy to feel stress when you have a problem. This stress can make psychosis worse.

You can't avoid all problems, but you can reduce stress by using good problem-solving skills.

**Here are six steps to help you solve problems:**

- 1. Choose the problem**
- 2. Understand the problem**
- 3. Come up with different solutions**
- 4. Compare your solutions**
- 5. Pick the best solution**
- 6. Put your solution into action**

Work through these six steps **in order**. Try not to skip any of the steps.

Don't get frustrated if this seems difficult at first. With patience and practice, you will get better at solving problems. Ask your Support Person for help if you get stuck.

On the following page is an example of how to work through the six steps.



*Support  
Person*



Problem Solving

Anita dislikes her parents nagging her to wake up early and not just sit around the house all day. Here's how she used the six steps to solve her problem.

## SAMPLE PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

### 1 Choose the problem

My parents nag me. They keep waking me up all the time and want me to be more productive and responsible.

### 2 Understand the problem

It bothers me that my parents think I am lazy. I am just really tired.

### 3 Come up with different solutions

- Explain to my parents that it upsets me that they think I am lazy.
- Bring my parents to talk with my doctor or clinician to see if being tired is related to my medication, and if there are things I can do to feel less tired.
- Make a contract with my parents that I will take care of my tasks when I have the most energy.
- Move out of the house so my parents don't hassle me.

### 4 Compare your solutions

- It is a good idea to talk to my parents, but I worry that it might result in us arguing again.
- It sometimes takes a few weeks to get to see my doctor, so this won't help me in the short-term. Changing medications may only help a little and may take a long time. I can usually see my clinician more quickly. He may be able to help my parents and me come up with a solution.
- If I could sleep as late as I want and still get my work done without my parents bothering me, then everybody wins.
- This is a drastic solution that can create a lot more problems.

### 5 Pick the best solution

A combination of b and c. Have my clinician talk with my parents and me to better understand my condition and agree on a schedule that works for all of us.

### 6 Put your solution into action

Find a time when my parents and I can meet with my clinician.



Thinking of and Comparing Solutions



Problem  
Solving

## Step One: Choose the Problem

*You need a specific problem to practise problem solving.*

Think about your problems. What causes you to become stressed or upset? Paying attention when you feel stressed or upset can help you identify your problems. For example, what was happening just before you began to feel stressed or worried? What were you thinking?

Here are some examples of problems people experience. Some of these may be familiar to you.

School or work problems	I don't want to go to school. The teachers always give me deadlines that stress me out.
Not getting along with others	Arguing. I am scared to tell my friends about having had psychosis.
Money problems	Not having enough to pay for things I need or want.
Personal health problems	Not getting enough sleep. Gaining Weight.





Support Person

**Choose a small problem.** Working on small problems helps you practice problem solving. After you have successfully solved a few small problems, you can begin to tackle the bigger ones.

**Once you have chosen a problem, spend a few minutes describing your problem to your Support Person. Be as specific as you can.**

Anita chose the problem of her parents nagging her to do more and not sleep so much. For the problem-solving method to work best, Anita needs to clearly define her problem. Anita thinks her parents nag her because:

- They don't understand how tired she is
- She goes to bed later and wakes up later than everybody else
- They want her to do things that she is not ready to do

## Your Turn!

Describe the problem you chose in the space below. Be as specific as you can.

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Your Turn!



Describe



Your Turn!

## Step Two: Understand the Problem

*Asking specific questions about your problem will help you understand it better and can lead to effective solutions.*

### Your Turn!

Write your answers to the following questions in the spaces below.

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT MY PROBLEM

Who might help me solve this problem (friends, family, teachers, health professionals, etc.)?

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Have I had this problem before? How did I handle it? Were the results worth trying again?

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Do I need to find out more about this problem? Is there any information I don't have?

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Do I have any other ideas about this problem?

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Write Down



Think of Solutions

## Step Three: Come Up With Different Solutions

*Once you understand your problem better, you can start to think of different solutions.*

### **Your Turn!**

**Write down four ways that you might be able to solve the problem.**

For now, don't try to decide which of the four ways is best. Just think of four different things you could do to help solve this problem. If you have difficulties, ask your Support Person for some suggestions.



Your Turn!

#### THINGS I COULD DO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Write Down



Compare  
Solutions

## Step Four: Compare Your Solutions

*In this step, you compare the good and bad things about each potential solution.*

Anita filled out her worksheet like this:

POSSIBLE SOLUTION	WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT THIS?	WHAT'S BAD ABOUT THIS?
1 Explain to my parents that it upsets me that they think I am lazy.	My parents may understand that I'm really tired and am not being lazy. They may stop nagging me.	My parents may not understand me and still continue to nag.
2 Bring my parents to talk with my doctor or clinician to see if being tired is a problem with my medication.	Maybe the doctor can change the dose so I'm less tired and have more energy to do the things I'm supposed to. The clinician can explain to my parents that my tiredness is a medical condition and does not mean that I am lazy. He may also help us come up with a solution that works for both my parents and me.	It may take a long time to see the doctor and get the dose adjusted. Even after all that time I may still feel tired.
3 Make a contract with my parents that I will take care of my tasks when I have the most energy.	I will get to sleep in later. My parents won't have to nag me to do my work.	It limits my excuses. I still have to do the work.
4 Move out of the house so my parents don't hassle me.	My parents can't nag me anymore.	I have no money to pay rent. I'm better off living with my parents.



*Your Turn!*

## Your Turn!

Write down the **good and bad** things about each of your four solutions.  
Discuss what is good and bad about your potential solutions with your Support Person.



*Write Down*

POSSIBLE SOLUTION	WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT THIS?	WHAT'S BAD ABOUT THIS?
1 _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
2 _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
3 _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
4 _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____





Pick the Best Solution

## Step Five: Pick the Best Solution

Use the following questions to help decide which solution is the best.

### Your Turn!

Write your answers to the following questions in the spaces below.

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT MY PROBLEM

Which solution seems most positive?

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Which solution seems most negative?

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How much time will the solution take? You may want to choose a solution that you can achieve more quickly.

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What do you need to carry out the solution? (For example, if the solution is to wake up earlier than you are used to, a good resource would be an alarm clock.)

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How does this solution make you feel? Are you comfortable with the solution?

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Your Turn!





Put Your  
Chosen Solution  
Into Action

## Step Six: Put Your Solution Into Action

*Once you choose a solution, it's time for action.*

Use the *Setting Goals and Moving Forward* section (on page 41) to create a workable plan.

Don't be discouraged if your plan doesn't work. Try another possible solution from your list. Or, you may come up with a new solution to try.