



# Solving Problems

## My Progress

- What steps have you taken toward your goal(s) this week?
- How were you able to achieve the steps?
- If not, what got in your way? How will you overcome that barrier?

## Let's Discuss

- What problems have you faced recently that you needed to solve?
- How did you manage the situation? Were you able to solve the problem?
- What problems do you need to solve now that you haven't been able to solve?
- How do problems affect your symptoms?

## Leticia's Story

"Problems are a part of everyone's life. If I recognize problems that come up and work on solving them, it's a lot less stressful. Learning positive ways to cope with the stress has kept my voices from taking over my life and has kept me from going back to drinking. Drinking never really worked in the long term."

— Leticia, retail worker in recovery from schizophrenia and alcohol use disorder

## Good to Know

- Whenever we are working toward our goals or just living our lives, **we are going to experience problems that get in our way.**
- **It's normal to experience problems** and challenges and feel frustrated or confused about what to do about them.
- Some common types of problems people face include **problems with other people, financial or scheduling problems, problems from using alcohol or other drugs, and problems because of physical or mental health challenges.**
- When you run into a problem, you may be able to solve it by **finding a way to resolve or get rid of the problem, finishing your task or step in a different way to get around the problem, or picking a different step toward your goal to avoid the problem altogether.**
- You may be able to **come up with a plan to solve a problem on your own, or you may want someone to help you.**
- It may be **tempting to avoid the problem altogether, but that often makes it worse.**
- There are many ways of solving problems, but **one helpful way is to follow clear steps of solving a problem.**

## My Experiences

Leticia found that a step-by-step problem solving process was helpful for her when learning to solve problems, especially when she was under stress. The more she went through the steps to solve her problems, the easier it was to come up with solutions and get back to working on her goals. On page two are the steps for problem solving, write in your problems and solutions.

## Problem Solving Step

## Solving My Problem

### Step 1

Define the problem as specifically and simply as possible.

### Step 2

List at least 3 possible solutions to the problem.  
Don't evaluate them yet.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**PRO**

**CON**

### Step 3

For each possible solution list one pro and one con.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Step 4

Choose the best solution or combination of solutions.

Once Leticia identified a solution, she worked on identifying some of her internal fears about carrying out the solution and the thoughts that went with them. After listing the thoughts that could get in her way, she listed some new thoughts that would support her progress. Look at the provided examples and then try to come up with some of your own examples of old and new thoughts.

#### OLD THOUGHT

What if it doesn't work?

I will always have problems no matter what I do.

Why do I have so many problems? It's not right.

It's too much. I don't want to think about it right now.

#### NEW THOUGHT

If my solution doesn't work I can come up with a new one.

As I get better at solving my problems, the less stress I will feel when they come up.

Everyone has problems. I can't control that, but I can control what I do about it.

Avoiding the problem doesn't get rid of it. I can use my new skills and strategies to address it.

## Let's Practice Solving Problems

**Once you have identified a solution or combination of solutions**, you can now make a plan to carry out your solution. Your worker can help you make the plan and practice with you.

### 1. Develop the the steps of solving your problem:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

If your steps include something you can practice, practicing that part can make it easier to carry out your solution. Your worker can help you practice.

### 2. Watch your worker demonstrate the steps

### 3. Discuss how it went with your worker. Did they follow the steps? How effective do you think they were?

### 4. Now try it out for yourself with your worker.

### 5. Discuss with your worker how the practice felt to you, what you did well, and how you might do it differently in the future.

### 6. Continue to practice and discuss with your worker.

### Next Steps

- What did you find helpful about our meeting today?
- What would you like to do for your next step toward your goal(s)?
- Carry out my solution.
- I'd like to do something else \_\_\_\_\_.