



Problem Solving Guide

Some young people may need support to learn effective problem-solving skills, as difficulties with problem-solving is often a reason for frustration or outbursts. Often, the challenging part of problem solving is making decisions after coming up with and choosing options for a situation that needs resolving.

The following decision making process can assist children and teenagers to think of and evaluate options to a problem or situation. Encourage and support children or students to come up with two options, write the pros and cons of each and then implement the one they think is best. It is important for students to have only a few options to choose from, especially when learning these skills, as too many choices may be overwhelming and impact their ability to make a decision. By writing down the pros and cons of the options, they will be able to evaluate their choices, guiding them to find the best one.

The level of support you give children and students will depend on their age or abilities. Young children in early education and care settings will need lots of support. The main focus for these children is thinking of options for them to try in response to the problem they face. Help them identify their problem, then focus on supporting them to think of options. Skip writing down pros and cons.

The main focus for primary and secondary students is still coming up with options, however they can also work through the other steps. For younger students, encourage them to independently identify the problem and think of options – try to offer support only when they get stuck. They can also begin to write down pros and cons, although they don't need to write many! They will still need a lot of your support.

Older students can work through the problem solving steps more independently, however monitor their progress and offer your support when needed. Encourage and support them to focus on considering the pros and cons of their options, so they can evaluate and reflect on their choices.

Steps for problem solving

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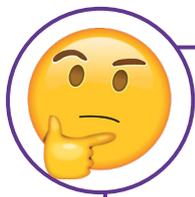
1 *Clearly define the problem*
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2 *Think of two options for resolving the problem*
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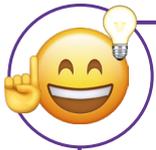
3 *Write a pros and cons list for each option. Both short and long term consequences of choosing an option can be explored if the students are able to understand these concepts.*
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4 *Choose an option based on the assessment of the pros and cons list and carry it out*
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5 *Evaluate how successful the option was in addressing the problem. If it wasn't helpful or only addressed some of the problem then the process can be restarted*



What's the problem?



What's one option?



What's another option?



Pros



Pros



Cons



Cons

I would choose option _____ because: _____
