

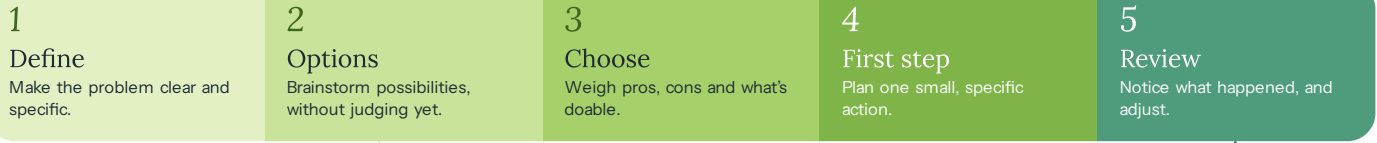
Problem-Solving Worksheet

STRUCTURED PROBLEM SOLVING · ONE STEP AT A TIME

Turning a problem that feels overwhelming into steps you can take

When a problem feels big, it can be hard to know where to begin. Working through it in stages can make it more manageable.

Choose one problem at a time, ideally something specific and at least partly within your influence.



↑ not quite working? return to your options and try another

A helpful stance

Problems are a normal part of life, not a sign of failure.

Approaching a problem often works better than avoiding it.

Pause and settle first if emotions are running high.

"Good enough" solutions are often enough to start.

1 Define the problem

who, what, where, when

The problem, as specifically as I can put it

A realistic, good-enough outcome would be

What's within my influence

2 Brainstorm options

quantity first; include small or unusual ideas

1	2
3	4
5	6

3 Choose an option

compare two or three

Option	Pros	Cons	Doable?
			/10
			/10
			/10

4 Plan the first step

small and specific

My chosen option	First small step
When	Where
What might get in the way	If so, I'll
Support I could ask for	

5 Review

after trying the step

What happened	☐ Keep going ☐ Adjust ☐ Try another option
What worked, and what I'd change	How manageable it feels now ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What the research suggests

Problem-solving therapy, which teaches steps like these alongside a constructive attitude to problems, has been found helpful for depression in several meta-analyses, though effects vary between studies and people.

Go at your own pace

Some problems can't be solved quickly, or at all. If a problem involves your safety or feels overwhelming, consider talking it through with someone you trust or a professional.

SOURCES

Bell, A. C., & D'Zurilla, T. J. (2009). Problem-solving therapy for depression: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review* 29(4), 348-353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.02.003>

Cuijpers, P., van Straten, A., & Warmerdam, L. (2007). Problem solving therapies for depression: A meta-analysis. *European Psychiatry*, 22(1), 9-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2006.11.001>