

# SOLVED - problem solving technique



## S Step 1 - Selecting a problem

**Convert your worries/stresses into a problem. Identify and clearly define one problem you are going to work on.**

The first step of the problem-solving process is to convert your worries into problems that are ready to be solved. Write down one difficult situation, relationship or practical issue you are facing.

### Example:

- Worry - I'm broke, what if I get into more debt?
- Problem - My income won't cover my outgoings next month unless I do something.



## O Step 2 - Opening your mind to all solutions

Once your worry has been converted into a problem, start **brainstorming** about ways to solve the problem, even "ridiculous" ways, writing down all possibilities. Think up as many solutions as possible.

### Tips for generating possible solutions:

- Think about a solution you would give someone else with their problem
- Think about the ways you have handled similar situations

The example below demonstrates a variety of solutions to worry about "being broke" and problem of income not covering outgoings next month.

1. Get a part-time job
2. Sell some items on-line.
3. Ask my parents for the money.
4. Extend my overdraft on my bank account.
5. Rob a bank (silly idea)

## L Step 3 - List up the pros and cons for each potential solution

**Think carefully about the strengths and weakness of each option, how practical it is and the potential consequences.**



Brainstorm possible solutions	Solution pros (advantages)	Solution cons (disadvantages)	Rank
<b>Extend my overdraft on my bank account</b>	I will receive the money quickly	High interest rates. Might leave me more in debt	3
<b>Ask my parents for the money</b>	This will allow me to focus on other things. I can repay them with no interest	They might think I overspend on unimportant things or don't work hard	1
<b>Get a part-time job for the weekend</b>	I might meet some new people	I'll have less/no relaxation and leisure time. I will be tired, and it might affect my work productivity	2

## V

**Step 4 - Verify the best solution**

Verify the best solution by ranking the solutions from best to worst and pick the most practical and/or desirable solution.



## E

**Step 5- Enact a plan**

Enact a plan by identifying the steps needed to carry out your chosen solution and execute.

You need to have a clear plan that lays out exactly what you are going to do and when you are going to do it. You may need to break actions down into small steps to facilitate their execution.

- **What you are going to do?**  
*"Borrow money from my parents"*
- **When you are going to do it?**  
*"I will drive up there this weekend and ask for it. I will also tell them what my repayment plan is. I will also ask my bank for an overdraft as a back-up plan"*
- **What problems and difficulties could arise?**  
*"They might not agree or have the full amount"*
- **How could you overcome them?**  
*"I could choose my second-best solution from the list I made. I could also borrow half the amount from them and request a much smaller overdraft from my bank".*



## D

**Step 6- Decide if the plan worked**


Whatever happens, you need to review the plan and learn from what happened.

- Did you try out your plan? If yes, what went well and what didn't go so well. If no, what stopped you?  
  
*"Parents agreed to loan me  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the amount I asked for. Getting an overdraft from my bank was problematic. I decided instead to do a couple of private tutoring sessions a week for the remaining amount that I need. My schedule is busier and I have less time to relax, but I know it's only temporary."*
- If your chosen solution doesn't get you the outcome you would have liked, return to the first step in the SOLVED technique to specify a new problem or move to "O" or "L" to identify other goals or potential solutions for the same problem.



# SOLVED template

## **S** Specific problem

 Write your problem here...

## **O** Open your mind

## **L** List

To possible solutions	Pros	Cons	Rank

## **V** Verify the best solution by circling your choice

# E

## Enact the solution

Steps and time frame of solution:



Step 1:

When:



Step 2:

When:



Step 3:

When:



# D

## Decide if your solution worked: Why not?



Did you try out your plan? If yes, what went well and what didn't go so well. If no, what stopped you?