



# Structured Problem Solving

Problem solving is different to worrying or ruminating. When we worry or ruminate, we aren't coming up with solutions or a plan for action, this can feel like shifting from one thought to the next without fully processing our worries. On the other hand, problem solving is when we spend some time thinking about things we can do to solve or help a specific problem. Structured Problem Solving is all about focusing on what's in our control and what we can do to make things better.

## THE SIX STEPS OF PROBLEM SOLVING

### 1. Define the problem

- Think about one specific problem that causes you stress or worry
- Clearly define the problem, be as specific as possible
- Only consider one problem at a time
- Don't try and solve the problem at this stage

### 2. Brainstorm as many solutions as you can

- List any solutions you can think of
- List ideas even if they seem useless or silly
- Even if a solution seems ridiculous at first, the idea may help you think of better solutions that aren't immediately obvious
- At this stage, don't evaluate solutions, just list them

### 3. Evaluate the solutions

- Briefly consider the pros and cons of each solution
- No solution will be ideal, as every good solution will have some drawbacks
- Don't pick a solution yet. Just consider the pros and cons of each option

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## 4. Choose the best solutions

- Pick a solution or a combination of solutions
- It can be helpful to choose a solution you can start quickly, so you can begin straight away
- Choose a solution that is doable and not overly ambitious
- Your solution(s) might only begin to solve the problem, and that's okay!

## 5. Make a detailed action plan

- If you make a detailed plan for how you will carry out your solutions, then you will be more likely to take action (and therefore, solve your problem)
- Consider what steps you will need to take, how and when you will do these steps, whose help and what resources you might need, what obstacles you might come across, and how you will overcome these

## 6. Review your progress

- Often, problems are not completely solved after the first round of structured problem solving
- So, once you've tried your solution, reflect on what you've achieved, what you've learned, and what still needs to be done
- If you need to, you can start the structured problem solving process again



- 1. Define the problem:** (the more narrowly you can define it, the better)

- 2. Brainstorm as many solutions as you can think of:**

- 3. Briefly evaluate the pros and cons of each solution:**

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**4.** Choose the best or most practical solution(s) :

Blank area for writing the best or most practical solution(s).

**5.** Create a detailed plan for how to carry out this solution:

Blank area for creating a detailed plan for how to carry out the solution.

**6.** Review your progress

Blank area for reviewing progress.

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