

Problem Solving

Use This When:
 To provide children with a systematic way to negotiate problems and to consider alternative solutions to situations.



Objectives:

- to teach a method of problem solving that involves clearly defining the problem, generating possible solutions, examining the solutions, implementing a solution and evaluating its effectiveness

Steps:

<input type="checkbox"/> Normalize problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the fact that we all have problems, every day. • Note that solving them can make us feel good, and not solving them can make us feel bad. • Discuss with the child the types of problems that people in general experience daily, and more specifically, those problems that the child might be dealing with. Appropriate self-disclosure may be useful. • Ask the child to begin thinking about a particular problem he/she has experienced lately.
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach 5 steps to problem solving	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Say what the problem is 2) Think of solutions 3) Examine each one (what good and bad things would happen if he/she tried this solution?) 4) Pick one and try it out 5) See if it worked. If so, great! If not, go back to the list of solutions and try another one.
<input type="checkbox"/> Practice using the problem solving steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize the child with this problem-solving process by starting with your own problem and allow the child to help you in working through the problem solving steps. • Keep your example brief (e.g., use only 2 or 3 possible solutions, and move through them quickly; the goal is to illustrate the process). • Use questioning to make sure he/she understands the steps.
<input type="checkbox"/> Elicit personal example from child and practice	<p>After you have disclosed your problem, work with the child to identify a problem from his/her life that the two of you can work on using the problem solving steps. Do this in more detail than your example above. If the child is not ready to discuss his/her problems, use a story or a problem of someone the child is close to (i.e., a friend or family member).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Review problem solving technique	<p>Ensure that the child (a) knows when it might be helpful to use the steps, (b) understands how to use this strategy, and (c) knows each of the five steps.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Practice assignment	<p>Ask the child to practice the problem solving process on his/her own, and to record his/her steps (with caregiver, as needed), and bring the record back to the next session for discussion and review.</p>

Helpful Tips:

- Remember to praise often
- Remember to review often, by **asking questions**
- Brief any caregivers, teachers, or other adult figures who may be involved
- Simplify these steps if you have to
- This can be covered in more than one session/meeting