

Creative Problem Solving

SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Penn State Health



Disclaimer

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Objectives

This training is designed to help you:

- Define the problem
- Differentiate problems from conflicts
- Manage complex problems
- Understand your role
- Discover alternate solutions
- Check-up

Problem
Analysis
Solution



Problem solving skills

- Active listening
- Analysis and research
- Creativity and innovation
- Communication
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- Resilience
- Impartiality

WHO
WHEN
WHERE
HOW
WHAT
WHY

Defining the problem

- Write down the problem and be specific.
- Where is the problem?
- How is it a problem?
- Will it still be a problem tomorrow?
- Who is involved?
- Why is the problem occurring?
- What are potential outcomes/solutions?

Problems vs. conflicts

- Are you “conflict-averse”?
- Do you have a personality conflict?
- How comfortable do you feel with the problem?
- Recognize that problems and conflicts happen all the time.



Complex problems

“Chunk” the problem down...

Make sure you understand the entire problem...

Prioritize the problem – which “chunk” of the problem needs to be solved first?

How do you fit in the problem?

- Focus on the problem. Solution?
- Are you making it better? Worse?
- Are you trying to solve the problem for the right reasons?
- Where does guilt fit in to this problem?
- Understand where all parties are coming from.

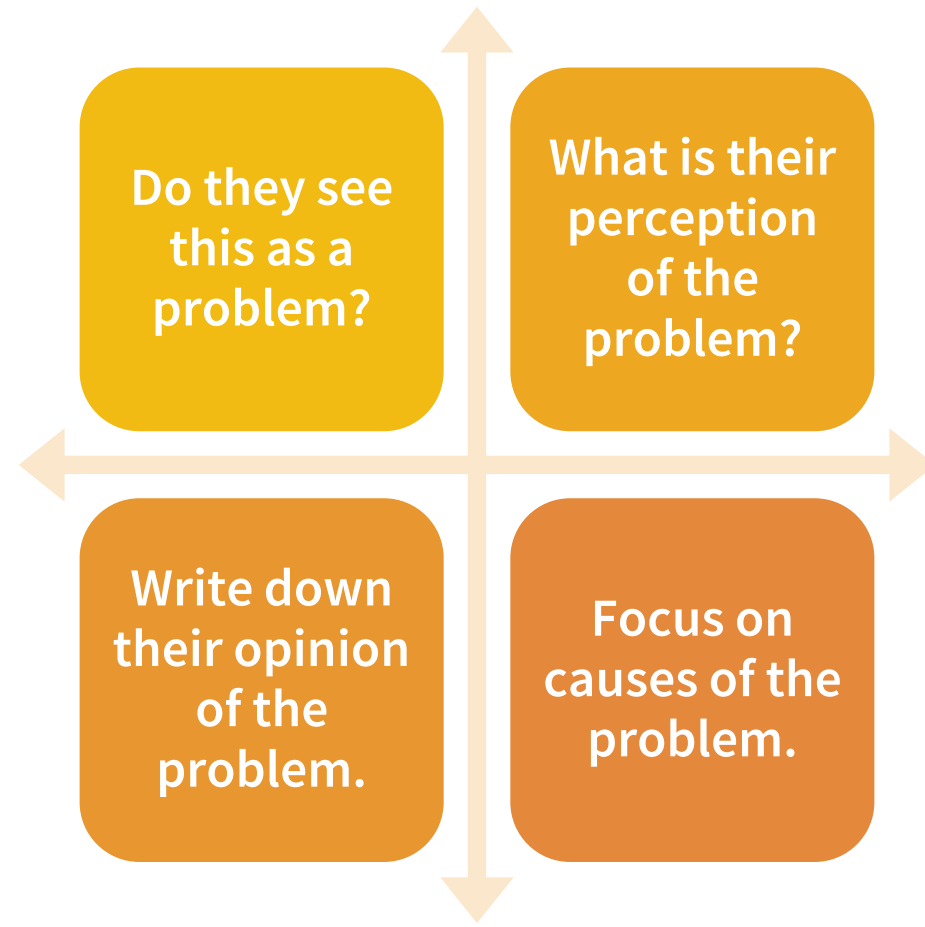


Procrastination



- **Impacts**
 - Missed opportunities
 - Increased stress/anxiety
 - Rushed decisions
 - Missed deadlines
 - Underdelivering
- **Recognizing it in yourself**

Interview others



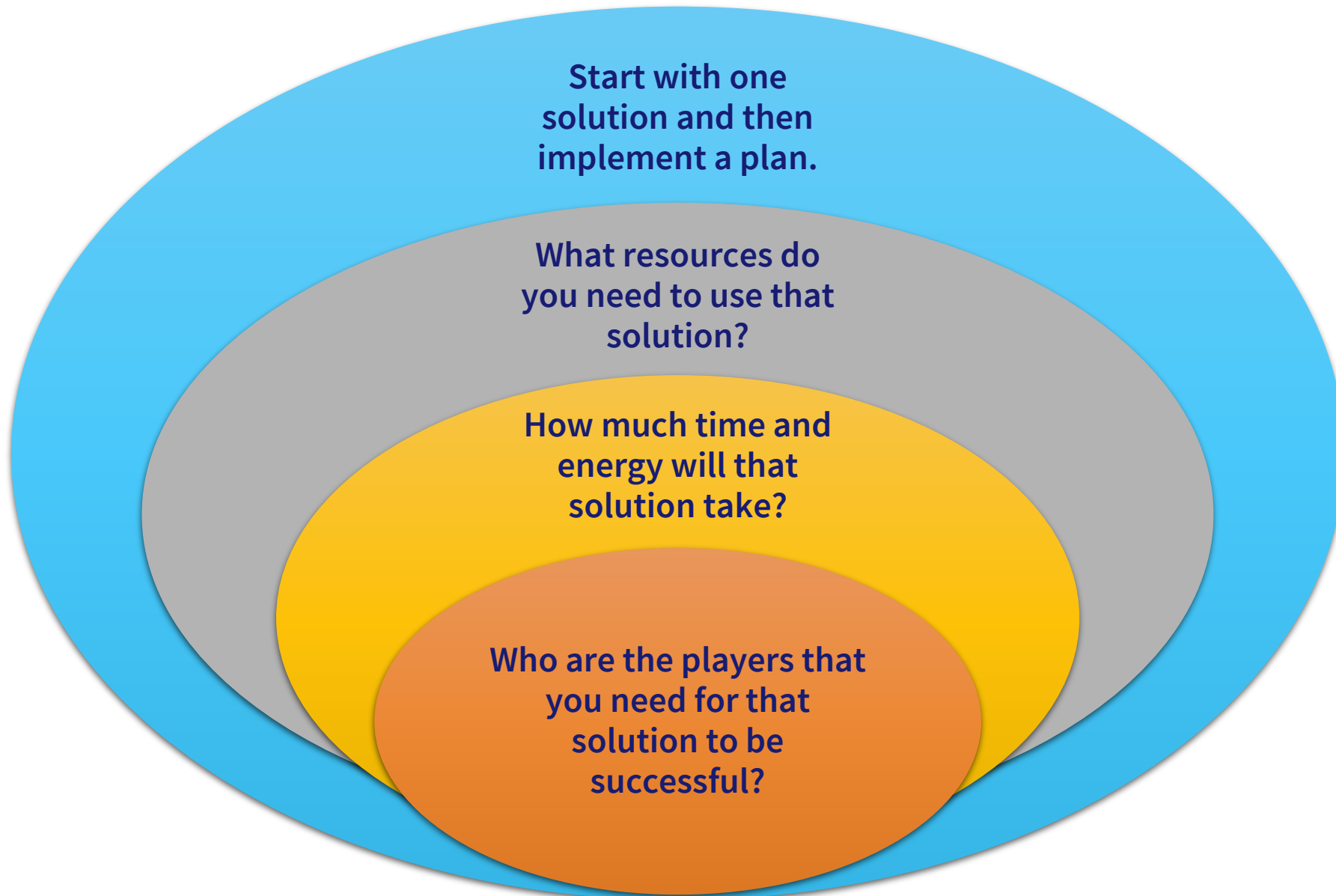
Activity



Mind map



Which solution is the best fit?



SMART goals

-  S - Specific
-  M - Measurable
-  A - Attainable
-  R - Rewarding
-  T - Time-based



Check-up

How is the solution going?

Is it working as well as it should/could be?

What can you do to make it better?

Evaluate

Evaluation



- Did you define the problem correctly?
- Were you on target with the root causes?
- Were the resources used appropriately?
- Where did you have to “course correct” and why?
- Were possible solutions correctly ranked?
- Did you achieve the desired outcome?
- Was the outcome initially identified correctly?

Interactive toolkits

Mindfulness

www.mindfulness.tools

Practical tools and exercises for incorporating mindfulness into everyday life.

Meditation

www.meditate.tools

Easy-to-use collection of resources that includes guided meditations, tip sheets and more.

Resiliency

www.resiliency.tools

Skill development resources to help you 'bounce back' from challenging situations.

Sleep fitness

www.sleepfitness.tools

Information and resources to help you learn good sleep habits and achieve healthy sleep.

What is SupportLinc?

The SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a health benefit, separate from your medical insurance, offered by your employer to help you manage life's daily challenges.

SupportLinc can refer you to professional counselors, services and resources that will help you and your eligible family members resolve a broad range of personal and work-related concerns.

What services are included?

Work-life benefits



Legal consultation

Free in-person or telephonic consultation with a licensed attorney

No employment law



Dependent care referrals

Expert referrals to child and adult/elder care providers, facilities and other resources



Financial consultation

Expert guidance and consultation from financial professionals



“Convenience” referrals

Guidance and referrals to a variety of daily living resources: home improvement, entertainment services, pet care, auto repair, wellness, travel, handymen, volunteer opportunities etc.



Identity theft consultation

Free consultation with an identity theft recovery professionals

Tailored recovery action plan

Getting started



Call: 1-888-881-LINC (5462)



QR Code:



Visit: www.supportlinc.com



Log in or create account
(code: psh)

SupportLinc

Support for everyday issues. Every day.

Additional resources

SMART goals

There is a skill to setting and prioritizing goals. When done properly, goal setting forces you to think about not only what you want to achieve, but how to achieve it. The SMART system is one way of setting effective goals. SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, rewarding and time-based.

Be specific: In general, goals starting with “to be better ...” are too vague. Unless you describe your goals in exact terms, it’s difficult to develop an action plan. For example: I wish to stabilize my weight at 130 pounds.

They should be measurable: Determine your criteria for evaluating performance. Unless you assess your progress with hard data, it is difficult to determine when you reach your goals. Example: I will exercise by walking 30 minutes each day, 5 days a week.

They should be attainable: You must be careful not to set your goals so high that they are unreachable. You can check this by asking yourself, “Can I walk 30 minutes a day?” If the answer is yes, then the goal is attainable.

Goals should be rewarding: Unless you feel that your goals are worth the effort, you may have difficulty starting and staying motivated. Ask yourself, “Is weighing 130 pounds something that I value? What will I enjoy by stabilizing my weight?”

And your goals should be time-based: You need to assign realistic deadlines to each of your goals. Deadlines should be far enough in advance that you can accomplish the goal comfortably – even with unexpected delays. However, the deadlines should be near enough that you feel compelled to take action. The length of your commitment should also be assigned. Will it be an ongoing effort or just for a specific period of time?

Remember, the underlying reason you are setting SMART goals is to stay focused and to allocate your time efficiently.

Mutual conflict resolution

In most cases you should be able to resolve conflicts by working with others involved. Here are some steps to consider:

Step one: Identify the purpose and importance of the conflict—and your mutual desire to solve it.

Step two: Takes turns listening to each other’s side. This is a very important step and one that requires good listening skills.

Step three: Once all the issues are discussed, repeat and summarize what was said. It may help to write this down or even create “minutes” to document issues discussed.

Step four: Ask questions as needed and encourage others to do the same. Do you understand their point of view? Are you sure they understand yours? Clarify as needed.

Step five: No matter how intense the conflict, you should always find issues or points that you agree upon. For instance, “we agree our goal is to increase sales by 10 percent this year.” Or, “we agree that we need to cut our household costs, we just don’t agree on what costs we can cut.”

Step six: Next, list ALL Solutions— even those that may seem unrealistic, unreasonable, or wrong.

Step seven: Review all the possible solutions and highlight those you find mutually acceptable. Hopefully, you will have at least one or two that you agree upon.

Step eight: Choose the one (or few) that you agree will work best.

Step nine: Put a plan into action. What steps will you take to implement? How will you review progress?

By creating step-by-step guidelines and mutually agreed upon solutions and action plans, you should be able to minimize conflict and achieve the desired goals.

For further resources, please go to your portal and use the search bar to type in “Conflict Resolution Flash Course.”

Moving ahead



What did you get out of today's presentation?

Which concepts are working in your life and why?

Who can be a support for you to make change?

Which concepts are *not* working in your life and why?

What 3 ideas are going to be the most helpful for you?

How can you support someone else with change?

What can you do in the next 24 hours to apply these concepts?

What are your biggest barriers for change?