

Better Problem Solving

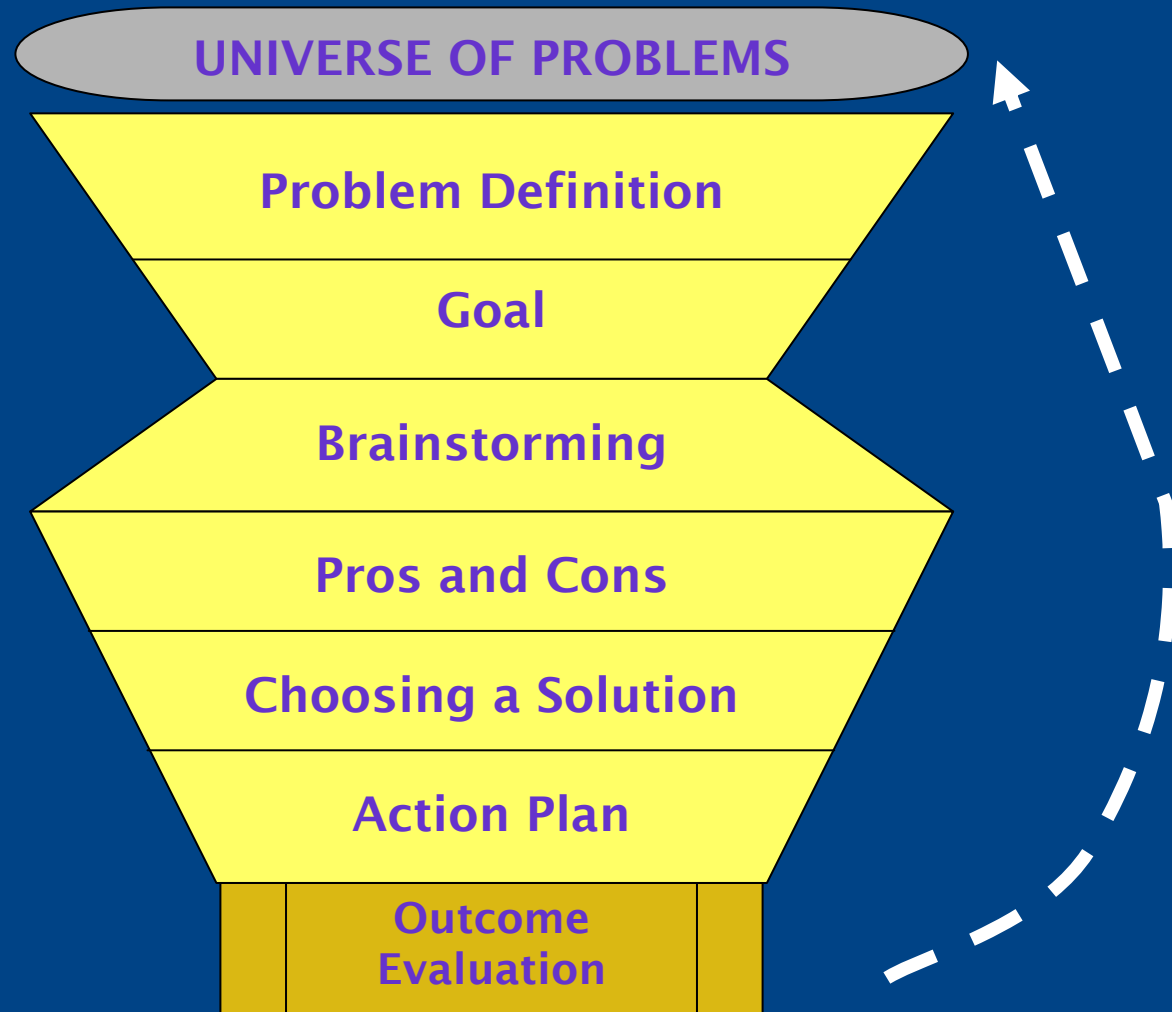
Developed for REACH NOLA

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Problem Solving Process



Seven Steps of PST - PC



1. Clarify and Define the Problem
2. Set Realistic/Achievable Goal
3. Generate Multiple Solutions
4. Evaluate and Compare Solutions
5. Select a Feasible Solution
6. Implement the Solution
7. Evaluate the Outcome

Clarifying and Defining the Problem

Explore and Clarify:

Who, What, Where, When, Why?
“What have you already tried?”

Break down Complex Problems into Objective & Possible

Must be objective: observable and measurable:

“Low self-esteem” is *not* objective.
Ask self: “Can I picture this?”
Think “Function”
“I stay home alone” *is* objective.

Must be possible:

Patient must have some degree of control
Life problems are potentially controllable
Symptoms are not directly controllable

Establishing a Realistic Goal

Follows directly from the Problem definition

“What do you want to change about...How would things be different?”

Goal must be objective (i.e., measurable).

Either it happened or it didn't happen.
Improved self-esteem is *not* objective.
Going out with friends *is* objective.

Must be stated in Behavioral Terms.

“Weight loss” *is* objective, but it is *not* behavioral.
Changing eating habits is both objective
and behavioral.

Goal must be Achievable.

i.e., by next visit

Generating Solutions “Brainstorming”

Solutions come from the patient

Withhold Judgment

It's all about *Attitude*

- Throw caution to the wind!
- Number over Quality
- Combine and Modify Ideas
- “What Else?”
 - *then be quiet*
- Write them down

Weighing the Pros and Cons

Pros – look for unique quality:

What is unique about this solution?

What makes this solution so good?

“It solves my problem” is not unique. Look for “it is quick”, “social”, “solves two problems in one”

Cons:

Time, Effort, Cost, Independence, Emotional Impact
Compared to other solutions?

Rating & Comparing Cons

How much does this solution “cost” in terms of:

Cons (-)	A Little	Medium	A Lot
Effort			
Time			
Money			
Emotional Impact			
Involving Others			

Choosing the Solution

Systematic Evaluation of Pros and Cons

Solution Satisfies the Goal

Negative Impact is Limited

Review the Rationale for Choice

**Especially if it does not seem to
reflect preceding decision analysis**

Empowers the client

The Action Plan

Specific Tasks Identified:

Where, When, How, Who...

Anticipate Obstacles

Realistic

Role Play to Improve Confidence

Evaluating the Outcome

Review all Tasks

Acknowledge Success

Explore Undesirable Outcome:

- Problem definition
- Goal definition
- Unforeseen Obstacles

Road Blocks to Effective Problem Solving

ROAD BLOCK	OPTION
Avoiding problems	Create a list and prioritize
Getting discouraged and giving up.	Be persistent
Getting frustrated and unable to concentrate	Be patient, break it down into small steps
Getting anxious and jumping at the first idea that comes to mind	Attend to details, weigh the consequences of each option and compare them against each other.