

Your turn – have a practise at solving a problem

Think of a problem you are having in your life right now. It could be something really big, like having relationship difficulties with someone important, or being bullied, or getting into trouble at school or somewhere else. Or it could be something quite small, like forgetting where you put your favourite shoes, or not being able to do your chores. Or your problem might fit somewhere in the middle, not huge, but not so little either.

STEP 1 Name it:

The problem is

Solving problems

STEP 2 Come up with some possible solutions – go on, add some funny and ridiculous ones too, it helps with imagination.

STEP 3 Have a think about each solution and how good you think it is – will it solve the problem completely or maybe even just a little?

Am I Depressed and What Can I Do About It?

STEP 4 Choose one or two of your favourite solutions – they don't have to be perfect, in fact most of the time solutions are not perfect, they're just OK.

My favourite solutions are

STEP 5 Plan how and when you will try them out.

Solving problems

STEP 6 Try them. Did it work?

STEP 7 If not, try some other ones – which ones will you try next? Do you need to think of some extra solutions?

Am I Depressed and What Can I Do About It?

STEP 8 Stop and remind yourself that it's great you have remembered to practise solving problems, no matter what the outcome.

How do you feel now?

This technique can be used for any problems that come up. After a while it becomes easier to use it quickly. Sometimes you will discover that solving the problem on your own is impossible and then one of your solutions might be about getting others to help you.

In fact, this might then become another problem to be solved.

'My problem is that I need help with my problem and I don't know who the best person or people are to help me with this'.

There might be lots of different solutions you can come up with for this particular problem. As you practise problem solving more your confidence will go up. Your mood will also improve once you feel you are doing something about your problems.