

THE SEVEN STEPS TO PROBLEM SOLVING

From the workbook
Practical problem solving

To help you complete the 7 steps see the online workbook '*Practical Problem Solving*', pages 7 to 28. Or see the associated worksheet '*Julia's 7 steps to problem solving*' for an example of how to use this technique.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO WORK ON.

Write down one difficult situation, relationship or practical issue you are facing here, break it into smaller steps if you need to (remember these are problems outside you):



STEP 2: THINK UP AS MANY SOLUTIONS AS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE YOUR FIRST TARGET (including ridiculous ideas at first):



STEP 3: LOOK AT THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH POSSIBLE SOLUTION



Write your own list of ideas below, and the pros and cons of each suggestion.

MY SUGGESTIONS FROM STEP 2	PROS (ADVANTAGES)	CONS (DISADVANTAGES)

STEP 4: NOW CHOOSE ONE OF THE SOLUTIONS. In making your decision bear in mind the best way of tackling the problem is to plan steady, slow changes.



MY SOLUTION Write down your preferred option here:

Check your solution: Now see if you can answer 'yes' to the questions below.

Is my planned solution:

- Useful for helping me move forward? Yes No
- Clear, so that I will know when I have done it? Yes No
- Something I value, or need to do? Yes No
- Realistic, practical and achievable? Yes No

If you answered 'yes' to all four questions, your chosen step is a good choice to start with.
If you answered 'no,' then think again and choose another option from your list.

STEP 5: PLAN THE STEPS NEEDED TO CARRY OUT YOUR CHOSEN SOLUTION. You need to have a clear plan that lays out exactly what you are going to do and when you are going to do it.



Now, write down your plan:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it (day and time)?

What problems or difficulties could arise?

How could you overcome them?

It is good to have a backup solution in case major difficulties arise with your first choice plan.



Write your own backup plan here:

STEP 6: CARRY OUT YOUR PLAN. Now carry out your plan during the next week. Good luck!

STEP 7: REVIEW THE OUTCOME. Whatever happens, now is the time to review the plan and learn from what happened. Review what happens with the content of the *Review Sheet* (which follows on the next page).



OK, HOW DID IT GO?

1 WHAT DID YOU PLAN TO DO?

Write it here:

2 DID YOU TRY TO DO IT?

If yes:

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

What have you learned from what happened?

How are you going to apply what you have learned?

If no, what stopped you?

Internal things (forgot, not enough time, put it off, didn't think I could do it, couldn't see the point, etc.)

External things (other people, work or home issues, etc.)

How could you have planned to deal with these things?

USE THE PLAN, DO, REVIEW APPROACH
TO HELP YOU MOVE FORWARDS