

# Problem-Solving

## Understanding Your Role and Actions



### You Have Choice and Control

Problems happen to everyone. We all have problems. Some problems can be short term while others are with us much longer, months or even years.

When dealing with a stressful problem or issue, we often forget that we have choice and control over some aspects of our problem and some things are out of our control.

We have choice and control over how we think and act which can determine how we choose to interact with and be affected by a problem. Its through purposeful choice that you engage in problem-solving that works for you and accounts for the context and realities of the problem.

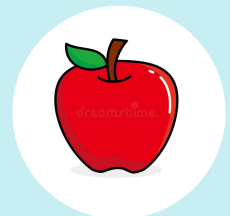
Consider problem-solving not only as something you have choice and control over, but as action toward resolution. Here are steps to consider to as you to **think**, **reflect**, and **consider** your problem:



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## DEFINE

In order to problem solve, you need to determine what the problem is.

Defining the problem is about determining what your focus should be on and not other factors. It's about diagnosing the issue, not just the symptoms of the issue.

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## REVIEW

Now that you know what the problem is and what your focus is on, you have work to do.

- Write a summary
- Create a timeline
- Outline steps you have taken
- List what is in your control and what is out of your control

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## CONSULT

You are not alone and there are many supports and resources available to you on campus.

Reach out to consult and review your situation and the problem you are experiencing with others to seek guidance and assistance.

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## DECIDE

Once you have consulted, you need to decide what action(s) you want to take.

You need to decide on what remedy and solutions you are seeking.

You need to decide what you are comfortable with.

## Problem Solving is a Mountain to Climb

There are consequences for any action you decide to take or not to take. It is important you consider all your options (pros and cons), the potential risks, and whether you are prepared to take that risk.

It can be tempting to think of your problem as huge, unsolvable, and out of your control, but problem solving can look different depending on the situation. Reviewing your choices and options can allow you to evaluate what you are willing to spend your time and energy on. Remember, your well-being needs to be a priority! Keep clam and don't panic!

Solving a problem is not an immovable mountain, but it does require you to make decisions whether to take action or not take action. Be kind to yourself and be mindful of how you are feeling and what you are comfortable with. Be creative and open-minded on what could be!



## Think About It...

- Don't start by trying to solve the problem. First seek to understand the root of the problem.
- All problems have aspects that are within your control and outside of your control.
- We tend to spend more time fussing and focusing on the aspects of our problems that are not within our control (what other people did or didn't do) rather than what is in our control.
- Biggest mistake is our tendency to seek solutions to our problems from the solutions we used before to resolve a problem. However, if those old solutions worked, the problem would not still be around. In order to come up with new solution, we need to be open to brainstorming all options and solutions.
- Naming your problem differently than you have been, will often open the doors to choices and solutions which had not been previously considered.
- We may not be able to change what others do or think, but we do have control and the power to act and think differently for ourselves.
- We always have more than one choice or option - even if we don't particularly like any of them. These choices and options are ways we can do things differently and to change our relationship to the problem.
- Even if there are people and processes that might or should be able to address or help you with your problem, it is still up to you to define the problem and challenge yourself to make a change, move forward and away from your problem.

