

3. Tackling Your Problems



Sometimes, it can be hard to think of solutions to focus on. This is especially the case when we're facing multiple problems or when we're feeling tired, stressed or overwhelmed. If you're struggling to think of proactive strategies for addressing any difficulties you're facing, try the below steps:

Define the problem you are trying to solve, as specifically as possible (e.g., instead of "I'm worried about money" try "In one month's time, I might not be able to afford to pay my rent").

Brainstorm as many solutions to this problem as possible. Don't try to think of the 'best' solution. Instead, list as many creative ideas as you can. Even if a solution might seem ridiculous, it may help you think of better ideas.

Evaluate these solutions by listing the pros and cons of each. Then, choose the best solution or combination of solutions. No solution will be perfect – they will all have a downside, but often choosing any solution is better than having no solution at all.

Make a plan for how and when you will implement the solution. You can break it down into steps and schedule them in your calendar.

Implement the solution you've come up with.

Review and repeat (if necessary) - take a moment to reflect on the outcome and see if you may need to try something else if the problem remains unsolved.

Tips for tackling problems:

- ✓ Prioritise what's important to focus on first.
- ✓ Apply the step-by-step strategy to one problem at a time.
- ✓ Try to tackle small problems as they come up rather than putting them off.
- ✓ Break larger, more complex problems down into smaller problems.
- ✓ Talk through the various solutions with someone you trust if you feel stuck.
- ✓ Try to be patient, especially when tackling longer-term problems.
- ✓ Be gentle with yourself and don't criticise yourself if you can't solve something.
- ✓ Use strategies to soothe your emotions if a problem you face can't be solved right now (or in the near future).



References:

*The University of New South Wales
St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney*

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