5 helpful steps for tackling your problems

Learn what to do when facing a challenge

When going through a tough time, it can feel overwhelming to keep solving problems that come up.

It's natural to feel stressed, anxious, or frustrated about things that take you by surprise.

When it feels like the problem is too big or you don't know where to start, try these practical steps to help you find a solution:

1 Consider the problem

It is normal to worry about the problems we are facing. But, worrying is passive, exhausting, and doesn't help us tackle and overcome what's going on.

To begin solving our problems instead of worrying about them, we first need to identify and consider each one in turn.

Begin by making a list of the difficulties you are currently facing, then pick one problem at a time and consider the following:

Ask yourself: *"Is there anything I can do about this problem right now?"*

YES

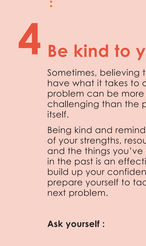
Get creative and think through some potential solutions. Ask yourself: 'What would I suggest to a close friend dealing with this?'

Not Right Now

Pick a time in the future when you might be in a position to solve it. Mark it in your calendar - this is your designated time for thinking about this problem and coming up with solutions. For now, try not to dwell on this problem, knowing that you've set aside time later to think about it.

NO

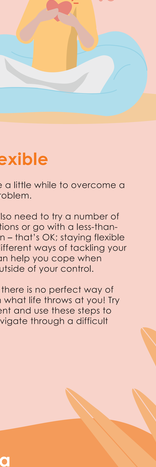
Acknowledge that you may not like the situation, but you can't control it. Seek some social support to help you cope with what's going on and try shifting your focus onto something else if worry about this problem creeps in.



2 Focus on what you can control

When we continuously think about our problems, the challenging situation we are in, or how bad things are (or might become), we can get stuck in an unhelpful thinking pattern called 'rumination'.

Try to focus instead on what you can control, brainstorm solutions, and make a list of helpful actions you can try – this will help you break this negative pattern and start to feel better and more positive.



3 Take action

Breaking problems down, making a step-by-step plan, and taking action (no matter how small) will make your difficulties feel more manageable and can help you feel more confident and productive.

Try using these steps:

Step 1 Define the problem

Step 2 Brainstorm solutions

Step 3 Evaluate your options

Step 4 Make a plan to take action

Step 5 Implement your solution

Step 6 Review and repeat if necessary

4 Be kind to yourself

Sometimes, believing that we have what it takes to overcome a problem can be more challenging than the problem itself.

Being kind and reminding yourself of your strengths, resourcefulness, and the things you've overcome in the past is an effective way to build up your confidence and prepare yourself to tackle the next problem.

Ask yourself :

What difficult circumstances have I coped with in the past?

What things have I done recently that show me how capable I am?

What qualities (e.g. organized, creative, funny, easygoing) helped me cope with these challenges?

5 Stay flexible

It might take a little while to overcome a particular problem.

You might also need to try a number of different actions or go with a less-than-ideal solution – that's OK; staying flexible and trying different ways of tackling your problems can help you cope when things are outside of your control.

Remember, there is no perfect way of dealing with what life throws at you! Try to stay patient and use these steps to help you navigate through a difficult time.