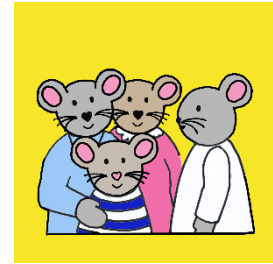


Problem Solving

Use This:

To teach the parent/s and child steps to solve problems more effectively.



Goals

- The family will know the five steps for effective problem solving
- The family will know how to generate a variety of ideas and possible solutions prior to evaluating them or acting on them
- The family will know how to apply these problem solving skills to real problems in his or her life

Materials

- **Fear Thermometer** and **Fear Ladder** (2 unrated copies for anxiety/trauma), **Feelings Thermometer** (for depression) (pp. 305, 307, 329)
- **Five S-T-E-P-S to Problem Solving** worksheet (p. 341)
- **Helping Your Child Solve Problems** parent handout (p. 338)
- **Weekly questionnaires** and **Monitoring sheet** (see pages 268 – 285)
- **Therapist Note Taking Sheet** (p. 267)

⌚ If time is tight: Teach the child a procedure for solving problems using the S-T-E-P-S acronym.

Main Steps

<input type="checkbox"/> Set an Agenda	Remember to start by setting an agenda together and by reviewing any practice assignments.
<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Weekly Ratings	If the main focus is traumatic stress or anxiety, use the 0 to 10 scale of the Fear Thermometer to obtain Fear Ladder ratings from both the child and his or her parent. If the main focus is depressed mood, use the Feelings Thermometer to take a rating. Review the Weekly questionnaires and Monitoring sheet in detail.
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Problem Solving	Discuss the fact that we all have problems every day. Note that solving them can make us feel good or keep us out of trouble, and not solving them can make us feel bad or get us in trouble. Let the child know you will be talking about a new way to solve problems, called "S-T-E-P-S."

<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss Types of Problems	<p>Discuss some examples of problems people often deal with on a daily basis. Use examples the child is likely to have experienced and that can be solved through direct action. This can be done by using calculated self-disclosure; that is, share with the child <i>appropriate</i> information about problems you have encountered and how you solved them.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Problem Solving S-T-E-P-S	<p>The parent should understand that S-T-E-P-S is a tool to solve problems that arise in the child's life.</p> <p>Describe each part of problem solving S-T-E-P-S:</p> <p>S: Say what the problem is. State the problem as specifically as possible.</p> <p>T: Think of solutions. Brainstorm at least three solutions without judging their feasibility or quality at this point.</p> <p>E: Examine the solutions. Identify the pros and cons of each suggested solution, including the likely consequences of each.</p> <p>P: Pick one and try it out. Use the pros and cons to choose the best solution.</p> <p>S: See if it worked. What was the outcome? If it didn't work, choose another solution to try.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY Solve a Problem Using S-T-E-P-S	<p>Present the child with a fun problem to solve that can be solved in the session together. Write down the process in terms of the problem solving S-T-E-P-S, and then point out to the child that you followed a process to solve the problem and that this is how S-T-E-P-S can be used. Example fun problems include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem: move an object from one part of the room to another without using hands • Problem: keep a balloon in the air for 60 seconds without hands • Problem: Move from one chair to another without letting feet touch the ground <p>Alternatively, use a problem from your own life and enlist the child as a helper to work through the problem-solving S-T-E-P-S.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply S-T-E-P-S to Child's Life	<p>Help the child identify a problem from his or her life that the two of you can work on using the problem solving S-T-E-P-S procedure. Practise using S-T-E-P-S to address a relatively simple problem in the child's life. Talk the child through the Five S-T-E-P-S to Problem Solving worksheet and help him or her to apply each part of the strategy to the identified problem.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Review Problem Solving S-T-E-P-S	<p>With the worksheet out of sight, discuss this new problem-solving strategy with the child to ensure that he or she (a) knows when it might be helpful to use the S-T-E-P-S strategy, (b) understands how to use this strategy, and (c) knows each of the five parts of S-T-E-P-S.</p>
Example script	
<p>You: So, when would someone want to use these S-T-E-P-S? Child: Well, when they're feeling bad about a problem, or feeling like they're stuck. You: And if they felt like they had a problem or couldn't figure something out, what would you tell them to do? Child: To think about their problem and some ways to try to solve it by going through the S-T-E-P-S. You: Great. But what if they're not familiar with solving problems by using S-T-E-P-S? How would you get them started? What would be the first thing that they need to do? Child: Well, they would need to start by saying what the problem is... You: Perfect! Then what? (continue asking similar questions, walking the child through the problem solving process)</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT <i>Practise at Home</i>	<p>Ask the child to practise using problem solving S-T-E-P-S on his or her own. The child should identify a problem in his or her life and fill out a Five S-T-E-P-S to Problem Solving worksheet for that problem at home. The child should then try one of the solutions and tell you how it worked in the next session. Remind the family to send the completed worksheet back for the next session for discussion.</p> <p>Be sure to help the child pick a relatively simple problem for this practice assignment, rather than something big or complicated. Appropriate problems might include resolving a disagreement with a parent over a minor matter or with a friend about what to do over the weekend.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Review Helping Your Child Solve Problems Handout	<p>Review the Helping Your Child Solve Problems handout. Make sure the parent is familiar with the concepts so that he or she can assist the child at home if needed.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Send the materials for the next session	<p>Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they <u>do not</u> need to be completed for next session as you will go through them together in the session. Tell the family you will also send the Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet and Feelings Thermometer which need to be completed for the next session.</p>
<p>Confirm date and time of the next call.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Summarising	<p>Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.</p>

Leave ‘Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note with the family by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to treatment or a game or activity that will leave them feeling good about the work you’ve done today. The end of each session should be used to praise the family’s efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

Helpful Tips

- If the child is reticent or having difficulty identifying a problem, you may use a story to illustrate a problem and then have the child apply the S-T-E-P-S to that problem. Alternatively, some children may be able to apply the S-T-E-P-S to a problem of someone they know or are close to, such as a friend or family member. The primary goal of this module is to teach the child a new skill for solving problems – not necessarily to solve a specific problem at hand. Eventually, this skill can be used to address problems specific to the child, even if the child is not ready at this point to discuss his or her unique problems during the session.
- Check in on goals: Does the child feel that he or she is making progress? How does the material you covered today relate to the goals you set together?

Special Cases

<i>Depression</i>	If the child enters the session in a bad mood, or seems tired, lethargic, or uninterested, this is an opportunity to introduce a mood booster: take a brief mood rating using the Feelings Thermometer , spend a few minutes engaging in a pleasant activity, and then take another mood rating. If the activity was successful, highlight to the child that what we do changes how we feel and then move on to covering the problem solving skill.
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How’s Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
 - Did you review often, by asking questions?
 - Did you simplify the steps as needed?
 - Did your pace match that of the child or family?
 - Did you stay on track?
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