Lesson 18 – Problem Solving: Skill 2 – State the Problem



Summary and Rationale

Group members apply the skills and insights they have developed learning the skill of cognitive self-change to make a simple problem statement. The problem statement consists of an objective description of the problem situation, including identifying warning signs and risk reactions.

This skill reinforces the process of creating an "objective distance" between the group member and the pressure of the problem he/she is facing.

Linking: The problem statement is like a min-thinking report. Group members identify warning signs (physical reactions, risk thoughts, and risk feelings), describe the problem situation simply and objectively (like the situation description in a thinking report), and then identify a potential risk reaction.

Concepts and Definitions

There are three steps in problem solving skill 2: **state the problem**.

Step 1: Identify a warning sign

Step 2: Describe the situation objectively

Step 3: Identify a risk reaction

Objectives – As a result of this lesson the group members will:

1. Identify a warning sign they experience in a problem situation.
2. Describe problem situations objectively.
3. Identify how their physical reactions, risk thoughts, and risk feelings create a risk of their reacting impulsively to make the problem worse.

Major Activities

Activity 1: Homework Review

Activity 2: Review of Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

Activity 3: Overview of Lesson

Activity 4: Explain Steps of Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem

Activity 5: Put Information Into a Problem Statement

Activity 6: Apply Steps of Skill 2: State the Problem

Activity 7: Review Examples of Problem Statements

Activity 8: Model Problem Solving Skills 1 and 2

Activity 9: Discuss Modeling Example

Activity 10: Group Members Role Play Problem Solving Skills 1 and 2

Activity 11: Wrap-up

Activity 12: Assign Homework

Supplements*

Charts – Make before facilitating lesson. (See supplement section in each lesson for full text of chart page.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



C-18-1 – Reaction to Roster
C-18-2 - Fathers Reaction
C-18-3 – Problem Solving Skills 1 & 2

Handouts – Make copies before lesson. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



H-16-1–Overview of Problem Solving Skills and Steps (Group members should bring this to class or you should keep a folder with these steps to use each lesson)
H-17-1-Using Stop and Think (with group members' problem situations)
H-18-1–Using Stop and Think
H-18-2-Pocket Skill Cards
H-18-3-Homework

Presentation Slides – Make transparencies if projector is not available. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



P-18-1-Title slide
P-18-2-Homework Review
P-18-3-Problem Solving Skill 1
P-18-4–Types of Problems
P-18-5–Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem
P-18-6–Template for "State the Problem"
P-18-7–Reaction to Roster
P-18-8–Fathers reaction
P-18-9- Which Steps are Missing?
P-18-10-Identify the Steps
P-18-11-Which Steps are Missing?
P-18-12 to P-18-16-additional State the Problem examples
P-18-17-Homework

The supplement section for this lesson includes scripts you can choose to use for modeling displays of two problem situations: "Shewan and Ms. Shells," and "Sherry and Ms. Porter." Alternatively, if the technology is available, you can choose to show the vignettes from the NIC* ***Thinking for a Change* *DVD.*

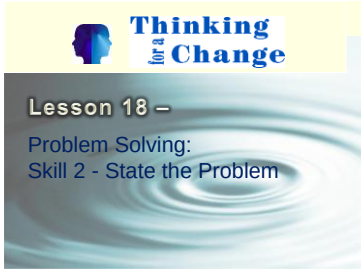
Equipment	Supplies
■ Easel (chart stand) ■ Projector to show presentation slides ■ Projection screen or suitable surface ■ Television and DVD player, or ability to play a DVD through the projector using a PC/laptop w/speakers	■ Chart paper ■ Markers ■ Masking tape ■ Copies of participant handouts ■ NIC **Thinking for a Change** DVD

Content	Notes

Activity 1: Homework Review

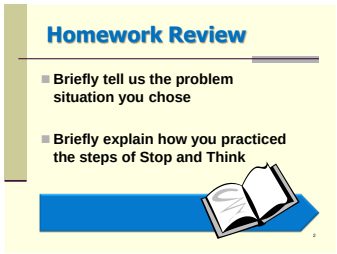
Welcome back to another session of **Thinking for a Change**!

P-18-1



Your homework assignment was to watch for problem situations and practice the two steps of problem solving skill 1: **stop and think**.

P-18-2



Let's take a minute to review what you did. Briefly tell us the problem situation you chose. Then explain how you practiced the **stop and think** steps.

Who would like to begin?

Have all group members review by quickly reporting out as directed.

Activity 2: Review of Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

Take a look at the handout with the problem solving steps on it. Let's review what we learned in the last session.

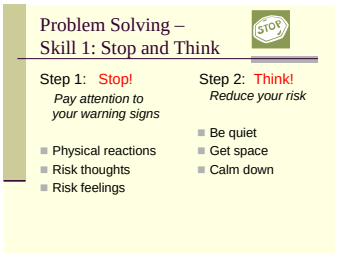
H-16-1-Overview of Problem Solving Skills and Steps

Who can tell us the steps for problem solving skill 1: **stop and think**?

P-18-3

(*Example answer: Step 1: Stop – Pay attention to*

my warning signs: physical reactions, risk thoughts, and risk feelings. Step 2: Think – Reduce the risk by being quiet, getting space, and calming down.)



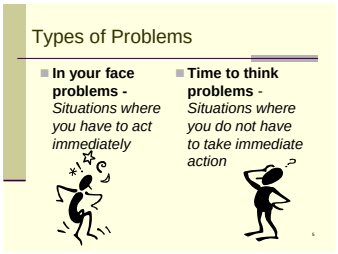
Good job. And, as you told us during the homework review, you found situations where you could use problem solving skill 1: **stop and think**.

By using this skill, we start to get control of our physical reactions, risk thoughts, and risk feelings to get ready to use other important thinking skills.

We can use **stop and think** for "in your face" and "time to think" problems.


P-18-4

What is the difference between an "in your face" and a "time to think" problem?



(Example answer: The amount of time you have to think. With an "in your face problem" you have only a few seconds or a few minutes to think. With a "time to think" problem, you have many minutes, hours or days to figure out what you can do.)

Using problem solving skill 1: **stop and think** gets us ready to think through a problem situation before taking action.

Activity 3: Overview of Lesson

Content	Notes

Today we are going to learn problem solving skill 2: **state the problem**. The skill focuses on thinking about the problem rather than just reacting to what happened.

Let's look at the **state the problem** handout and examine the thermometers. If we think of risk feelings and thinking skills as individual thermometers we see that the strength of risk feelings decrease as we use the steps of this thinking skill.

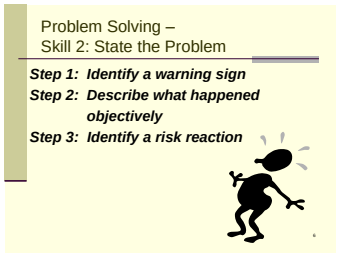

H-18-1 Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem

State the problem means you are keeping your risk feelings in control while you let your mind define the problem objectively.

This type of thinking helps you gain control by using thinking skills rather than reacting based on emotions. The more thinking we are able to do in a situation the more power and control we have.

Who will volunteer to read this slide with the **state the problem** steps?


P-18-5



(Answer: Step 1: Identify a warning sign; Step 2: Describe what happened objectively; Step 3: Identify a risk reaction.)

Activity 4: Explain Steps of Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem

Stating the problem means looking at the problem objectively just as you did when you did thinking reports in the cognitive self-change part of this program. Stating the problem is like writing a "mini" thinking report.

Step 1: Identify a Warning Sign

We have had a lot of practice identifying our warning signs. Remember warning signs are our physical reactions, risk thoughts and/or risk feelings. These put us at risk for reacting in a way that gets us into trouble or hurts others.

Step 2: Describe What Happened Objectively.

We also practiced step 2: Describe what happened objectively, when doing thinking reports. In step 2 we want to come up with a short description that tells who was involved and what was said or done. This should be very short and factual.

Step 3: Describe a Risk Reaction

We have also had a lot of practice in describing risk reactions in stressful situations throughout the cognitive self-change and social skills sessions. In this step we identify what we might want to do in a situation that would break a rule or hurt someone. We describe our risk reaction because it describes what we could do to make the problem bigger than it already is. Remember

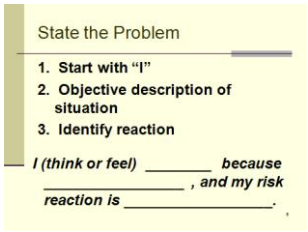
the conflict cycle.

As you can see, the steps of this skill are things we have practiced throughout this program and are things we already know how to do. You have these steps "in your pockets."

So now, we are going to add something new – learning how to put this information into a problem statement.

Activity 5: Put Information Into a Problem Statement

 P-18-6



Our goal is to state the problem in one or two sentences. We want to end up by using the formula:

> I (think or feel) _____ because _____ and my risk reaction is _____.

Starting the Problem Statement

We start the problem statement with the word "I."

Starting with the word "I" shows that we are going to take control of the problem situation. Starting with the word "I" also lets us put our risk thought or feeling as the first thing we consider. We have the power to control our risk thoughts and feelings. That is the first piece of information in a problem statement. It is the piece of the situation

that we have the most control over.

Part 2 of Problem Statement

The second part of the problem statement describes the situation objectively just like a thinking report. It tells who is involved and what was said or done.

Part 3 of Problem Statement

The third part of the problem statement identifies how we could react that would break a rule, hurt someone or make the problem bigger.

Here is a skill card with the **state the problem** steps. You can use this card while you practice the skill here in class, as well as when doing your homework.


H-18-2-State the Problem Pocket Skill Cards

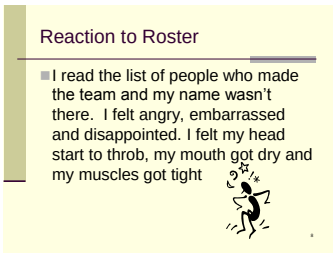
Activity 6: Apply Steps of Skill 2: State the Problem

Let's use this problem solving skill with the situations we worked on in the previous session.


P-18-7

The Boy Who Did Not Make the Team

Let's go through the steps of for the boy who did not make the team.



Content	Notes
Step 1: Identify a warning sign. What are his warning signs? *(Example answers: Thinking, "I hate the coach, physical reaction of feeling hot all over, emotional feeling of being angry, embarrassed, and disappointed).* Of the warning signs that you have identified, which do you think might hold the most risk for him? *(Any of the warning signs would be correct.)* Step 2: Describe what happened objectively. How could we describe this problem objectively? *(Example answers: Because my name was not on the list of who made the team.)* Step 3: Describe a risk reaction. What could this boy do that could be a risk reaction? *(Example answers: go off on the coach, vandalize the school, etc.)*	Facilitate a discussion for each of the questions you ask.
Now let's put this information into a problem statement. Remember it should just be one or two sentences	Take the information from the discussion and write it on chart

and we need to use "I" to begin our statement of the problem.

Father Who Found His Daughter Using

Now let's do the same thing for the father who found his daughter using.

paper.

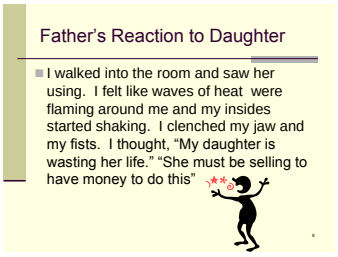
C-18-1-Reaction to Roster

Reaction to Roster

I (think or feel) _____because ____, and my risk is to react by _____.

Example: *I feel* angry *because* I read the list of people who made the team and my name wasn't there, and my *risk is to react by* going off on the coach.

 P-18-8



Repeat the same series of questions for the father who found his daughter

Activity 7: Review Examples of Problem Statements

Next we are going to look at some examples of problem statements that may or may not contain all of the steps.

using. Conclude the questioning by writing the information on the chart in the suggested format.

C-18-2-Father's Reaction

Father's Reaction
I think or feel _____because ____, and my risk is to react by _____.

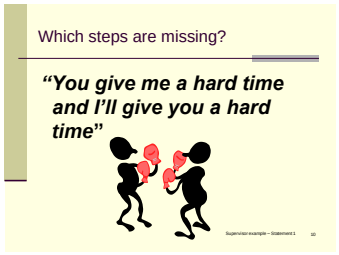
Example: *I think* my daughter is selling drugs *because* I walked into the room and saw her using, and *my risk is to react by* throwing her out of the house.

P-18-9 – P-18-16: Group members will probably need more practice. Show one or more of these

state the problem

example slides.

 P-18-9



Example 1

Here is an example of a problem statement that does not follow the steps. *You give me a hard time and I will give you a hard time.*

Let's talk through it 1 step at a time.

Do you see step 1: Identify a warning sign?

(Example answer: This could be debated, but you could say that "you give me a hard time and I give you a hard time" is an example of a risk thought.)

How about step 2: Identify what happened objectively?

(Answer: There is not an objective statement of the situation.)

And what about step 3: Describe a risk reaction?

(Answer: Maybe, maybe not – you could argue that "I'll give you a hard time" is a risk reaction.)

Example 2

 P-18-10

Let's look at the second statement

Do you see step 1: Identify a warning sign?

(Example answer: *I think my supervisor likes to*

put me down is an example of a risk thought.)

Do you see step 2: Describe the situation objectively?

(Example answer: He told me to redo the job he gave me in from of other workers.)

Do you see step 3: Describe your risk reaction?

(Example answer: Telling him off.)

And this statement begins with the word "I."

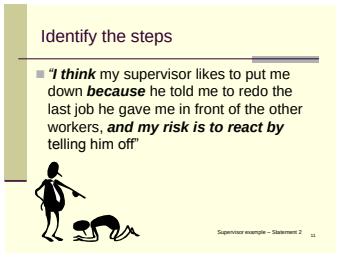
More Examples

Let's look at some additional examples and figure out if they use all the steps of skill 2: **state the problem**.

Do you see step 1: Identify a warning sign?

Do you see step 2: Identify what happened objectively?

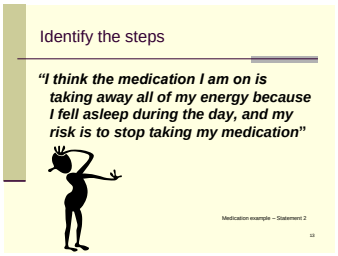
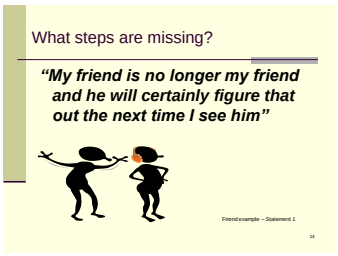
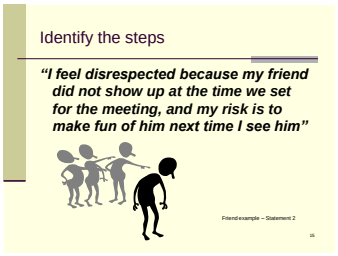
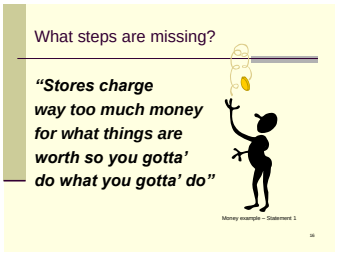
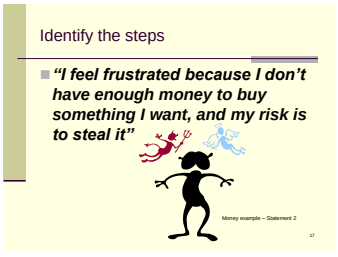
Do you see step 3: Describe a risk reaction?





P-18-11 – P-18-16: Ask these questions for each of the example slides you use.



Content	Notes
Activity 8: Model Problem Solving Skills 1 and 2	    

Content	Notes

We are now going to watch a video clip (or modeling display) that will show a problem situation. We'll keep an eye on the problem solver, (Shewan for an adult group or Sherry for a younger group), and see how she does the first two problem solving skills.

Choose the appropriate example for your situation to model skills 1 and 2 (*Shewan and Ms. Shells* for an adult group/*Sherry and Ms. Porter* for a younger group).

We are going to watch for problem solving skill 1: **stop and think** and problem solving skill 2: **state the problem**.


C-18-3-Problem Solving Skill 1 & 2

Let's quickly review the steps of each to make sure you focus on what you need to watch for.

Review Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

Step 1: Does she stop and pay attention to her warning signs: physical reactions, risk thoughts and risk feelings?

Step 2: What does she think and do to reduce her risk: be quiet, get space, and calm down?

Review Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem

Look to see if she follows these steps:

Step 1: Does she identify her warning signs?

Skill 1: Stop and Think
Step 1: Stop
Physical reactions
Risk Thoughts
Risk Feelings
Step 2: Think
Be quiet
Get space
Calm down

Skill 2: State the Problem
I think or feel _____ because _____ and my risk is to react by _____.

Content	Notes
Step 2: Does she describe the situation objectively? Step 3: Does she describe her risk reaction **Present the Model of Problem Solving Skills 1 & 2 – Either Adult (Shewan) or Teen (Sherry) Example** Now watch for these problem solving skills.	Choose the appropriate example for your group and either show the vignette from the NIC T4C video, or model it from the scripts provided in the supplement section.
Activity 9: Discuss Modeling Example **Option 1: Adult Situation – Shewan and Ms. Shells** **Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think** What are some things the Shewan did and said before she used the **stop and think**	Discuss whichever modeling display you viewed with your group Do either option 1 *or* option 2.  - Discuss using chart 18-3: Problem Solving Skills 1 & 2.

skill?

(Example answer: Raised voice, moved closer.)

Did Shewan stop and think?

(Answer: Yes.)

What warning signs did she identify?

(Example answers: All three physical reactions – risk thoughts, and risk feelings. Physical reactions: heart pounding, dry mouth; risk thoughts: "She thinks I stole the money." "Nothing I say will do any good." "She just wants to get rid of me"; risk feeling: scared.)

For step 2 in **stop and think**, what did she do to reduce her risk? Did she stop talking?

(Example answer: Yes, she stopped talking.)

How did she get space?

(Example answer: Sat down)

What did she do to calm down?

(Example answers: Took a deep breath and said to herself, "I really don't want to lose this job.")

Write answers on the chart.

Keep this chart for use in subsequent lessons.

Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem

Shewan made a problem statement. Let's review what she did for each step of that skill.

What risk thoughts or feelings did she identify?

(Example answer: Angry.)

How did she describe the situation objectively?

(Answer: Ms. Shells is accusing me of lying to her.)

Did she describe her risk reaction?

(Answer: Yes, to quit.)

And did she put it together in a problem statement starting with "I?"

(Example answer: Yes, she did: "I'm angry because Ms. Shells is accusing me of lying to her. My risk reaction is to quit.")

Option 2: Teen Situation – Sherry and Ms. Porter

Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

What are some things Sherry did and said before she used the **stop and think** skill?

 - Discuss using chart 18-3: Problem

(Example answer: Raised voice)

Did she stop and think?

(Answer: Yes.}

What warning signs did she identify?

(Example answers: All three, physical reactions, thoughts and feelings. Physical reactions: heart pounding, feeling tight all over; risk thought: "She thinks she can jerk me around"; risk Feelings: angry and frustrated.)

For step 2 in **stop and think**, what did she do to reduce her risk? Did she stop talking?

(Example answer: Yes, she stopped talking.)

How did she get space?

(Example answers: She looked past Ms. Porter and visualized her baby brother laughing. She also walked quietly out of the room.)

What did she do to calm down?

(Example answers: Took a deep breath and said, "I can figure this out.")

Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem

Solving Skills 1 & 2. Write answers on the chart.

Keep this chart for use in subsequent lessons.

Sherry made a problem statement. Let's review what she did for each step of that skill.

What risk thoughts or feelings did she identify?

(Answer: Angry)

How did she describe the situation objectively?

(Answer: Ms. Porter said she thinks I cheated on the test.)

How did she describe her risk reaction?

(Answer: Get friends and do something to her car.)

And she put it together in a problem statement starting with "I": "I feel angry because Ms. Porter said she thinks I cheated on the test, and my risk reaction is to get my friends and do something to her car."

Activity 10: Group Members Role Play Problem Solving Skills 1 and 2

In this session we have looked at a number of examples of problem situations, the boy who did not make the team, the father who found his daughter using drugs, and the Shewan's/Shelly's problem situation. Now, with your partner, I want you to use the situation you worked on last


H-17-1-Using Stop and Think (With group members' problem situations).

Content	Notes
session and move on to skill 2: **state the problem**. I am handing back your **stop and think** handout from the previous lesson. You will now use your skill 2: **state the problem** handout that I gave you earlier in this session. Work with a partner as each of you completes this handout and think about how to role play the first two problem solving skills.	and H-18-1 Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem Give partners a few minutes to fill in the information on the handout. Then choose or solicit a volunteer who did not have an opportunity to role play **stop and think** in the previous lesson. Review the information on his/her handouts. Help the group member plan the role play, and remind him/her to point to his/her head when thinking aloud.

Content	Notes
	Set the scene and have the role player pick other group members to take parts in the role play as necessary. Have the role player keep their handouts to refer to as he/she goes through the 2 skills. Assign a step or part of a step to each group member to observe. After the role play, provide feedback as in social skills. Do this with as many group members as time allows.

Activity 11: Wrap-up

Today you have worked on the first two problem solving skills. What are they?

(Answer: Skill 1: Stop and think and Skill 2: State

the problem.)

What do you remember about skill 1: **stop and think**?

(Example answer: Answers will vary.)

What is something you remember about skill 2: **state the problem**?

(Example answer: Answers will vary.)

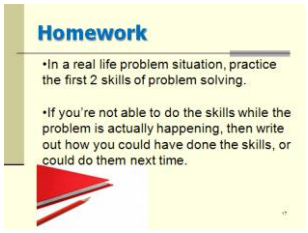
Activity 12: Assign Homework

For next time, your assignment is to:

- In a real life problem situation, practice the first 2 skills of problem solving.
- If you're not able to do the skills while the problem is actually happening, then write out how you could have done the skills or how you could do them next time.

Completing the homework assignment is critical.

 P-18-17



 H-18-3-Homework