Problem solving activity

Toolkit p18-23

The process below can help to retake control of our rational brain and enable us to think about a difficult situation in a structured and logical way. You might want to work through this section with your healthcare worker.

1. Identify the problem

Identify the problem. It needs to be something that has happened, or you have evidence for - not just something that *might* occur. Try and be very specific about this - you might even need to break it down into several problems and use this technique for each one separately.

My current problem is:

2. Note down potential solutions

Identify all possible solutions or responses to this problem and write them down. It's easier said than done - but a good tip is to try not to think too far ahead at this stage - just think of as many possible actions as you can. It can help to think about what you would advise a friend to do in the same situation.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. Pros and cons

The next step is to think of the pros and cons of each of your identified solutions. This kick-starts the rational part of your brain, and you can begin to consider which solution is the most reasonable.

	Pros	Cons
Solution 1		
Solution 2		
Solution 3		
Solution 4		
Solution 5		

4. Choose your solution

Choose which option to take forward based on your evaluation. This doesn't need to be the 'perfect' solution – but selecting an option after weighing up the evidence you have is still making progress.

5. Plan out your next steps and take action

Now that you have identified your solutions use the template below to determine your mental health and money management goals.

Short term goals	How can you achieve these goals?	When would you like to achieve this?
1.		
2.		
3.		

Long term goals	How can you achieve these goals?	When would you like to achieve this?
1.		
2.		
3.		

Use the schedule below, or an app on your phone, to plan these activities over the week.

Make it as easy as possible for yourself and break down steps into tiny chunks - it's much easier to succeed when your goals are manageable and realistic. E.g. rather than 'change energy supplier', try breaking it down into small steps like the example below:

Day	Action
Monday	Find out how much I am currently paying
Tuesday	Research alternative energy suppliers
Wednesday	Contact the potential new supplier and confirm details
Thursday	Cancel current supplier and switch over
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Day	Action
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

6. Review

Continuously review how things have gone. It may be that things didn't quite work out as expected or you've had to change your plan and start something again at Step 4. But that's ok; you're further along than you were, and you've taken a proactive step in dealing with the situation.