

# QUALITIES OF GOOD PROBLEM SOLVERS

## (3-3)

[Time Allotted: 50 Minutes]

### CASE STUDY

This small group activity is designed to help participants apply the "five qualities of good problem solvers" to a practical case scenario. Participants will be divided into five groups. A faculty member will present the following case scenario on an overhead slide to participants (*five minutes*):

You have been asked by the Chief Judge to lead a county-wide initiative to improve the management of restitution. Overall, the rate of restitution collections hovers around 20 percent for criminal offenders. It has never been a big priority for any of the criminal justice system agencies or leaders. Each agency involved has a tendency to "point the finger" at other agencies relevant to why collection rates are so low, and why restitution management has not been a priority.

The key stakeholders who the Chief Judge has invited to the first meeting include representatives from:

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| C Law enforcement.                | C Court administration.            |
| C Pre-trial services.             | C Probation.                       |
| C Prosecution and victim/witness. | C Community-based victim services. |
| C Defense bar.                    | C Crime victims.                   |
| C Judiciary.                      | C Offender advocates.              |

### LEARNING ACTIVITY

Each small group will be given a work sheet with one of the "five qualities of leaders with good problem solving ability." After reviewing the case scenario as a full group, instruct each sub-group to take *twelve minutes* to identify *up to* ten activities, tasks and tactics that reflect its "quality" that should be utilized in leading and managing the county-wide restitution project. A reporter from each sub-group will present its findings to the full group (*five minutes each*), with *eight minutes* allotted for facilitator processing.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- C Case scenario slide.
- C Group work sheets.
- C Tear sheets and markers for processing.

1. **Good problem solvers *anticipate problems*. Problems are inevitable and good leaders anticipate them. Maxwell advises to have a positive attitude, but plan for the worse.**
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**2. Good problem solvers *accept the truth*. You can deny the problems or accept them and try to make them better. Denial only prolongs the agony. Be willing to look at the issues at hand honestly, accept responsibility and move forward.**

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**3. Good problem solvers *see the big picture*. A good leader can't be overwhelmed by emotion and can't get bogged down with details. It is helpful, however, to have a trusted colleague to help ferret out the details. However, a good leader must have a vision of the future, and be able to *see and articulate* where the organization can be in five or ten years.**

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**4. Good problem solvers *handle one thing at a time*. Any attempts to try and manage all of the problems at once is too overwhelming. In other words, "Eat the elephant one bite at a time."**

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**5. Good problem solvers *don't give up a major goal when they're down*. They see life as a roller coaster—sometimes up and sometimes down. They don't give up on their vision just because some glitches occur.**

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# CONFLICT-BASED PROBLEM SOLVING

## *Dialectical Inquiry*

(3-14)

[Time Allotted: 70 Minutes]

### LEARNING ACTIVITY

Faculty will utilize overhead slides to provide an overview of creative problem solving through dialectical inquiry/debate.

Participants will be divided into two sub-groups. *Note:* Each sub-group will take its morning/afternoon 15-minute break while the other sub-group is problem-solving.

### CASE STUDY (*PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED*)

Recent survey data from your county indicate that only eight percent of rape cases are being reported to law enforcement. Of particular concern is under-reporting on your local university campus, as well as among women of color.

Your group—consisting of law enforcement, prosecution, and rape crisis center representatives—needs to develop *five* recommendations to address this problem in *fifteen minutes*.

### FACILITATOR GUIDELINES

1. Utilize overhead slides to introduce the concept of dialectical inquiry as a *structured conflict resolution process (ten minutes)*.
2. Instruct Sub-group One to complete its worksheet; make a duplicate copy for Sub-group Two; make an overhead slide; and select a reporter. Allow *fifteen minutes*, with Sub-group Two taking its break.
3. Instruct Sub-group Two to complete its worksheet; make a duplicate copy for Sub-group One; make an overhead slide; and select a reporter. Allow *fifteen minutes*, with Sub-group One taking its break.
4. Each sub-group's reporter presents its facts, assumptions and recommendations to the full group (*five minutes each*).

5. Both plans are debated (*ten minutes*), with a goal of exposing hidden and/or faulty assumptions.
6. Once the debate is completed, the full group should take *ten minutes* and agree on which assumptions are most plausible, and develop and/or fine-tune the recommendations based on these surviving assumptions (recorded by facilitator on a tear sheet).

## **MATERIALS NEEDED**

- C Overhead slide presentation.
- C Sub-group work sheets.
- C Sub-group overhead transparency work sheet.
- C Tear sheets.
- C Markers.



## DIALECTICAL INQUIRY GROUP EXERCISE: SUB-GROUP ONE

*Recent survey data from your county indicate that only eight percent of rape cases are being reported to law enforcement. Of particular concern is under-reporting on your local university campus, as well as among women of color.*

Your group—consisting of law enforcement, prosecution, and rape crisis center representatives—needs to develop *five* recommendations to address this problem *in 15 minutes*. Utilize *the first two columns of this work sheet* to record your assumptions and recommendations, and prepare an overhead slide (provided by faculty) that includes the same information. Prepare an extra copy for Sub-group Two.

<i><b>SUB-GROUP ONE</b></i>		<i><b>SUB-GROUP TWO</b></i>	
<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND FACTS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COUNTER-ASSUMPTIONS AND FACTS</b>	<b>COUNTER-RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.

## DIALECTICAL INQUIRY GROUP EXERCISE: SUB-GROUP TWO

*Recent survey data from your county indicate that only eight percent of rape cases are being reported to law enforcement. Of particular concern is under-reporting on your local university campus, as well as among women of color.*

Your group will review the five key assumptions, facts and recommendations developed by Sub-group One, and develop five counter-assumptions, facts and recommendations to address this problem *in 15 minutes*. Utilize the last two columns of this work sheet to record your assumptions and recommendations, and prepare an overhead slide (provided by faculty) that includes the same information.

<i><b>SUB-GROUP ONE</b></i>		<i><b>SUB-GROUP TWO</b></i>	
<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND FACTS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COUNTER-ASSUMPTIONS AND FACTS</b>	<b>COUNTER-RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.

## PRESENTATION SLIDE: SUB-GROUP ONE

<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS &amp; FACTS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

## PRESENTATION SLIDE: SUB-GROUP TWO

<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS &amp; FACTS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

# CONFLICT-BASED PROBLEM SOLVING

## *Devil's Advocacy*

(3-14)

[Time Allotted: 30 Minutes]

### LEARNING ACTIVITY

A faculty member asks participants to articulate the meaning and purpose of "devil's advocacy." Key points might include:

- C Presenting two sides of an issue.
- C Trying to anticipate *why* and *how* others might disagree on a position.
- C Constructively arguing about the merit(s) of each position.
- C Reaching some consensus on a solution.

Allow *five minutes* for this full group discussion, and record participants' input on a tear sheet.

Divide the full group into four sub-groups. Two sub-groups will take one side of the issue addressed in the case study; brainstorm positions for *seven minutes*; record their findings on the group work sheet; and elect a reporter to present the sub-group's findings to the full group.

### CASE STUDY

Your juvenile justice system is debating the value of written victim impact statements (through pre-sentence investigations) and oral victim impact statements (in court) at adjudication hearings of juvenile offenders, and there are clearly two opinions on the issue.

#### ***Sub-groups One and Two:***

Victims of juvenile offenders; victim advocates; a judge; the Chief Probation Officer; and a representative from an insurance company.

#### ***Sub-groups Three and Four:***

Parents of juvenile offenders who are going through the adjudication process; a judge; and probation officers from the assessment division who complete pre-sentence investigations for the juvenile court.

## FACILITATOR PROCESSING

1. Reporters from Sub-groups One and Two present their findings, alternating to avoid duplication (*five minutes*).
2. Reporters from Sub-groups Three and Four present their findings, alternating to avoid duplication (*five minutes*).
3. The facilitator guides a group discussion—avoiding an outright brawl!—that encourages participants to:
  - C Identify and evaluate general assumptions of each sub-group.
  - C Identify faulty assumptions of each sub-group.
  - C Allows members of each sub-group (particularly Three and Four) to adjust their recommendations based upon valid criticisms of the other two "devil's advocates" groups (*eight minutes*).

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- C Tear sheets and markers.
- C Sub-group work sheets.

# DEVIL'S ADVOCACY

## SUB-GROUPS ONE AND TWO

*Your juvenile justice system is debating the value of written victim impact statements (through pre-sentence investigations) and oral victim impact statements (in court) at adjudication hearings of juvenile offenders, and there are clearly two opinions on the issue.*

Your group (through role play) includes: victims of juvenile offenders; victim advocates; a judge; the Chief Probation Officer; and a representative from an insurance company.

Please list *up to ten facts* that support your position:

<b>WHY VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS ARE A <i>GOOD</i> IDEA</b>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
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# DEVIL’S ADVOCACY

## SUB-GROUPS THREE AND FOUR

*Your juvenile justice system is debating the value of written victim impact statements (through pre-sentence investigations) and oral victim impact statements (in court) at adjudication hearings of juvenile offenders, and there are clearly two opinions on the issue.*

Your group (through role play) includes: parents of juvenile offenders who are going through the adjudication process; a judge; a community-based juvenile offender advocate; and probation officers from the assessment division who complete pre-sentence investigations for the juvenile court.

Please list *up to ten facts* that support your position:

<b>WHY VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS ARE A <i>BAD</i> IDEA</b>
1.
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8.
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# CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

## *The Need for a Positive Approach*

(3-4 TO 3-5)

[Time Allotted: 30 Minutes]

### LEARNING ACTIVITY

Faculty should refer participants to pages 3-4 and 3-5 of the Manual.

#### ***Presentation***

Utilizing an overhead slide, a faculty member provides a short presentation on how to improve spirit among people who work for you (from *Supervising and Managing People*, First Books for Business, 1996) (*ten minutes*)

#### ***Small Group Discussion***

Facilitators divide participants into six sub-groups. Utilizing individual work sheets, each group identifies *five ways* to "improve team spirit among people who work for you," based upon their assigned "guideline." (*ten minutes*)

Each group assigns a reporter to articulate the sub-group's "best (one) way to improve team spirit among people who work for you"—recorded by facilitators on a tear sheet. (*ten minutes*)

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- C Overhead slide presentation.
- C Participant work sheets.
- C Tear sheets and markers.

# IMPROVING TEAM SPIRIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR YOU

Please list five ways to improve team spirit, based upon the following guideline derived from *Supervising and Managing People* (First Books for Business 1996):

## ***1. Select People Who Are Right for Your Organization.***

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEAM SPIRIT
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

# IMPROVING TEAM SPIRIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR YOU

Please list five ways to improve team spirit, based upon the following guideline derived from *Supervising and Managing People* (First Books for Business 1996):

## ***2. Work to Create a Supportive Environment for Your Team or Staff.***

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEAM SPIRIT
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

# IMPROVING TEAM SPIRIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR YOU

Please list five ways to improve team spirit, based upon the following guideline derived from *Supervising and Managing People* (First Books for Business 1996):

## 3. *Challenge Your Team or Staff to Help the Organization as a Whole.*

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEAM SPIRIT
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

# IMPROVING TEAM SPIRIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR YOU

Please list five ways to improve team spirit, based upon the following guideline derived from *Supervising and Managing People* (First Books for Business 1996):

## 4. *Create a Unique Team or Staff Identity.*

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEAM SPIRIT
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3.
4.
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# IMPROVING TEAM SPIRIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR YOU

Please list five ways to improve team spirit, based upon the following guideline derived from *Supervising and Managing People* (First Books for Business 1996):

## *5. Encourage Your Staff or Team to Use its Initiative and Creativity.*

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEAM SPIRIT
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5.

# IMPROVING TEAM SPIRIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR YOU

Please list five ways to improve team spirit, based upon the following guideline derived from *Supervising and Managing People* (First Books for Business 1996):

## 6. *Make Your Team or Staff Accountable.*

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEAM SPIRIT
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2.
3.
4.
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# SWOT ANALYSIS

(3-16 TO 3-17)

[Time Allotted: 30 Minutes]

## LEARNING ACTIVITY

A faculty member facilitates an overhead slide presentation that highlights the key SWOT concepts—including its use in problem solving and strategic planning (*ten minutes*):

- C Strengths.
- C Weaknesses.
- C Opportunities.
- C Threats.

The following case scenario is presented to the full group (on an overhead transparency):

## CASE SCENARIO

There are over 30,000 statutes in all fifty states that provide for victims' rights and services (including hundreds in your states). However, many of these rights and services are *not* being implemented in a consistent manner.

Using SWOT analysis (on individual worksheets), please identify the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats you face in implementing victims' rights and services (*eight minutes*). You may find it helpful to refer to pages 3-16 and 3-17 of your manual for guidance.

## FACILITATOR PROCESSING

Utilizing prepared tear sheets with each of the four SWOT categories, facilitate a "round-robin" discussion among participants of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (*twelve minutes*).

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- C Overhead slide presentation.
- C Participant work sheets.
- C Prepared SWOT tear sheets (with headings) and markers.



## SWOT CASE SCENARIO

There are over 30,000 statutes in all fifty states that provide for victims' rights and services (including hundreds in your states). However, many of these rights and services are *not* being implemented in a consistent manner.

Using SWOT analysis (on your individual worksheets), please take *eight minutes* to identify the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats you face in implementing victims' rights and services.

*You may find it helpful to refer to pages 3-16 and 3-17 of your manual for guidance.*

**VICTIMS' RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE**

**SWOT**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>

**VICTIMS' RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE**

**SWOT**

<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>

# INTERACTIVE EXERCISES FOR CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

All of us have dealt with problems. We have all faced what seemed like an insurmountable barrier to a service we were trying to provide. Whether the barrier was enough money, enough staff, a hard-nosed policy, difficult co-workers, the workflow within the office, or some other obstacle, we struggled to find the answer. The following are some situations that require problem-solving skills. Using the messages from this text and keeping openness and innovation in mind, creatively process, as a group, the problems listed here.

After reviewing and assessing the problems, make every effort to throw out old ideas, assumptions, and stereotypes, and utilize the group process to creatively solve the problems. Use your intuition and create new avenues for those constant problems that emerge.

## ***Problem 1***

Your domestic violence shelter has tried to keep its location anonymous but more and more people have somehow received word of its location. How can you keep your residents safe and deal with the knowledge that the location of your shelter has become common knowledge?

## ***Problem 2***

Your staff at the Victim Compensation Fund is complaining that too many claims are coming in to process. There is no more money to hire new staff but there is money to improve processes or improve technology. How can claims continue to be processed in an efficient manner with the increase in claims received?

## ***Problem 3***

Your child advocacy center is up and running and your multi-disciplinary team is in place. However, very few referrals are coming into the program and very few victims are being served. You know statistically that the abuse is occurring so that the shortage is not in the people needing the help, but in the referrals coming into the program.

## ***Problem 4***

You are the Victim Service Officer in a District Attorney's Office and part of your role is to help victims receive restitution. The Assistant DAs do not accept the idea that collecting restitution is a part of their job, nor do the Clerks or the Probation Officers. However, you realize that if victims are going to get the restitution they deserve, a workable solution must be found.

## ***Problem 5***

You are the director of a one-person non-profit organization that provides direct services, information, and resources to victims of family violence. Your organization's limited funding does not provide for your own training needs. You want to keep abreast of the changes in the field and explore ways to expand your organization. What options do you have?

# ROADBLOCKS TO CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

## *(A Guided Imagery Exercise)*

*(3-4 TO 3-7)*

*[Time Allotted: 45 Minutes]*

Labeling an action or person a "failure" is an arbitrary decision that you or someone else made sometime in the past. You or others then attached meanings, associations, decisions, and feelings to the concept of failure. In the present, you can transform your past associations, ideas, and decisions about failure to ones that are more useful to becoming a leader. Rather than getting stuck, feeling depressed, denigrating yourself, or using the even as evidence of your low self-worth, consider an alternative: Failure is an opportunity to learn, to change course, and to discover new options for yourself.

Each of us makes many mistakes in the course of each day. Some we notice because we are sensitive to a particular mistake or because someone has called attention to it. However, we have an opportunity to change our view of failure. We have a choice: We can consider each mistake a natural part of life from which we can learn and grow, or we can use failure as evidence of our lack of self-worth.

David Hare, the playwright, told a wonderful story about Joe Papp, impresario and director of the New York Shakespeare Festival, at a memorial for Papp just after his death in November 1991:

The greatest thing Joe ever did was when we did "The Knife." There was a party afterward and the reviews were read. The *Times* review was absolutely dismal. He read it out line by line and the whole room went completely silent. It meant that we had lost over a million dollars. At the end he said, "That is not what I call a good review." Then he turned to me and said, "What do you want to do in my theater next?"

Following the guided imagery exercise, share what you have learned from the exercise with your small group. You may have had a number of insights, images, and feelings come to the surface in this exercise. It is now time to take a look at the origins of your views on failure and how they affect your current life. Discuss with your partner or small group the insights that you gained from your greatest failure by responding to the following questions.

1. What were the messages about failure in your family? What messages were sent to you? What messages were sent to others?



