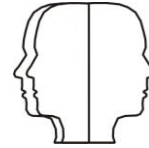


Lesson 17 – Problem Solving:

Skill 1 – Stop and Think



Summary and Rationale

Problem solving **skill 1: stop and think** helps group members to remain in control of their actions rather than reacting emotionally in problem situations.

Stop and think means paying attention to three internal warning signs: physical reactions, risk thoughts, and risk feelings. Without intervention these internal experiences increase the chance of reacting impulsively or emotionally. The **stop and think skill** consists of two steps.

Step 1: stop – pay attention to your warning signs

- Physical reactions
- Risk thoughts
- Risk feelings

Step 2: think – reduce your risk

- Be quiet
- Get space
- Calm down

Linking to previous lessons: In cognitive self-change group members learned how to recognize their thoughts and feelings that lead to trouble. This lesson helps them translate those insights into a quick recognition of risk thoughts and feelings that can lead them to criminal or problem actions and prompts use of subsequent **problem solving skills**. Facilitators should emphasize the connection between all components of **Thinking for a Change**.

Concepts and Definitions

- **Step 1: stop - pay attention to your warning signs** – There are three kinds of warning signs to consider: Physical reactions; Risk thoughts; and Risk feelings.
- **Step 2: think - reduce your risk** – Be quiet and get space either physically or mentally, and calm down by taking a deep breath, counting or self-talk.

Types of Problems

- **In your face problems** – Problem situations which require immediate action (i.e., seconds or minutes).
- **Time to think problems** – Problem situations where there is time (such as hours or days) to think through the problem.

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

1. Identify specific warning signs: physical reactions, risk thoughts and risk feelings that indicate that they are in a problem situation;
2. Intervene in their internal experiences to begin to use thinking skills to reduce their risk reactions.

Major Activities

Activity 1: Homework Review

Activity 2: Review the Conflict Cycle and Six Problem Solving Skills

Activity 3: Define Two Types of Problem Situations

Activity 4: Overview of Lesson

Activity 5: Explain Step 1: Stop – Pay Attention to Your Warning Signs

Activity 6: Apply Step 1: Stop – Pay Attention to Your Warning Signs

Activity 7: Explain Step 2: Think – Reduce Your Risk

Activity 8: Model Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

Activity 9: Discuss Modeling Display

Activity 10: Group Members Role Play Skill

Activity 11: Assign Homework

Activity 12: Wrap-up

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:



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-Pocket Skill Cards
H-17-2-Using Stop and Think (Make 2 copies for each group member)
H-17-3-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-17-1-Title slide
P-17-2-Homework Review
P-17-3–Conflict Cycle
P-17-4-Problem Solving Skills
P-17-5–Types of Problems
P-17-6–Risk Feeling and Thinking Skills
P-17-7–Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think
P-17-8–Stop and Think–Step 1
P-17-9–Problem Situations
P-17-10–Step 1: Stop – Pay Attention to Your Warning Signs
P-17-11-Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think–Step 2
P-17-12-Thinking Report
P-17-13-New Thinking
P-17-14–Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

The supplement section for this lesson includes a script of the vignette, “Woman’s Problem Situation.” Alternatively, if the technology is available, you can choose to show the vignette from the NIC **Thinking for a Change DVD.*

Equipment

- 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

Supplies

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Copies of participant handouts
- NIC **Thinking for a Change** DVD

Activity 1: Homework Review

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

Let's review the homework assignment from lesson 16. You were asked to pick a conflict and identify the warning signs: physical reactions, risk thoughts and risk feelings you had that might lead to making the problem worse.

To check-in I want each of you to:

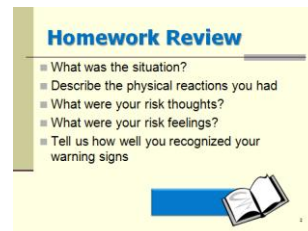
- First identify the situation
- Then identify your warning signs.
- Evaluate how well you recognized your warning signs.

Who would like to get us started?

Activity 2: Review the Conflict Cycle and Six Problem Solving Skills

Review the Conflict Cycle

In our last session we viewed a conflict during a Saturday detention between a student named Bender and the assistant principal, Mr. Vernon. We first looked at the situation using the conflict



Have all group members check-in by quickly reporting out as directed.



cycle. Let's review the conflict cycle.

Problem - Let's start with the top circle which shows that something is happening that a person does not like. We can call this a problem.

Warning Signs - Let's look at the arrow leading to the next circle, warning signs. This shows that when we have a problem we often have physical reactions, risk thoughts and risk feelings.

For example, someone in authority comes up to you and accuses you of breaking a rule.

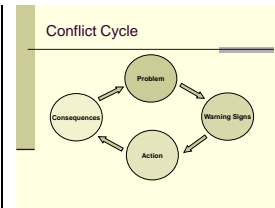
1. What would be your physical reaction?
2. What would be your risk thought?
3. What would be your risk feeling?

Take a minute to talk to a partner about these questions.

Let's hear some of your answers.

Great, you have done an excellent job of recognizing the warning signs that tell us we are in a problem situation.

Actions - Let's keep going through the conflict cycle. The arrow coming from the warning signs circle tells us that these internal experiences directly connect to our actions. Throughout this program we keep discussing how *thinking controls*



Answers will vary.
Provide feedback and keep the discussion on track.

behavior. If you don't pay attention to your warning signs and a person in authority accuses you of breaking a rule, what might be an angry or frustrated action you could take?

(Example answers: argue, show disrespect.)

Consequences - Now follow the arrow from actions and look at the consequences. The consequence could be more problems if the authority decides to take action against you. If we follow the arrow from consequences we come to the circle that shows that the first problem has led to another problem!

Summary - The conflict cycle shows us how the actions we take in response to one problem can lead to more problems.

We are going to explore problem solving as a way to stop the conflict cycle. Because problem solving helps us focus on our thinking, we gain more power over what we do. When we use problem solving skills we *decide* what we are going to do rather than *reacting* based on our feelings.

Review the Six Problem Solving Skills

Remember, in our last lesson we learned that there are six problem solving skills. Please refer to your problem solving skills handout from that lesson. Could someone read those for us?

(Answer: Stop and Think; State the Problem; Set a



H-16-1-

Overview of
Problem Solving
Skills and Steps



P-17-4

Goal and Gather Information; Think of Choices and Consequences; Make a Plan; and Do and Evaluate.)

Activity 3: Define Two Types of Problem Situations

We can use problem solving skills in two types of situations – “in your face” problems and “time to think” problems.

“**In your face**” problems are situations where we have to act immediately. For example, someone in authority accuses us, or there is a physical threat. These situations usually call for some immediate response on our part. We have mere seconds or minutes to respond.

“**Time to think**” problems are situations where we do not have to take immediate action. For example, expecting to see someone who does not show up or wanting something that we don’t have enough money to pay for. In these situations, we usually have more time to think about what we are going to do.

We are going to learn to use problem solving skills in both types of problems.

Activity 4: Overview of Lesson

Problem Solving Skills

- Skill 1 – Stop and Think
- Skill 2 – State the Problem
- Skill 3 – Set a Goal and Gather Information
- Skill 4 – Think of Choices and Consequences
- Skill 5 – Make a Plan
- Skill 6 – Do and Evaluate



P-17-5

Types of Problems

- **In your face problems** - Situations where you have to act immediately
- **Time to think problems** - Situations where you do not have to take immediate action



Today we are going to explore skill 1: **stop and think**. Using this problem solving skill helps us get control of our feelings and get our thinking skills to kick in.

If we pay attention to the temperature on a thermometer we can get useful information such as how to dress for the weather. We can also pay attention to our own “internal thermometers” to tell the temperature of our thoughts and feelings. This information can help us know when to **stop and think**.

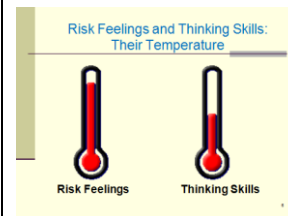
Here, let’s look at the risk feelings thermometer. We can see that feelings are hot - way above 90 degrees. When we first get into a problem situation we can experience mild to strong risk feelings.

Look at the thinking skills thermometer: The indicator is way down. When our warning signs kick in it is challenging to use thinking skills. The thinking skills thermometer shows that we are having risk thoughts and feelings that can overcome the thinking skills we have been developing in this program.

During **stop and think** our job is to begin to take control of our internal thermometers. We want to reduce our risk feelings and start to use our thinking skills. Getting our feelings under control is important if we are going to decide to take



P-17-6



control of ourselves in the situation.

Now, let's look at the steps of skill 1: **stop and think**.

Stop and think has two steps. Who will read the steps for us?

(Answer: Stop – Pay attention to your warning signs; and Think – Reduce your risk.)

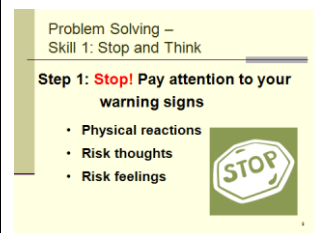
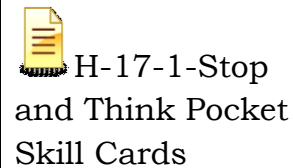
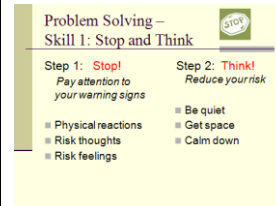
Here is a skill card with the **stop and think** steps. You can use this card while you practice the skill here in class, as well as when doing your homework.

Activity 5: Explain Step 1: Stop – Pay Attention to Your Warning Signs

We introduced the idea of physical reactions, risk thoughts and risk feelings in our last lesson. Paying attention to them is actually the first step of problem solving problem skill 1: **stop and think**.

Physical Reactions

Our bodies react physically when we have a problem. For the earliest humans, this helped them survive by being ready to take immediate action when they were in danger from a threat like a wild animal.



We first learned about these physical reactions when we learned the social skill, **knowing your feelings**. Step one of that skill has us, “tune in to what is going on in our bodies that helps us know what we are feeling.” You’ve learned this skill – you’ve got it “in your pockets.”

Here are a couple of statements from individuals in two different types of problem situations. The first is from a high school student who found out he didn’t make a team at school. This was a “time to think” problem situation.

“I read the list of people who made the team and my name wasn’t there. I felt my head start to throb, my mouth got dry and my muscles got tight.”

The second statement is from a father who is in an “in your face” problem situation when he finds his daughter doing drugs.

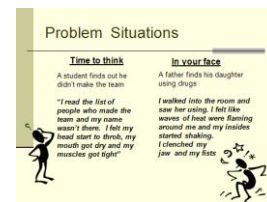
“I walked into the room and saw her using. I felt like waves of heat flamed around me and my insides started shaking. I clenched my jaw and my fists.”

Both of these people know they are in a problem situation based on their physical reactions.

What are the physical reactions these two individuals described?



P-17-9



(Example answers - head throb, dry mouth, tight muscles, feeling hot, feeling shaky, clenched muscles.)

For both of these people, the first thing that they recognized was their physical reactions.

Each of us has our own individual set of physical reactions when stressed. We practiced recognizing them early in **Thinking for a Change**. We also just discussed this when we did the conflict cycle.

Risk Thoughts

Risk thoughts also act as warning signs that we are in a problem situation. What might be some risk thoughts of the man who found his daughter using drugs?

(Example answers – Oh my god! She’s no good. This is my fault, etc.)

Risk Feelings

We also have emotional feelings that tell us we are at risk. What might the man who found his daughter using drugs be feeling?

(Example answers – anger, disappointment, shock.)

Summary

So, in step 1 of **stop and think** we pay attention to these three warning signs. We need to recognize these warning signs so that we don't react

immediately. These signs let us know we have to cool down and do some thinking before we do anything else.

This is just like recognizing a stop sign. There is risk if you keep going without first stopping. When you brake for a stop sign, you don't have to stop for very long, but you need to stop to make a decision about when it is safe to go. The same idea applies when you recognize your warning signs. You need to stop and take a moment to use your thinking so that you can be in control of the situation.

Activity 6: Apply Step 1: Stop – Pay Attention to Your Warning Signs

Now let's apply step 1 to a problem that you might face. Use this **stop and think** handout as you discuss ideas with your partner.

1. Identify a problem situation that you are having or have recently had.
2. Once you identify your situations, you should each write the answers for step 1: pay attention to your warning signs. Do this by first deciding if it is an “in your face” or “time to think” problem. Then consider your physical reactions, risk thoughts and risk feelings.



H-17-2-Using
Stop and Think
(Step 1: Stop!)



P-17-10



Circulate - provide assistance as needed.

Make sure each

Let's hear some of your ideas.

You've done great work with step 1. The second step of the **stop and think** skill helps us get control of our feelings and get our thinking working.

Activity 7: Explain Step 2: Think – Reduce Your Risk

Paying attention to our warning signs is important, but then we need to do something to reduce our risk of taking an impulsive or emotional action. Here are three things you can do.

1. Be Quiet

Be quiet by doing things to stop from carrying out immediate reactions like yelling, threatening, arguing, and complaining.

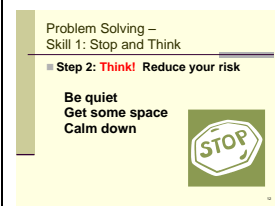
These reactions feed into the conflict cycle and can

group member identifies a situation and his/her warning signs.

Get a couple of group members to tell the large group his/her situation and warning signs.



P-17-11



make the problem worse.

For example, what if the boy who did not make the team immediately says to a friend, “I’m going to make the coach sorry he didn’t put me on the team!”? He now has said something he may or may not decide to act upon later. Just saying that has made the problem bigger.

With the other problem, if the father immediately starts yelling at his daughter and threatening her, he is now in a situation where both he and his daughter are reacting to each other.

The more angry and upset you are, the easier it is to say things that will feed into the conflict and make the problem more difficult to deal with.

With “in your face” problems, being quiet means that you hold inside what you want to say in the first few seconds of a problem. With “time to think” problems, being quiet means that you don’t say anything until you’ve taken some time to think things through.

Find step 2: **Think – reduce your risk** on your handout. Using the same problem you identified before, answer the two questions for number 1, “Be quiet.”

Let’s hear some of your answers.



H-17-2 – Using
Stop and Think
(Step 2 – Be quiet)

Answers will vary.
Provide feedback
and keep the

2. Get space

Another way to reduce our risk is to find a way to get some space between ourselves and the other people involved. We can get space in two ways: By choosing what we think and by choosing what we do with our bodies.

Thoughts - One way to get space is to use our thinking to visualize a calming place or scene that eases the stress and tension we feel. Imagination is a powerful vehicle, like a sports car. If we are skilled at steering the car then we can get where we want to go quickly and safely.

Visualization – We can reduce our risk by visualizing a place that helps us feel less tense.

What are some places where people can feel relaxed?

(Example answers: beach, park, looking out a window, or going for a ride.)

Turn to your partner and identify a place or scene that you would find pleasant to visualize.

Let's get some volunteers to share what you

discussion on track.

chose.

Visualizing a peaceful scene can help us “get space”. Let’s give it a try.

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in the place you identified.

Think about what is in front of you.

Think about the light – how dark or light is it?

What colors do you see?

What do you hear?

What do you smell?

Is anyone else there?

What do you feel?

Now open your eyes. What parts of the scene could you describe?

Once you practice visualization, you can “see” the place in your mind without closing your eyes.

With “in your face” problems you need to keep your eyes open as you get space with visualization.

With practice you will be able to bring this scene to mind without much work.

Conduct the visualization. If you think it would be helpful, you can first describe your scene.

Allow ample time after each sentence or question for the group member to formulate a picture in his/her mind.

This is a silent activity (they should not answer the questions out loud).

Who would like to share their thoughts about the visualization experience?

Actions – The other way to get space is with our body. There are a number of ways to do this.

We can move away from the situation. This can mean taking a step or two back. Or, if practical, we can actually walk away.

If on the phone, pull the phone away.

These actions aren't always possible, so sometimes we have to use smaller actions.

Like readjusting our body so we aren't directly in front of the person. Or controlling our eyes so we are not in direct eye contact with the other person.

At the very least we need to avoid moving closer. Moving closer sends a signal that we are increasing the conflict.

Who would like to show us some different ways to get space?

In which of the example problem situations, the boy who did not make the team or the father walking in on his daughter using drugs, would it

Ask for volunteers.

Invite group members to demonstrate different ways to subtly get space.

be easier for the person to get space?

(Example answer: Boy who did not make the team.)

What could the boy do to get space?

(Example answer: Walk away from the list.)

What could the father do to get space?

(Example answers: Try to generate a discussion of different options such as: walking out, standing where he is, not making eye contact, and using visualization.)

Notice that even though one of these situations is “in your face” and the other is “time to think,” getting space can work for both.

Now turn to your handout and answer the two questions under number 2, “Get some space,” for the problem you have identified.

Let’s hear some of your answers.



H-17-2-Using

Stop and Think

(Step 2 – Get some space)

Circulate - Provide assistance as needed.

Answers will vary.

Provide feedback and keep the discussion on

3. Calm Down

Problems cause risk thoughts and feelings. We want to reduce our risk by trying to use new thinking to get these thoughts and feelings under control.

New Thinking – One way to do this is to use new thinking that will reduce our risk thoughts and feelings. This process isn’t new to us. This is yet another skill you already have “in your pockets.”

Let’s look at a thinking report for the boy who did not make the sports team.

Here are his risk thoughts –

1. I feel like a fool.
2. I am a failure.
3. I am better than most of the people who made the team.
4. Everyone is going to make fun of me.
5. The coach is stupid.
6. I hate school.

Here are his risk feelings - Embarrassed, angry, frustrated, and defeated.

His attitudes and beliefs are: I have a right to be

track.



P-17-12

Thinking Report

Situation:	Did not make the sports team
Thoughts:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel like a fool 2. I am a failure 3. I am better than most of people who made the team 4. Everyone is going to make fun of me 5. The coach is stupid 6. I hate school
Feelings:	Embarrassed, angry, frustrated, defeated
Attitudes/Beliefs:	

on the team; and Making or missing the team says a lot about me.

In cognitive self-change we identified new thinking that reduced our risk of making the situations worse. These thoughts are a way to calm down.

Let's take a look at a list of possible new thoughts that might help the student calm down.

Would someone read them for us?

(Answer: see P-17-13)

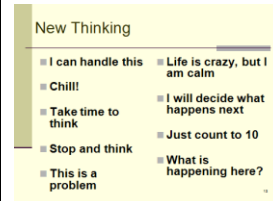
Which of these of these new thoughts do you think would help the teenager calm down?

What other things could he realistically say to himself to help him calm down?

Turn to your partner and discuss one or two thoughts each of you might be able to use to help yourself calm down that could work in your problem situations, and write them down on your handout for the first question under number 3, "Calm down."



P-17-13



Answers will vary.
Provide feedback and keep the discussion on track.

Answers will vary.
Provide feedback and keep the discussion on track.



H-17-2-Using
Stop and Think
(Step 2: Calm down)

Let's hear some of your answers.

Calming Actions – You can also take actions to help yourself calm down.

Taking one or more deep breaths helps your body get more oxygen and helps slow down your physical reactions. For example, breathe in for a count of 4 and breathe out for a count of 5. Do this 3 times. That can be an extremely effective way of calming down.

The things you do to get space can also help you calm down. With “time to think” problems taking a walk or doing something that you find more enjoyable like listening to music or talking to a friend can help you calm down.

Complete the second question under the “Calm down” section on your handout.

Answers will vary.
Provide feedback and keep the discussion on track.

Let the group try out the breathing.



H-17-2-Using
Stop and Think
(Step 2: Calm
Down)

Circulate and
provide assistance
as needed

Let's hear some of your answers.

Activity 8: Model Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think

Now I'd like to show you an example of problem solving skill 1: **stop and think**. Watch to see how the problem solver turns an "in your face" problem into a "time to think" problem, which helps her deal with her risk feelings and helps her get a lot more time to think.

Follow along with the **stop and think** handout so we can identify what the problem solver does for each **stop and think** step.

Answers will vary. Provide feedback and keep the discussion on track.



H-17-2-Using
Stop and Think

Provide clean copies of this handout so group members can take notes.

You can do one of the following:

1. Show the NIC DVD clip of *Woman's Problem Situation*
2. Model the Woman's Problem Situation using the script included in the supplements for this lesson.
3. Develop your own modeling

display.

Note: If you use the script or develop your own modeling display, you must plan and practice it before the lesson. The example you provide should be something that your group can relate to. Clearly model all parts of the **stop and think** steps. Remember to point to your head when you think out loud.

Activity 9: Discuss Modeling Display

Let's look at what the woman, who was the problem solver, did for each of the **stop and think** steps. You can take notes on your handouts.

First of all, how do you think she would objectively describe her situation?

Help group members come up with a brief, factual description of the situations.

Step 1: Stop – Pay Attention to Warning Signs

What did the problem solver do to stop and pay attention to her warning signs?

Physical reactions?

Risk thoughts?

Risk feelings?

(Example answers: dry throat, “I think he has another woman, anger)

Step 2: Think – Reduce Your Risk

Did the problem solver decide to be quiet?

(Example answer: Yes, She stopped talking.)

What thinking and actions did the problem solver do to get space?

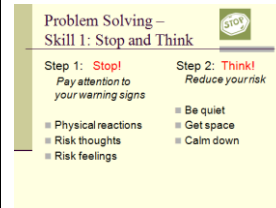
(Example answers: She told herself to get off the phone and then ended the conversation.)

What did the problem solver think and do to calm down?

(Example answer: Thought about what she wanted



P-17-14



These questions are designed for the clip of Juan and his girlfriend. If you develop another modeling display, you may need to modify the questions based on your situation.

to do; and she took a deep breath.)

Activity 10: Group Members Role Play Skill

So you've seen how someone else did skill 1 of problem solving. She was able to **stop and think**. Note that she interrupted the conflict cycle. Rather than reacting based on her risk thoughts and feelings, which could have led to new problems, she gave herself time for her thinking skills to kick in.

Now you will have a chance to try **stop and think** out with the problem you've been working on during this lesson. Let's role play this skill using the information you have developed on the **stop and think** handout for your problem situation.

Role Play Set-up:

Choose or solicit a volunteer to do the first role play.

Review the information on his/her **stop and think** handout. (The one from his/her own problem, not the *Juan and His Girlfriend* scenario.)

Help the group member plan the role play, and remind him/her to point to his/her head when

thinking aloud.

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 **stop and think** handout to refer to as he/she goes through the 2 steps.

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.

Now let me collect the **stop and think** handouts you wrote on your own problem situations. We will use them next session.

Activity 11: Assign Homework

During this session you have worked through problem solving skill 1: **stop and think**.

You did a lot of good work today.

For your homework assignment I want you to watch for problem situations and practice the two steps of **stop and think**. Use the homework handout to guide you through the steps, and complete the form after you have practiced the skill.

Activity 12: Wrap-up

Next time we will learn another problem solving skill. You will also have an opportunity to review your homework to see how well you did practicing, problem solving skill 1: **stop and think**. See you next time.

Collect the handouts they filled out on their own problems.

Completing the homework assignment is critical.



H-17-3-

Homework

