

Lesson 19 – Problem Solving: Skill 3 – Set a Goal and Gather Information



Summary and Rationale

Group members engage in two important activities in problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information**. Step 1 is: identify a positive and realistic goal. Then they analyze the problem through an information gathering process by completing step 2: identify what you know about the situation.

Linkage: Step 2: identify what you know about the situation, reinforces previous skills. Group members were first introduced to the importance of identifying facts in the lessons of cognitive self-change when they practiced writing an objective description of the situation. Group members have practiced how to think about other people’s thoughts and feelings throughout the social skills lessons.

Concepts and Definitions

Problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information** is a two-step process:

Step 1: Identify a positive and realistic goal

Step 2: Identify what you know about the situation

Fact – an objective description of an event without opinion or interpretation; a statement of what happened, who was involved and what was said and done.

Goal – a desired outcome. Goals give a purpose and focus to what we do. Goals should be realistic and positive. A goal is stated as: *I want_____ or I want_____, but I don't want_____.*

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

1. Develop positive and realistic goal statements.
2. Identify reasons to consider other people's thoughts and feelings.
3. Better determine the thoughts and feelings of others.
4. Differentiate between facts and opinions.

Major Activities

Activity 1: Homework Review

Activity 2: Review of Previous Lesson

Activity 3: Overview of Lesson

Activity 4: Explain Step 1: Identify a Positive and Realistic Goal

Activity 5: Explain Step 2: Gather Information – Facts

Activity 6: Step 2: Gather Information – The Other Person's Thoughts and Feelings

Activity 7: Apply Problem Solving Skill 3: Set a Goal and Gather Information

Activity 8: Wrap-up

Activity 9: 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-19-1-Set a Goal and Gather Information

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-Problem Solving Skills and Steps
H-19-1-Set a Goal and Gather Information
H-19-2-Pocket Skill Cards
H-19-3-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-19-1-Title slide
P-19-2-Homework Review
P-19-3-Problem Solving Skill 1: Stop and Think
P-19-4-Problem Solving Skill 2: State the Problem
P-19-5-Problem Solving Skill 3: Set a Goal and Gather Information
P-19-6-Step 1: Identify a Positive and Realist Goal
P-19-7-Step 2: Gather Information
P-19-8-Identify a Positive and Realistic Goal
P-19-9-Goal Statement
P-19-10-Goal Statement, continued
P-19-11-Step 2: Gather Information-Facts
P-19-12-Step 2: Gather Information-The Other Persons Thoughts and Feelings
P-19-13-Thinking Report–Ms. Shells
P-19-14-Thinking Report–Ms. Porter
P-19-15-Homework

Equipment

- Easel (chart stand)
- Projector to show presentation slides
- Projection screen or suitable surface

Supplies

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Copies of participant handouts

Activity 1: Homework Review

During our last lesson we focused on the second skill in problem solving. What was that skill?

(Answer: State the problem.)

And how about the first problem solving skill?

(Answer: Stop and think.)

For homework, I asked you to continue to look for real life problems and use them as a chance to practice your problem solving skills.

Then pick one real life problem situation and practice skill 1: **stop and think** and skill 2: **state the problem**.

If you were not able to do the first 2 skills while the problem was actually happening, then you were to write out how you could have done the steps of skills 1 and 2.

For homework review, I would like each of you to briefly and informally describe your problem situation and how you used the first two skills.

Activity 2: Review Previous Lesson

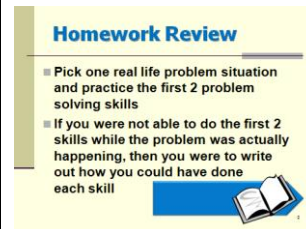
We are working our way through the problem solving skills. Let's review what we have done so



P-19-1



P-19-2



Ask for a volunteer to begin, and then quickly have all group members review homework.



-H-16-1-

Problem Solving

far. Problem solving skill 1 is **stop and think**.

What do you do when you use this skill?

(Example answer: Stop: Identify internal warning signs - physical reactions, risk thoughts and feelings. Then we Think to reduce our risk by being quiet, getting space and calming down.)

What is the second skill of problem solving?

(Answer: State the problem.)

What information do we identify when we make a problem statement?

(Example answer: We identify one of our warning signs, objectively state what happened and identify a possible risk reaction we may have that would make the problem worse.)

And then we put it all together in a statement starting with, "I".

Activity 3: Overview of Lesson

Let's look at where the risk feelings and thinking skills thermometers are at this time.

In problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information** we are increasing the thinking skills we will be using. In this step our thinking takes over. This helps us reduce our risk feelings. We

Skills and Steps




P-19-3

Problem Solving –
Skill 1: Stop and Think

Step 1: Stop!
Pay attention to your warning signs

Step 2: Think!
Reduce your risk





P-19-4

Problem Solving –
Skill 2: State the Problem

Step 1: Identify a warning sign
Step 2: Describe what happened objectively
Step 3: Identify a risk reaction

"I (think/feel) _____
because _____
and my risk reaction is _____"




H-19-1-Set a
Goal and Gather
Information

think ahead to set a goal and then use our minds to analyze the problem situation.

We remain in control by thinking through the steps of this problem solving skill instead of just reacting to what we don't like.

There are 2 steps to problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information.**

Step 1: Identify a positive and realistic goal

Step 2: Gather information

Step 1: Identify a Positive and Realistic Goal

- Keep your goal realistic – something that you can make happen
- Make it positive – something that does not hurt you or others
- Then make a simple goal statement starting with the words, “I want.....” and then describe the goal.
- Our goal statement can also include what we *don't* want. We can say, “I want... [state our goal], but I don't want... [describe that]”.

Remember the conflict we watched from the *Breakfast Club* movie? The student's goal had two parts: First, “I want no more detentions,” and the



P-19-5

Problem Solving – Skill 3: Set a Goal and Gather Information

- **Step 1:** Identify a positive and realistic goal
- **Step 2:** Gather Information
 - Facts
 - The other person's thoughts and feelings



P-19-6

Step 1: Identify a Positive and Realistic Goal

- Keep your goal realistic—something you can make happen
- Make it positive—something that doesn't hurt you or others
- Make a simple goal statement starting with the words, “I want....” and then describe the goal
- Or “I want..., but I don't want...”



second part was, “but I don’t want to look weak in front of the other students.”

Step 2: Gather Information

In this step we identify two types of information:

- Facts
- What we think the other person is thinking and feeling

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

Activity 4: Explain Step 1: Identify a Positive and Realistic Goal

Let’s look at these steps one at a time, starting, of course, with step 1: Identify a positive and realistic goal. One of the best ways to solve a problem is to set positive and realistic goals.

A **positive** goal means that we do not set out to hurt ourselves or others, because this usually just makes the problem worse.

Solving problems can cause pain, but that should not be the goal. If the goal is to cause pain, then the problem can just get bigger.

For example, someone you know is spreading



P-19-7

Step 2: Gather Information

- Facts
- What we think the other person is thinking and feeling



H-19-2-Set a Goal and Gather Information Pocket Skill Cards



P-19-8

Step 1: Identify a Positive and Realistic Goal

- **Positive** - we do not set out to hurt ourselves or others. (Because this usually just makes the problem worse)
- **Realistic** - something that you can actually make happen

nasty rumors about you. A positive goal would be to tell the person to stop. A negative goal would be to spread nastier rumors about that person. This is just going to make the problem bigger.

Realistic means that the goal is something you think you can make happen. For example, you don't have enough money to buy your girlfriend or boyfriend a birthday present.

A realistic goal would be to find a way to show that you remembered the birthday. An unrealistic goal would be to get everything the person might want.

As an example, a goal statement for someone who is a recovering drug user could be: *I want to keep away from drugs today.*

Or, the goal can say what we want and what we don't want: *I want to go out with my friends, but I don't want to use drugs or alcohol.*

Consider Goal Statements for Shewan/Sherry

We are going to look at several goal statements, one at a time, for our on-going problem situation.

Shewan/Sherry considered these goals. I want you to identify the one that best follows the guidelines for a positive and realistic goal statement.



P-19-9 and P-19-10

Goal Statement

1. **I want** the other person to say she is sorry and just leave me alone
2. **I want** to go back into the room and tell the other person off
3. **I want** to find a way to get out of this place right now and take whatever I can

For each statement, take a minute to discuss it with a partner.

Identify the goal as either:

- A “yes” or “no” for realistic
- A “yes” or “no” for positive
- Be able to state why

Goal Statement 1: “I want the other person to say she is sorry and just leave me alone.”

What did you think? Is the goal statement positive?

(Answer: Yes, it is positive because the goal is not to hurt anyone.)

Is it realistic?

(Answer: It is not realistic – we don’t expect people in authority to apologize.)

Goal Statement 2: “I want to go back into the room and tell the other person off.”

(Answer: Realistic but not positive.)

Goal Statement 3: “I want to find a way to get out

Goal Statement

4. I want to trash the room so she knows not to push me around
5. I want to find a way to get the other person to believe me, that I did not do anything wrong



Give group members a minute to discuss a goal statement with a partner and then ask them if it is positive and/or realistic and why. Do this with each goal statement.

Have the partnered group members discuss the statement and then have them report what they came up with.

of this place right now and take whatever I can.”

(Answer: Realistic because it is possible to find a way to get out but not positive because it hurts self and others.)

Goal Statement 4: “I want to trash the room so she knows not to push me around.”

(Answer: Realistic because I am capable of trashing the room but not positive because it hurts me and others.)

Goal Statement 5: “I want to find a way to get the other person to believe me that I did not do anything wrong.”

(Answer: Positive because it does not hurt anyone and realistic because it is possible to explain what you know in a way that helps other people listen to you.)

Now that we have our goal statement, I will write it on that part of our chart and let’s go to step 2.



C-19-1 (see supplement section for full text)

Skill 3: Set a Goal and Gather Information

Step 1: Set a Goal

I want _____

Step 2: Gather Info
Facts

Other’s Ths & Feelings

Thoughts

Feelings

Activity 5: Explain Step 2: Gather Information – Facts

There are two parts to step 2: gather information. The first part is to identify the facts about the situation. The second part is to identify the other person's thoughts and feelings.

Let's talk about the first part first: The facts. As we have discussed previously, an important part of problem solving is objective thinking. When gathering information, we separate facts from opinions as a way of being objective. This means making a statement of what happened, who was involved and what was said and done.

Knowing the difference between fact and opinion is important in problem solving, because facts are objective and opinions are not. Sometimes our opinions are right on and sometimes they are dead wrong. It is important to know the difference.

Observe a Situation

I am going to act out a situation. Watch what I do

Prepare chart before the session. Now, add the goal statement to the chart under step 1.



P-19-11

Step 2: Gather Information – Facts

■ Objective thinking ■ Fact vs. opinion

<p><i>Separate facts from opinions as a way of being objective. This means making a statement of what happened, who was involved and what was said and done</i></p>	<p><i>Facts are objective and opinions are not. Sometimes our opinions are right on and sometimes they are dead wrong. It is important to know the difference</i></p>
---	---

↔

Act out a situation

so that when I make statements about what I did, you can tell me which are facts and which statements are opinions.

I was staggering. Is that fact or opinion?

(Answer: Fact)

I was drunk.

(Answer: Opinion)

Why is this opinion? What else could cause me to stagger?

(Suggested answer: Being sick, having an injury, being dizzy.)

I was looking around the room.

(Answer: Fact)

I didn't want anyone to see what I was doing.

(Answer: Opinion. I could have been looking for someone to help me.)

I stole the money/wallet.

(Answer: Opinion. You don't know if the wallet/money was mine or if it belonged to

where you stagger in front of the group as you walk up to a table/chair, look around the room, pick up a wallet, smile and stagger away.

someone who asked me to get it for them).

I picked up the wallet/money.

(Answer: Fact)

I smiled when I saw the wallet.

(Answer: Fact)

I entered the room by myself.

(Answer: Fact)

I left the room by myself.

(Answer: Fact)

I am a person who should not be trusted.

(Answer: Opinion. You don't know why I was staggering or if I was acting responsibly or not.)

Identifying facts keeps you thinking objectively in a problem situation rather than letting your risk thoughts and feelings take over. This is an important thinking skill.

Facts should be information that other people can also observe. Facts are something you can check out or verify.

Turn to your partner and in one sentence describe the facts of what you saw.

What did you come up with?

Give partners a minute to discuss, then ask:

(Example answer: The person staggered into the room, looked around, took the wallet, and left.)

Consider Facts in Shewan’s/Sherry’s Problem

Let’s think back to the problem situation we have been working on.

Shewan was having a problem with Ms. Shells

[or]

Sherry was having a problem with Ms. Porter.

What are the facts of this situation?

(Possible answers for Shewan: Ms. Shells told Shewan that \$50 is missing; Mr. Brooks reported the money is missing; Ms. Shells is the boss; Ms. Shells raised her voice; Ms. Shells called Shewan into her office.)

(Possible answers for Sherry: Sherry got an A on the test; Sherry has not handed in homework; Sherry got a D on the prior test; Sherry sat next to Paul; Ms. Porter said she is going to contact Sherry’s parents; Both of them raised their voices.)

Great. By identifying the facts, we have practiced the first part of step 2: gather information.

You may want to replay the video of/again model the problem situation presented in the previous lesson to remind group members of the specifics of the conflict.



C-19-1 (see supplement section for full text)

Skill 3: Set a Goal and Gather Information

Step 1: Set a Goal
I want _____

Step 2: Gather Info
Facts

Other’s Ths & Feelings
Thoughts

Feelings

List facts on chart (C-19-1) as the group members give answers.

Activity 6: Step 2: Gather Information – The Other Person’s Thoughts and Feelings

Now let’s practice the second part of step 2: gather information. In this part, we imagine the other person’s thoughts and feelings.

You have had a lot of practice in thinking about others’ thoughts and feelings in previous sessions. For example, you practiced this in many of the social skills lessons such as: **understanding the feelings of others, active listening**, and **responding to anger**.

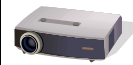
How do you figure out how someone else might be feeling?

(Example answers: Watch for body language and listen to the person’s tone of voice as well as what they are saying. We can also use our previous experiences with that person.)

Let’s look at a partial thinking report for the other person in our example problem. We will fill in some other thoughts and feelings you think Ms. Shells/Ms. Porter was having.

Who is the other person in the problem?

(Example answer: Problem situation #1 – Ms. Shells; problem situation #2 – Ms. Porter)



P-19-12

Step 2: Gather Information – The Other Person’s Thoughts and Feelings

- How do you figure out how someone else might be feeling?

Show the group either Ms. Shells’ (P-19-10) or Ms. Porter’s thinking report. (P-19-11).



P-19-13

What other thoughts do you think Ms. Shells/Ms. Porter might have had?

(Example answer: Many answers could apply.)

What did you observe that supports your guesses?

(Example answers: Problem situation #1: Ms. Shells said, "I don't believe you. I need employees I can trust." Problem situation #2: Ms. Porter said that she thinks Sherry cheated.)

How do you think Ms. Shells/Ms. Porter was feeling?

(Example answer for either situation: Angry.)

Can you guess based on what that person said or did?

(Example answer: Because she raised her voice.)

Activity 7: Apply Problem Solving Skill 3: Set a Goal and Gather Information

I now want you to apply both steps of skill 3: **set a goal and gather information**, to the problem

Thinking Report – Ms. Shells

Situation:	I told Shewan that \$50 was missing from Mr. Brooks' desk. She denied knowing anything about it.
Thoughts:	1. I think she knows what happened to the money 2. She certainly is getting me upset 3. I can't let her raise her voice to me
Feelings:	
Attitudes/Beliefs:	



P-19-14

Thinking Report – Ms. Porter

Situation:	I told Shelly that I think she cheated on her test and she got angry
Thoughts:	1. I can't let her think she can get away with cheating 2. She is hanging with the wrong crowd 3. I want her parents to know what is happening at school
Feelings:	
Attitudes/Beliefs:	

Use these questions to guide the group members to guess some thoughts and feelings the other person might be having in the problem situation. Write these on Chart 19-1. **Keep this chart to use for subsequent lessons.**



H-19-1-Set a

you used for homework.

Explain the situation to your partner and fill out the problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information** handout.

I will collect these to get an idea of how well we are doing in understanding problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information**.

Activity 8: Wrap-up

Today we explored problem solving skill 3: **set a goal and gather information**. Let's take a minute to review.

What are the steps to this problem solving skill?

(Answer: Step 1: Identify a positive and realistic goal and step 2: Gather Information – Facts; The Other Person's Thoughts and Feelings)

What will be the most challenging step for you

Goal and Gather Information (Handed out earlier in lesson).

Circulate to provide assistance when needed. Before ending, solicit volunteers to identify what they decided for one or more of the steps for skill 3: **set a goal and gather information**.

Collect skill 3 handout to see how well participants are able to use this step.

Encourage

(and why)?

Activity 9: Assign Homework

For homework:

- I want you to take a new situation through the first three problem solving skills.
- This is a problem you will work on through the rest of the problem solving lessons.
- Each of you will have a chance to role play the skills during our next session.
- I need each of you to fill in your problem before you leave the session today. Make it a “time to think” problem, and make it something you anticipate facing in the near future or something that is on-going.
- I will take a minute to give you some feedback so we can make sure it is a problem that you will be able to take through the remaining problem solving skills.

discussion.



P-19-15

Homework

- Take a problem situation through all the steps of the first 3 problem solving skills
- This is a problem you will work on through the rest of the problem solving lessons
- Each of you will have a chance to role play the first three skills during our next session



H-19-3-

Homework

In this activity, the group members begin working on a “time to think” problem.

They should identify a situation that they anticipate facing in the near future (i.e., group members who are about to return to the community) or an on-going problem (i.e., an on-going conflict with a family member).

Contextualize the directions for your group members' particular situations. Make it clear to group members that you want them to pick out a real life problem they can act upon in the near future.