Problem solving requires taking steps to solve a situation.

Factors affecting the problem solving process:
• Past experience related to the problem (how have you handled this problem in the past? Were you successful? Why or why not?)
• Amount of anxiety
  - Letting your emotions control you during conflict and/or problem solving may cause you to make an irrational decision
  - Take time to “cool off” or allow the other person to regroup before discussing the problem or issue
• Amount of resources
  - Internal; yourself and friends or family who have knowledge of a successful solution to the problem

Individual approach to problem solving
  • Brainstorm and list all your ideas with respect to what could be causing the problem or what the problem could be
  • Look for connections
  • Identify possible solutions or approaches
  • Try the one that seems most beneficial at the moment
  • Decide that if this plan does not work, you will try something different

Stages in solving a problem or conflict
A. Find out…
  1. Who are the parties involved?
  2. What are the issues?
  3. What background information do you have?
  4. Who are the people who can benefit or be injured by the issue?
  5. Focus on the problem, not the people
  6. Clarify the problem
  7. What is the goal?

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8. What are the options?

B. Decision making
   1. What will the decision be based on: values, political, emotions, etc.
   2. What are the options?
   3. Make a first decision

C. Making it work and looking back
   1. Develop specific steps
   2. How are these going to be implemented?
   3. Put the plan to action, follow up and evaluate possibly another plan

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