

PROBLEM SOLVING



“If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable, you disconnect yourself from what you truly want and all that is left is a compromise.”
Robert Fritz



PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL

- Don't use it when:
 - An immediate response is required
 - The decision is value based
 - Information will solve the problem



PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL

- Use it when:
 - There are numerous right answers
 - No solution presently exists
 - The present solution is unsatisfactory



IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

- Describe the situation and/or the issue in a few words
- Ask what is the real issue at the heart of the matter
- Define what the desired outcome will look like
- Identify the limits such as time, money, political constraints, etc



CHECKLIST FOR DISCOVERING THE REAL PROBLEM

- List the facts that need to be obtained
- Check the accuracy of the facts
- Examine the facts in the light of past experience
- Check the facts with others



CHECKLIST FOR DISCOVERING THE REAL PROBLEM

Review departmental policy as it relates to the problem

Identify key obstacles

Identify key players

Determine limits of authority



FIND AS MANY SOLUTIONS AS POSSIBLE

- Where can you find more info
- What has worked in past
- What have other agencies done
- Visualize the outcome of each alternative



FIND AS MANY SOLUTIONS AS POSSIBLE

- Do a reality check
- The alternatives must be weighed for their positive and negative points
- Decide which alternative fits
- Be creative - Keep an open mind and use your imagination



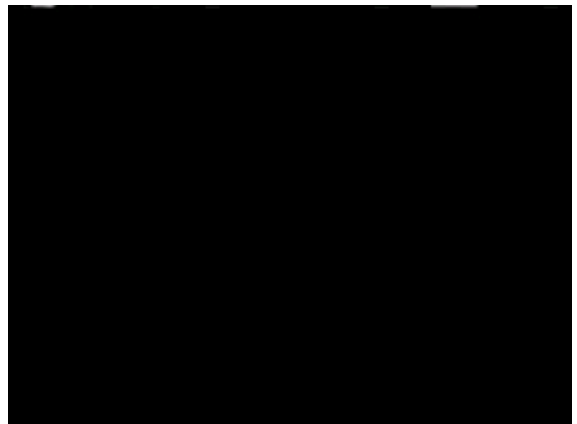
GUIDELINES FOR BRAINSTORMING

- Define and agree on purpose
- Set a time limit
- Keep the session focused on the problem
- Encourage active participation from all of team
- Develop an enthusiastic climate



GUIDELINES FOR BRAINSTORMING

- Let the team members have fun
- Don't criticize, compliment, or evaluate ideas when suggested
- Encourage thinking outside the box
- Build and expand on the ideas of others but ensure no train of thought is followed too long
- Create as long a list as possible in the allotted time



CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE

- Is this solution practical?
- Will it solve the problem?
- Is it acceptable to your supervisor?
- What will be the effect on others?
- Will precedents be set?



CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE

- Who will the decision affect?
- What are the cost factors?
- Will the decision meet departmental objectives?



CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE

- Will future problems occur as a result of the decision?
- Is the decision legal and ethical?
- Is the decision in line with agency policies and procedures

