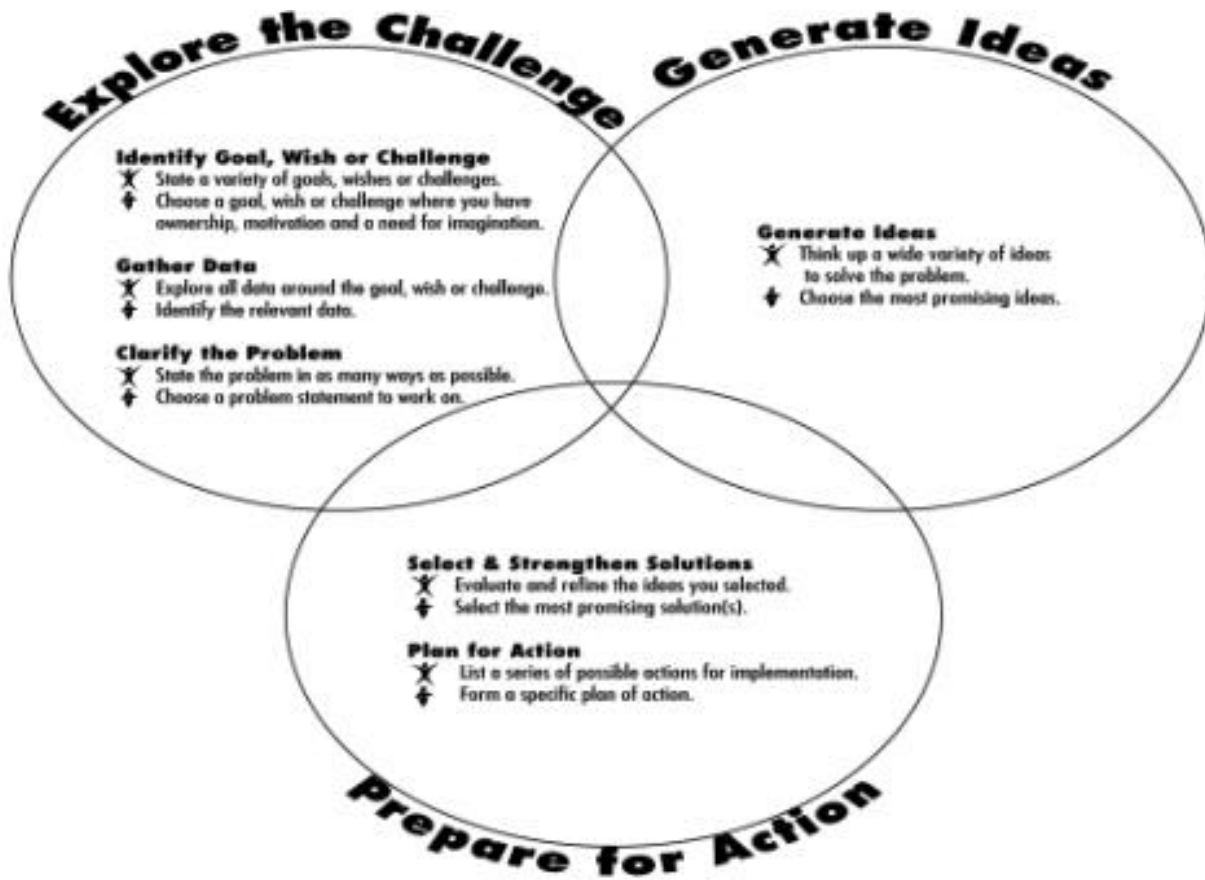


Creative Problem Solving

EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE

GENERATE IDEAS

PREPARE FOR ACTION



EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE

Start Here When... You are looking for a new way to improve, create or solve something. You want to explore the facts, feelings and data around it. You want to pinpoint the issue that really needs work.

Identify Goal/Wish/Challenge

In order to help give you a direction for your creative problem solving efforts, it is essential to have a clear sense of your goal or wish or challenge. Begin to articulate your goals, wishes and challenges by coming up with a whole series of phrases that start with: "I wish..." or "It would be great if..."

As you generate goals/wishes/challenges, if you get stuck or want to pursue another direction, ask the following questions and use them to help you generate even more statements. Use as many sheets of paper as you need.

What are some things you have done lately that you would like to do better?

What sorts of challenges might be on your mind?

What do you wish worked better?

Who has been on your mind lately?

Why have these individuals been on your mind?

What are some of the objectives that you would like to meet?

Now scan your life. What sort of opportunities might be in your world that you might like to take advantage of?

Imagine yourself ahead in time one year from today. What are some goals, some dreams, some visions you would like to accomplish or begin working on in the next year?

You have just been given a magic wand, and any wishes in relation to any aspects of your life can come true. What might those ideal goals or wishes for your life be?

Once you have generated several goals/wishes/challenges, review them all and then:

Place a check mark next to all of your statements over which you have **ownership or decision making authority**. Then place a check mark next to all of your statements about which you are **motivated** to do something (i.e. deal with in the next three weeks to three months.). Last, check the statements which require some **imagination** to accomplish.

Select one statement which has three check marks next to it. This is a Goal/Wish/Challenge statement that is appropriate for Creative Problem Solving.

EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE

Gather Data

Write the **Goal/Wish/Challenge** on which you want to apply Creative Problem Solving below. Use the phrase(s) "It would be great if..." or "I wish..."

To **Gather Data** about your **Goal/Wish/Challenge** write down your answers to the questions below. These questions are designed to give you a **clear picture of the situation surrounding your Goal/Wish/Challenge**. Write down a response to the question even if you think the response is obvious. By writing down those obvious responses, you free up your mind to generate more information about your situation.

1. What is a brief history of your situation?

2. Who is involved?

3. Why is this a concern for you?

4. How might this be an opportunity for you?

5. What have you already thought of or tried?

6. What are your gut feelings about this situation?

7. How are your feelings affecting your behavior?

8. When does this situation seem to occur?

9. What might be your ideal outcome or your ideal goal for dealing with this situation?

Review the information you just wrote about your goal/wish/challenge. Mark the key data that reveals a new insight into the situation or that is important for you to consider throughout the remainder of the CPS process.

EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE

Clarify the Problem

Restate your challenge from as many perspectives as possible. Use the statement starters: "How to...?" (H2...) "How might I...?" (HMI...) "In what ways might I...?" (IWWMI...) If you get stuck, try turning the key data you identified on the previous page into statements of the problem.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____

Select the most promising and intriguing problem statements to consider. Look through your list of problem statements and mark your "hits."

Cluster the "hits" that relate to each other. List the numbers of the hits that make up your cluster below.

Cluster 1 . _____

Cluster 2. _____

Cluster 3. _____

Cluster 4. _____

Look over your clusters. What does each one mean to you? In other words, what does each cluster represent? List below what each cluster represents to you as a problem statement beginning with the statement starters, "How to...?" "How might I...?" "In what ways might I...?"

Cluster 1 represents: (IWWMI: HMI: H₂;) _____

Cluster 2 represents: (IWWMI: HMI: H₂;) _____

Cluster 3 represents: (IWWMI: HMI: H₂;) _____

Cluster 4 represents: (IWWMI: HMI: H₂;) _____

Select the cluster that stands "head and shoulders" above the others, or synthesize the essence of several clusters together to create a problem statement that best identifies the challenge you want to work on. Write it below.

IWWMI: HMI: H₂: _____

GENERATE IDEAS

Start Here When ... You have a clearly defined problem and you need ideas to solve it. Remember the best way to come up with great ideas is to generate LOTS of ideas. Write your problem statement below:

IWWMI: HMI: H₂: _____

?

Defer judgment. Build off other ideas. It's easier to tame a wild idea than to energize a dull one. Go beyond the obvious. Strive for quantity. The mind only starts getting creative once the obvious answers are covered.

Come up with at least 35 ideas that might solve your problem. Come up with 35 more. Keep going! Even as you see good ideas emerge, keep pushing for novelty. *S T R E T C H !*

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1 . | 2 2 . |
| 2 . | 2 3 . |
| 3 . | 2 4 . |
| 4 . | 2 5 . |
| 5 . | 2 6 . |
| 6 . | 2 7 . |
| 7 . | 2 8 . |
| 8 . | 2 9 . |
| 9 . | 3 0 . |
| 1 0 . | 3 1 . |
| 1 1 . | 3 2 . |
| 1 2 . | 3 3 . |
| 1 3 . | 3 4 . |
| 1 4 . | 3 5 . |
| 1 5 . | 3 6 . |
| 1 6 . | 3 7 . |
| 1 7 . | 3 8 . |
| 1 8 . | 3 9 . |
| 1 9 . | 4 0 . |
| 2 0 . | 4 1 . |
| 2 1 . | 4 2 . |

Select the most promising and intriguing idea(s) to pursue. Look through your list of ideas and mark your "hits."

Cluster the "hits" that relate to each other. List the numbers of the hits that make up your cluster below.

Cluster 1. _____

Cluster 2. _____

Cluster 3. _____

Cluster 4. _____

Look over your clusters. What does each one mean to you? In other words, what does each cluster represent? List below what each cluster represents to you as an action. Use a verb.

Cluster 1 represents: _____

Cluster 2 represents: _____

Cluster 3 represents: _____

Cluster 4 represents: _____

PREPARE FOR ACTION

Start Here When...You have promising ideas and want to turn them into workable solutions. You need buy-in from others and want a detailed plan of action to follow.

Select & Strengthen Solutions Pluses, Potentials and Concerns (PPCo)

Review your clusters of ideas above. If your ideas blend together or suggest a tentative plan of action, write your idea in the form of an idea phrase. Your idea phrase should create a specific, measurable result. The result can be as stringent as using measures to quantify the result, that is, metrics or dollars saved, or as simple as verifying that you have accomplished the solution or not accomplished it. Write your idea phrase below.

What I see myself doing is:

Below list at least three **pluses** or specific strengths of your idea phrase. What is good about your idea now?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now, list three **potentials**, speculations, spin-offs or possible future gains from your idea. In a future when this idea has become a reality, what has become possible? List potentials using the phrase "It might."

1. It might...
2. It might...
3. It might...

Finally, list the **concerns** you have about your idea. Be sure to phrase each concern as an open-ended questions that will allow you to overcome each one and move forward.

How to...

How to...

How to...

Review your concerns. Decide which one is the most important to you. Generate at least 12 ways to overcome that concern. Once you have enough ideas to overcome your most important concern, go to your next most important concern and generate ways to overcome that concern. Do this until all of your concerns have been overcome.

Concern 1. How to...

Ideas for overcoming concern one:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7. |
| 2. | 8. |
| 3. | 9. |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |

Concern 2. How to...

Ideas for overcoming concern two:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7. |
| 2. | 8. |
| 3. | 9. |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |

Concern 3. How to...

Ideas for overcoming concern three:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7. |
| 2. | 8. |
| 3. | 9. |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |

Now review the information that you wrote for Pluses, Potentials and Concerns on the previous page, and **especially** the ideas that you generated for overcoming your concerns. Build on the solution you wrote on the top of the previous page or write a **new** and **improved** statement of your solution on the top of the next page. Include as much detail as possible.

PLAN FOR ACTION

Write your new and improved statement of the solution below.

What I NOW see myself (us) doing is...

Now generate at least 16 action steps that will detail everything that might need to happen in order to bring your solution to reality. If you get stuck or begin to slow down, ask yourself the following questions to stimulate more action steps.

What steps might you take to put your solution into action?

What additional resources might help you to implement your idea (e.g., individuals, groups, materials, money)?

How might you gain acceptance for this solution?

What might you do to gain enthusiasm for your solution?

What are some things that you might need to overcome?

Where might you start?

What special places or locations might you use?

What are some places or locations to avoid?

When might be a good time to begin?

What special times might you use?

How might you pretest this solution?

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 9. |
| 2. | 10. |
| 3. | 11. |
| 4. | 12. |
| 5. | 13. |
| 6. | 14. |
| 7. | 15. |
| 8. | 16. |

Form a Specific Plan of Action

When you have generated all of the steps that might be taken to bring your solution to reality, select the ones that you need to accomplish and then put them into the following format so that you know:

- What is the specific action step that is going to take place (be as specific as you can)
- Who is going to do this action step
- When will this action step be completed
- Who will check to make sure it is done (to provide support; also, sometimes it helps to check on the person who will do the action step, to make sure it isn't forgotten). Or, to whom do you need to report completion.

Be sure to make one of your first steps something you can accomplish within the next twenty-four hours.

Momentum is essential in the creative process!

PLAN OF ACTION

Action

**What is going to
be done?**

Who will do it?

By when?

**Report completion to?
Check/support?**

Short Term Actions

From: To:

Intermediate Actions

From: To:

Long Term Actions

From: To:

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