

PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

(Sample 1)

Briefly describe the problem:

My wife and I have been arguing- I feel so hopeless about this relationship at times-

State your problem-solving goal:

To have fun with my wife again

Describe the major obstacles to achieving your goal at this time:

- 1. We both are tired because we work a lot*
- 2. I get angry easily and feel sorry for myself—I feel like a failure 'cause this is my 2nd marriage*
- 3. Our 2 kids take up so much of our energy!*
- 4. I fear that nothing will work*

Think of alternative ways to achieve your goal. Be creative. List at least 3 solution ideas:

- 1. Talk with wife about making time to be alone.*
- 2. Ask a family member or friend to babysit the kids for an afternoon*
- 3. Ask a family member or friend to babysit for an overnight*
- 4. Practice the SS part of SSTA before and during discussions with my wife*
- 5. Make a list with my wife of those things we would like to do to feel like a couple again*
- 6. Listen to my wife's concerns without interrupting and ask her to do the same*

What are the major “pros” or positive consequences of these different alternatives?

Talking with my wife about wanting to be alone or making a list of things to do would let her know I care about our relationship— Practicing SS would help me to calm and center my body and mind so I would be less likely to say negative or critical things- Listening would help us understand each other; Getting some time away from the kids would help us do any of these ideas.

What are some of the “cons” or negative consequences?

Listening to each other may need the help of someone like a chaplain or a doc, because it's so hard to listen when I'm upset. I think it's hard for my wife as well. If we get someone to babysit, we either have to pay them or owe them something

Decide which alternatives are the best by choosing the ones with the most *positive* consequences and the least *negative* consequences. Write down your action plan.

SS seems to help with anything I decide to do, getting time alone with my wife would be great! We could ask our neighbors to have our kids play with theirs for “free” babysitting-- Going for a walk and making a list of the things we enjoy doing together would be enjoyable for both of us. We could promise to use these worksheets together to make sure we do a specific number of these activities over the next three months.

Carry out the plan & observe the consequences: Are you satisfied that your plan worked?

We began our action plan and our neighbors loved the idea. We got a few hours away from the kids and they got a free dinner that we didn't have to cook. My wife and I walked in the park, sat down by the lake and pulled out our smartphones to make a list – it wasn't long before we had about 20 things we enjoyed doing together and we started to visualize doing them—this was great! The first one on the list was singing together. So that week we picked a night to put on our favorite old music while we made dinner for the kids and sang along. Soon the kids were laughing at us and singing with us, and we now do this as a nightly ritual. We are planning the second thing on the list-- taking a bath together.

PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

(Sample 2)

Briefly describe the problem:

Do not have enough money for me and my wife to live on now that I am physically disabled from an injury on my last deployment and physical condition is not improving.

State your problem-solving goal:

To get additional income into my household by exploring some jobs that I can do from home, given my physical limitations and confinement to wheelchair for travel.

Describe the major obstacles to achieving your goal at this time:

- 1. Energy to find numbers and make calls*
- 2. Fear that my efforts won't lead to anything anyway*

Think of alternative ways to achieve your goal. Be creative. List at least 3 solution ideas:

- 1. Make 'cold' calls to medical coding and ask for recommendations of training for coders, availability of jobs, etc.*
- 2. Review Craig's List for potential computer jobs that can be done from home.*
- 3. Check newspaper ads for relevant job listings.*
- 4. Contact temp job sites.*
- 5. Check with my attorneys who are pursuing my SS Disability appeal.*

What are the major "pros" or positive consequences of these different alternatives?

All of these calls are pretty straightforward, and I can accomplish these from home, sitting in my wheelchair at my desk.

What are some of the "cons" or negative consequences?

The only "cons" have to do with my feelings of embarrassment in asking for help, and I think I may sound stupid. I may get very frustrated if they don't understand what I'm asking, and if they turn me down.

Decide which alternatives are the best by choosing the ones with the most positive consequences and the least negative consequences. Write down your action plan.

There's really no risk in making calls; I just have to be prepared that I may feel awkward or embarrassed. I will rehearse out loud and in my mind before the calls. I will write out a script so I don't mess up my wording.

Carry out the plan & observe the consequences: Are you satisfied that your plan worked?

Yes! I actually made all of the calls and learned that my feelings and fears of embarrassment have kept me from acting. I am able to take on the problems that I can do something about and let others deal with the ones I have no control over (i.e. whether they hire me or help me is up to them). This has been effective and emotionally freeing.