

# PROBLEM SOLVING WORKSHEET

- The core concepts of the problem-solving process include identifying a perceived challenge, identifying options and surveying the cost/benefit of each, and deciding on the best action to achieve the desired outcome.
- Problem Solving can be utilized with a wide range of individuals and can target different high-risk behaviors or situations.
- The problem-solving worksheet can be used to address both immediate and long-term problems that lead to impulsive responses that have undesirable consequences.

## STEPS FOR COMPLETING THE PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

### **Step 1. Stop and Think then identify the problem**

Help the youth identify when he or she has a problem by discussing the cues that serve as a warning sign. Warning signs can include thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions that happen in response to an external event or circumstance. Help the youth describe the problem objectively. The description should start with "I" and objectively detail the reason for the warning signs and your risks. Example: I have sweaty palms, because I am being confronted by my boss about an assignment. This puts me at risk, because I might yell and blame her for not getting information to me on time.

### **Step 2. Clarify Goals**

The Officer should help the youth identify a desired outcome that is positive and realistic. The identified goal should be time-specific and measurable. The goal should be SMART.

### **Step 3. Generate Alternative solutions and choose your best option**

Brainstorm with the youth by developing a list of solutions that are alternatives to the risky behavior that was identified in Step 1. include the goals that were listed in Step 2. List all possible options without being judgmental. Once all the options have been identified review EACH option and identify the short-term and long-term consequences for each. Choose the option that is an alternative to the risky behavior that was

identified in Step 1, helps achieve the identified goals from Step 2, and has short-term and long-term consequences that don't lead to future problems.

#### **Step 4. Develop a plan**

Have the youth develop action steps to implement the selected option. Role play the action steps with the youth and make necessary adjustments to the plan. (The youth should experience success with the plan).

#### **Step 5. Implement the plan**

Between practicing the skill and the next meeting, the youth should use the plan that was agreed upon.

#### **Step 6. Evaluate the plan**

At the first available opportunity after the plan has been implemented, review the plan, and gather information about the outcome. Evaluate the plan by determining the following: 1) Were the steps of the plan implemented as practiced? 2) Were the outcomes consistent with the outcomes predicted during practice? 3) Should modifications be made to the plan developed in step 4?