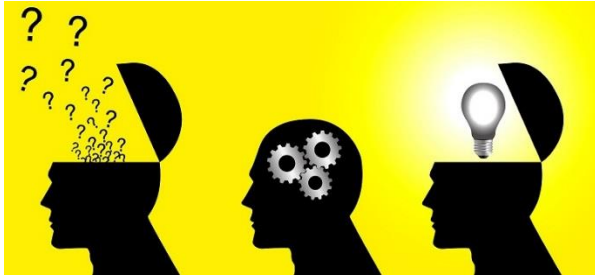


Short and Snappy – Think on your feet!

Keys to Better Problem Solving



Objective: To prepare volunteers to react quickly to the unexpected by building problem-solving skills.

Length: 20 minutes

Materials Needed: Pencils, worksheet (next page)

Information to Share (spend 10 minutes on this section)

When volunteering with girls, the unexpected is always just around the corner. As volunteers, we need to be ready to react quickly and effectively, and maintain the safety, well-being, and positive experiences of girls.

Here are some tips for how to problem solve quickly and effectively in times of pressure:

- **Relax.** This may be the last thing you feel like doing when under pressure, but it is necessary to think clearly and keep control. Take a few deep breaths and think something positive to reaffirm yourself (e.g. “I can handle this.”).
- **Listen.** What is the request or piece of news that requires an immediate response? Make sure you understand what is happening in order to react well. Be perceptive to body language and tone of voice. If an upset person is addressing you, try to determine why they are upset and what their motivation is. Do not get defensive.
- **Practice and Prepare.** Regularly review the following steps to problem solving, such that you are prepared to take yourself through these steps quickly when under pressure:
 1. Evaluating the problem:
 - Clarify the nature of a problem
 - Gather information through questions and observation
 - Interpret that information
 - Define the desired outcome
 2. Managing the problem:
 - Use techniques such as brainstorming to consider options for response
 - Analyze these options
 - Identify steps that can be taken to achieve the objective
 3. Decision-making:
 - Decide what action to take
 4. Resolving the problem:
 - Implement action
 - Provide information to other stakeholders; delegate tasks
 - Review progress
 5. Examining the results:
 - Monitor the outcome of the action taken
 - Review the problem and problem-solving process to avoid similar situations in future

Activity (spend 10 minutes on this section)

1. Break into small groups.
2. Give each group one of the following scenarios: (or have groups make up their own scenario)
 - a. You are at day camp. While playing a game, a girl fell down and appears to have hurt her arm badly. She is crying and screaming. Think fast!
 - b. Your community is hosting a Daddy Daughter soccer tournament. You signed up to help set up. You arrive at the field as instructed, and see a men's league game going on. There are other teams from the league there too, and it looks like they are not leaving any time soon. Think fast! (Note: assume you did **not** get the date/time wrong.)
 - c. You are at a community meeting after a highly anticipated event did not go as well as expected. Disagreements are quickly escalating into arguments, and people are beginning to point fingers and pass blame. The room is loud and no one can hear you. Think fast!
 - d. You are conducting an older girl training and one of the girls appears to have an anxiety attack. You are unable to get a hold of her parents. Think fast!
3. Have groups go through the 5 steps to problem solving with their scenario. Then bring groups together to share their responses.

Activity Worksheet

Problem Scenario: _____

Evaluating the problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify the nature of a problem - Gather information through questions and observation - Interpret that information - Define the desired outcome 	
Managing the problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use techniques such as brainstorming to consider options for response - Analyze these options - Identify steps that can be taken to achieve the objective 	
Decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decide what action to take 	
Resolving the problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement action - Provide information to other stakeholders; delegate tasks - Review progress 	
Examining the results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the outcome of the action taken - Review the problem and problem-solving process to avoid similar situations in future 	