

PROBLEM SOLVING TO COPE WITH UNCERTAINTY

Below are steps you can follow to help you manage the uncertain situation that you are facing.

1. Identify the problem that you face. _____
2. Do you feel optimistic, pessimistic, or cautious about what will happen? _____ Are you taking a “wait and see” position or are you certain how this situation will turn out? _____
3. What is your goal in this situation? Be specific about your goal, so you can visualize it occurring. _____

4. Think of alternative steps that you can take that are within your area of influence to manage this problem. Be careful not to plan an alternative strategy that you cannot control or influence that is outside of your area of influence.
Alternative #1: _____
Alternative #2: _____
Alternative #3: _____
5. For each alternative step you thought of taking, think of the consequences from taking that step. Plot the consequences like branches on a tree where one consequence leads to another and then another.
Consequence 1: _____
And that consequence leads to: _____
And that leads to: _____
6. Select which alternative strategy you want to pursue.
7. Plot the tactics for executing that strategy.
Tactic 1: _____
Tactic 2: _____
8. Estimate how much that plan you have selected can lead to accomplishing your goal. If you could accomplish just _____% of your goal, what would you have to do? If you could accomplish more of your goal (_____% more) what would you have to do?
9. What will you do if your primary pathway to achieving your goal is blocked? _____
10. Each time you take a step toward accomplishing your goal, reinforce that action. Use verbal praise (e.g., “Good job on getting up before 7:00 a.m.”) or use a tangible reward when the goal state is accomplished (e.g., taking yourself out for dinner). Accompany this with self-affirmations such as: “I can make a difference in my life,” “I can make myself happier despite the obstacles that I face.”

11. What will sustain your motivation to continue working on your plan to accomplish your goal? _____
12. What will curtail working on your plan? _____
13. At various times while working on your plan, perform an estimate (from 0 to 10, with 10 being highest level of motivation) of how motivated you are to continue working on accomplishing your goal.