

CBT Skill: Structured Problem-Solving

Turning an overwhelming problem into a sequence of decisions and actions.

1. Define the problem

Describe one problem in concrete terms. Avoid broad labels such as “my life is a mess.”

2. Define the goal

What would “better enough” look like?

3. Brainstorm

List several options before evaluating them.

4. Compare

Consider effort, risk, values, time, and likely consequences.

5. Choose and schedule

Pick one next step, assign a time, and define what completion looks like.

6. Review

After trying it, keep, modify, or replace the plan. A plan can fail without you being a failure.

Try this reflection

What is the smallest decision inside the larger problem that would create useful movement?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.