



Decision Making

What's the Problem?

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

For the best results, teachers should complete the **Fact vs. Opinion Decision Making** strategy first.

We all encounter problems every day. Some big and some small! But how do you know what the actual problems are? Sometimes it's hard to figure out if a problem is *actually* a problem or if we are making a "mountain out of a mole hill." In turn, if we distinguish that this is a problem that needs solving, how do we understand what the problem really is?

Let's all put on our "critical thinking hats" and take a close look at some problems we might encounter and see if they are problems we can work to solve or if they are everyday annoyances that we can move past without getting more involved.

How to understand what the problem is:

1. If we got involved, what would happen?
2. What benefit does getting involved have?
3. Why do I care about this problem?
4. What would change for me if I solved this problem?
5. What is my ideal outcome?
6. Who else would it affect if I got involved?
7. How does this problem impact me?

Remember, saying no and setting a boundary when it is not a problem you can solve does not make you selfish. This allows your friends, family, and others to have a chance to use their resources and critical thinking skills to help themselves.

Key Takeaways:

- Students will be able to effectively identify a problem.
- Students will understand if the problem at hand is one for them to solve or be involved in and how to find help if it is.

Duration + Materials:

- 30 Minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Encounter**- Unexpectedly experience or be faced with.
- **Critical thinking**- The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.
- **Boundary**- A limit of a subject or sphere of activity.



Activity:

1. Teachers will use the pre-teaching language to introduce the idea of problem solving.
2. Teachers will break students into three groups.
3. Teachers will provide each group with a scenario listed below to walk through the 7 steps of understanding the problem to distinguish if this problem impacts their lives.
 - a. Two of your good friends are in a fight.
This fight is about something that happened between them, and you were not involved. Both of your friends are complaining to you about each other and you have managed to stay out of the fight thus far. However, you feel like you should try and mediate the situation now. Should you let them work it out or try and help solve the problem?
 - b. Your younger brother is supposed to do his homework before he plays video games. However, every day he comes home and plays games before he starts his homework. You come home and do your homework first before you do anything else. He always gets what he needs to get completed done, but it bothers you that he does not follow the rules. Do you tell your parents or just mind your own business?
 - c. You are worried that a friend of yours might be struggling with their mental health. You notice that they are not acting themselves lately, forgetting to do their assignments and cancelling plans with friends. Some of your friends think that you are overreacting, but you feel like you should tell someone. Should you get involved and tell a teacher or is this not your problem?
4. Teachers will use the discussion questions to have a whole group discussion about how the students were able to solve the problem.

Discussion Questions:

1. If your group deemed that the problem was not yours to solve, explain why you felt that way.
2. If your group felt like you had to get involved in the problem, explain why you felt you needed to be involved.
3. What did you find the most difficult about your problem?
4. Were there disagreements in your group? How did you come to a consensus?
5. Do you feel like you can decipher whether you should get involved in a problem in the future?

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Teachers will be sure to remind students of the “7 Steps” when they are encountering a difficult situation.
2. Teachers will model the “7 Steps” through their teaching.