



# Finding solutions

## What you'll find out:

- How to spot problems.
- How to find solutions.
- How to communicate with others about problems and issues.

A problem is simply a situation that needs to be dealt with or solved. It can involve people, actions or objects. It could be urgent or something that's been going on for a while. As a young leader, you're someone who can help others by solving problems in your unit. Let's take a look at where to start when a problem crops up.

## Finding problems – detective time

Sometimes problems come up unexpectedly, and you have to deal with them straight away. Other times, you'll spot a potential problem and have more time to think about how to solve it. One way to sort problems out before they become serious is to make sure you chat openly with the girls in your unit. If you know about any issues they're having, you can step in to help fix them.

## Active listening

As leaders, we need to be good listeners. Listening helps us fully understand other people's problems without judgement.

A good listener receives a message from someone else with care and respect. They focus on what the person is saying and make sure they don't get distracted.

Active listening means not only paying attention to what someone is saying but also trying to understand things from their point of view.



Here are some top tips on active listening techniques:

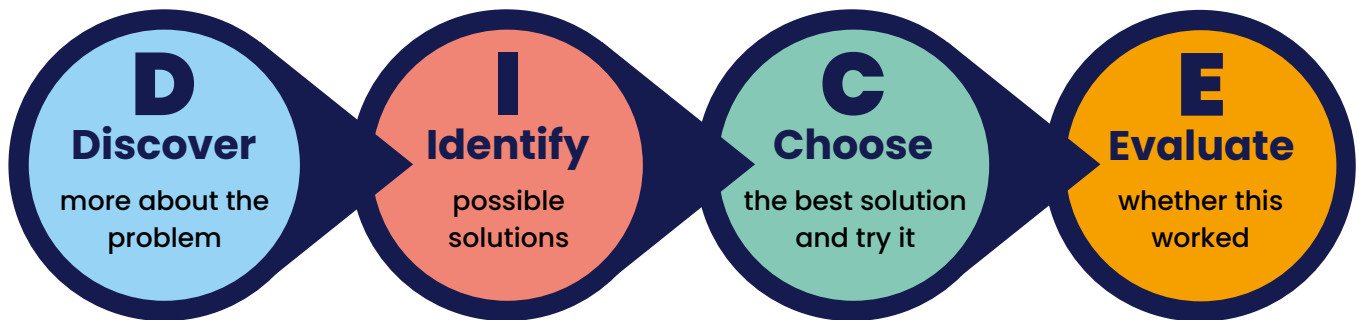


- It sometimes helps to summarise or reflect back what someone has said to you in similar language to make sure you've understood them properly.
- Use positive body language – if everyone's comfortable, make eye contact, lean in or nod. Smile if it feels right, but if it's serious, try to have an open, caring expression.
- Make affirmative noises – these are positive noises like 'mmm' and 'uh huh' which help someone feel heard.

Sometimes it might not be the right time to listen – perhaps you're too busy, or it's not safe. Make sure the person who's trying to tell you something knows this and let them know they can talk to you at a better time.

## DICE – problem solving steps

Whatever the problem is, you can use these 4 steps to help you tackle it.



### Step 1: Discover more about the problem

Try to understand the problem. Think about what's causing it and the effect it's having on your unit. Use active listening techniques as well as your detective skills.

For example, one of your Rainbows is crying, what should you do? Ask another Rainbow? Look to see if she's hurt? The easiest thing to do here is to ask her what's wrong. It turns out to be a simple problem: she wants to sit next to her best friend, but they're in different groups. For you, this seems small, but for her, it's a big deal and you need to take some steps to solve the problem. You could try comforting her, distracting her, or just moving her to a new group.

### Step 2: Identify possible solutions

If a problem is quite big, try breaking it down into smaller steps. Also think about what could happen if you didn't do anything, would the problem get worse?

To help find solutions you could:

- Talk to other people in your unit leadership team.
- Ask the girls in your unit for their ideas.
- Get the girls to act out different solutions and choose the best one.
- Chat with other young leaders to see if they've solved a similar problem before.



### Brownies and Guides

Here's a problem to try to solve. Your Brownies don't want to move up to Guides. There are lots of ways to find solutions. Note down what you could do to solve this problem.



### Step 3: Choose the best solution and try it

Decide which is the best option to solve the problem. To do this, you could think about:

- How quickly the problem needs to be solved.
- How easy it'll be to try your solution.
- What's the most important thing you need to fix?



#### When activities go wrong

Sometimes, activities don't go to plan. In this scenario, you have a group of Guides who are trying to make smoothies, but the blender is missing. This is the last activity they need to do for a skills builder and this evening is the last chance in the term for them to do it.

Out of the solutions below, which do you think is the best solution to try first? Why?

- They do a different activity not from the skills builder and you ask them to catch-up on this activity from home.
- Look at the outcomes of the card and see if they can achieve it by making something different without the blender, like a fruit salad.

Either solution could work, but as there is time set aside for them to do the activity and they have the ingredients, b would be a good solution to try first.

### Step 4: Evaluate if the solution worked

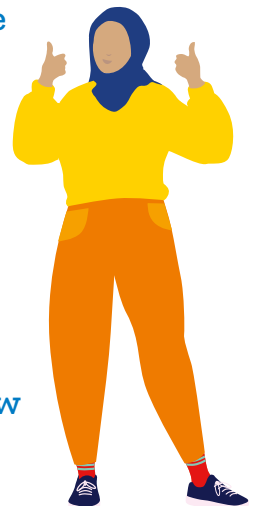
Now check your success.

- Is the problem solved? Great!
- If not – has the situation improved? And are there any other steps you can take to make it better?
- Is there something more you don't know about the problem that needs to be solved?
- What could you do differently? Try again.

#### Who can help?

Sometimes there are problems that you can't solve on your own. Frankie, a young leader with Rainbows, talks about a time she asked for help finding a solution to a problem:

'We were on a Rainbow sleepover and one of the girls approached me to ask what food she was able to eat. I knew she had allergies, but I wasn't sure where her food was. So I asked the leader doing the cooking which foods were safe for her. They had put food aside and had forgotten to serve it with the others. I gave the food to the Rainbow and solved the problem.'



Who could you ask for help finding solutions in your unit?



#### Congratulations!

You're ready to face any problems that might come up in your unit! Now it's time to put those problem-solving skills into action, good luck.