

Problem-solving for Couples

It's normal to experience challenges over the course of your relationship. The key to overcoming your problems is to thoughtfully work through them as a team. Use this worksheet to help identify solutions together.

PART I. IDENTIFY AND NAME IT

1. Briefly define your specific problem. If there are multiple issues, break them down separately.

1.
2.
3.
4.
<p> TIP: Try to avoid assigning blame to a specific person. And use neutral language instead of feelings.</p> <p> SAY THIS: “We have a hard time agreeing about how to spend money, so our discussions often get heated and stay unresolved.”</p> <p> NOT THAT: “We fight about money because she is too worried about debt and he spent too much on his new truck.”</p>

2. On a scale of 1–10, how much does the problem impact your lives today?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Little or no impact</i>					<i>Major impact</i>				
<p> TIP: Think about how often you notice the problem is present and how long it takes you both to move past any issues or conflicts that arise as a result. Use this scale to check in periodically with your partner as you try different solutions.</p>									

3. Find a pattern: List those times when you notice the problem is less stressful.

1.
2.
3.
4.
<p> TIP: Think of those moments or situations when the problem has less of an influence on your relationship. For example, maybe you notice less financial stress during your partner’s deployment. Or maybe you experience less conflict while vacationing together or when you both simply get enough sleep.</p>

4. Set expectations: Write down some specific things in your relationship that would change if the problem was solved.

1.
2.
3.
4.



TIP: Ask yourself: What might an outsider looking in notice is different?

PART II. BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS

1. List what you've done (either together or on your own) to overcome the issue.

1.
2.
3.
4.

2. What are you each willing to do to help solve the problem?

<i>Partner #1</i>	<i>Partner #2</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.



TIP: Come up with ideas you both agree would be helpful, including things you can do on your own and seeking support from a chaplain or therapist.

PART III. MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

- 1. Scan your list and choose 1 or 2 things you're both willing to try first.**
- 2. Pick a specific time where you'll come back together to discuss what's working well and whether you need to try something else on your list.**



TIP: Remember to scale (from 1-10) the impact of your problem to help track your progress.