



Breaking
the Ceiling



Co-funded by
the European Union

AN IDEAL SOLUTION

PROBLEM-SOLVING TRAINING MODULE



euro
pass



SKILL
CONSULTING up
TRAINING

Sfs
Adult
Education
Iceland



INDEPCIE

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Table of Contents

01

Introduction

02

Problem-solving in the professional environment

03

Impacts recognized through gender stereotypes

04

Good practices and tips

05

Conclusions

1.Introduction



Problem Solving is a mental process by which, when faced with a problem, we examine the situation and make assumptions about how to solve it or what is the best way forward.

The most commonly used **problem solving method** involves four steps or stages:

1- Problem definition. This is a very important step, analysing a situation and understanding the real core of the problem is crucial. In this regard, it can be very useful to break down the problem into smaller subproblems and understand how they can be handled and/or solved individually.

2- Creation of alternatives. This is a phase in which, through the information we possess, we try to achieve a plan to manage the problem.

3- Evaluation and selection of alternatives. After considering several alternative solutions, we then select the one best suited to achieve our goals.

4- Implementation of solutions. Having chosen the solution and achieved the implementation plan, it must be implemented, and therefore executed

Although many individuals are naturally more predisposed to problem solving, it should not be forgotten that **this is a skill that can also be acquired**. That is what this **module** is for. It will present one of the most useful methods to cover these four stages and come to effective and timely solutions, along with pointing out the relevance this skills has when it comes to workplace and leadership.

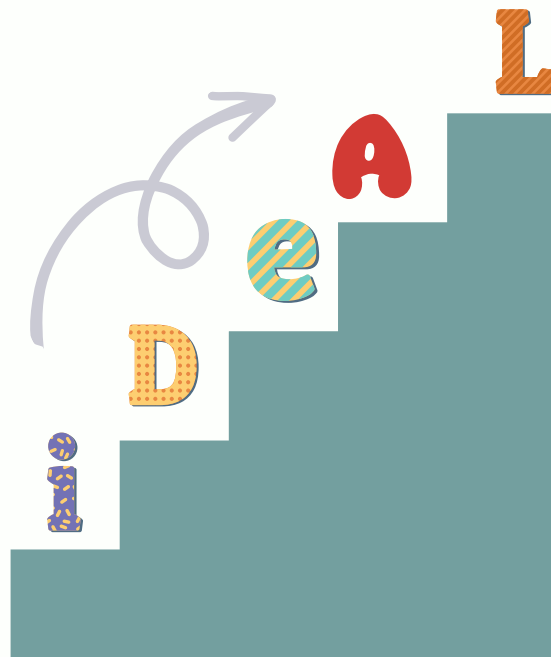
2. The module in the professional environment



The IDEAL Problem-Solving Method

One of the most well-known and respected problem-solving techniques was published in 1984 by Bransford and Stein. It aids diverse learners in identifying a problem, coming up with answers, and proceeding swiftly and effectively in both industry and education.

A set of steps to confidently address an issue can be given to your student by teaching them each stage of the IDEAL model.



I – Identify the Challenge. To effectively address challenges faced by women, especially at work, it's essential to first understand the specific issues at hand.

D – Define an Objective. The second step is to establish clear objectives or goals for problem-solving.

E – Explore Potential Strategies. Once the objectives are set, encourage women in entrepreneurship to brainstorm and explore various strategies.

A – Assess Possible Outcomes & Take Action. After generating a list of potential strategies, the next step is to review the available options and decide on the best course of action.

L – Learn and Adapt. The final step is to encourage reflection and learning from problem-solving attempts, analysing both successful and unsuccessful outcomes to enhance problem-solving abilities.

3. Impacts recognized through gender stereotypes



In 2015, actress Reese Witherspoon, when speaking at the Glamorous Awards, criticised how in mainstream media, women are always portrayed as **helpless** and as having to turn to the man and ask "**What do we do now?**".

But, while this is the portrayal provided by media and mainstream narratives, this is far from the truth. In situations of crisis, women do possess the ability to approach an **intra-personal level of problem-solving**.

However, in the workplace, there are some **negative biases** that affect the position of women and how their superiors/coworkers see them. If a male coworker perceives women in the workplace as calm, gentle, and lacking competitiveness, he may believe that they require protection from the demanding and challenging nature typically associated with the frontline business or professional roles.

This "**benevolent**" **bias** has still negative effects, as a sort of "patronizing" dynamic can harm the promotion of women to more prominent roles, which they won't likely get if they are shielded from real challenges and deemed as "too fragile" for managerial positions.

The aim of this module is to implement strategies of problem-solving at the intra-personal level. **Organisation and mindfulness** are key, especially when dealing with stereotypes and biases in the workplace.

4. Good practices and tips



Here are some problem-solving tips to help you navigate your work life and career.

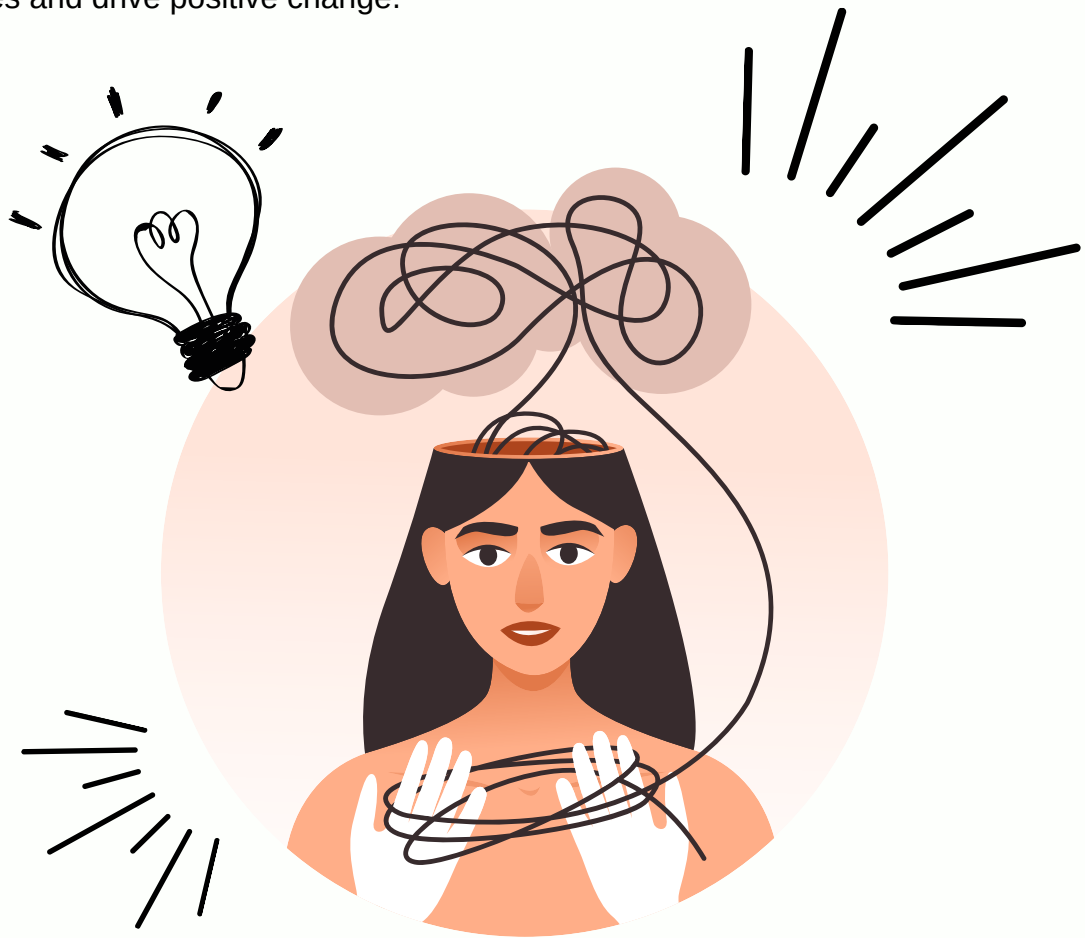
- 1. Embrace diverse perspectives:** Seek input from a wide range of sources, including mentors, industry experts, and fellow women entrepreneurs. Embracing diverse perspectives can lead to innovative solutions and help uncover unique insights and opportunities.
- 2. Cultivate a supportive network:** Build a strong network of supportive individuals, including other women entrepreneurs, who can provide guidance, encouragement, and valuable connections. Engage with networking events, online communities, and mentorship programs specifically designed for women to access resources and receive feedback on your problem-solving approaches.
- 3. Foster a growth mindset:** Adopt a growth mindset that welcomes challenges as learning opportunities. Emphasize the importance of resilience, perseverance, and continuous improvement in problem-solving. Believe in your ability to learn and grow from every obstacle encountered.
- 4. Prioritize ongoing learning:** Place a strong emphasis on continuous learning and professional development. Stay updated with industry trends, attend workshops and conferences, and seek out educational resources tailored to women in entrepreneurship. This commitment to learning will enhance your problem-solving capabilities.
- 5. Embrace collaboration:** Foster a collaborative mindset by seeking opportunities to collaborate with other women entrepreneurs and professionals in your industry. Collaborative problem-solving allows for the sharing of diverse expertise, experiences, and resources, leading to more effective solutions.



5. Conclusions

In summary, the **IDEAL** method of problem solving offers a framework for women in the workplace to address the challenges they face and drive positive change. By leveraging problem-solving skills, women can redefine traditional norms, break down barriers, and create a more inclusive and empowering work environment. Through their efforts, women can inspire future generations, promote diversity, and shape a brighter future for all individuals in the workplace.

In the context of women in the workplace, the IDEAL method can be particularly valuable. Women have faced numerous challenges and barriers in professional settings, including gender bias, inequality, and limited opportunities for advancement. However, by applying the IDEAL method, women can address these obstacles and drive positive change.



References



- Spiro, R, Feltovich, P., Jacobson, M. & Coulson, R. (1992). Cognitive Flexibility, Constructivism, and Hypertext: Random Access Instruction for Advanced Knowledge Acquisition in Ill-Structured Domains.
- Dheer, R., Lenartowicz, T. (2019). Cognitive flexibility: Impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Journal of Vocational Behavior.
- Dweck, C. (2017). Mindset Revised And Updated: Changing The Way You Think To Fulfil Your Potential.
- Warner, J. (2012). Coaching Process Models. Retrieved from Ready to Manage. <https://blog.readytomanage.com/coaching-process-models>

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Authors

© May 2023 – EBB GmnH, Step-by-Step, VAEV R&D, INDEPCIE, Skill-Up Srl., SVERONIS & SIA O.E.

This publication was carried out with the financial support of the European Commission under Erasmus + Project “2022-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000085146”

Attribution, share in the same condition



(CC BY-SA): You are free to Share- copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format and Adapt – remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms under the following terms:

Attribution – you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

ShareAlike- If you remix, transform or build upon the material, you must distribute your contribution under the same license as the original.

No additional restrictions – you may not apply legal terms.