

# Dealing with problems in a structured way

## *Coping with stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic*

All the issues you might need to address during this pandemic situation may feel overwhelming. It can be useful to identify which things are actually problems that need to be solved or addressed, and which are just worries that are not necessarily grounded in reality. Here are some steps you can take to resolve issues that come up for you.

1. Take some time to identify what you feel are problems. As we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, planning for self-isolation or quarantine might be something you identify. What concerns are causing you stress or anxiety?
2. Break each problem down into smaller parts, so you don't feel so overwhelmed. Think about what parts of the issue are most immediate and urgent: what needs to be done now, what can be tackled tomorrow, and what can be delayed or even dropped completely because it doesn't really matter in the long run.
3. Brainstorm some options that can help address the problem. List all possible options.
4. Identify the pros and cons of each option.
5. Narrow down to the best option you have.
6. Put the solution into practice and see how it goes. Did it solve the problem? Did it help a bit? Do you need to adjust the solution or consider another solution from your list?
7. Ask others how they see your "problem"? If they agree that it is a real problem, ask for feedback on your solution.
8. Consider writing things down—putting this process down on paper. You can cross off tasks as you do them. This can help you feel you are getting things resolved and can combat feelings of helplessness.
9. If you may need to plan for self-isolation or quarantine, do so ahead of time. Here are some resources that may be helpful:
  - **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
  - **Conference Board of Canada**