

From Impossible to I’m Possible

*(A Focus on Problem-Solving Skills)*

**Purpose: This activity has students work through the basics of problem solving—the idea that we can choose to reframe any situation and find a solution to lessen the impact of the problem or eliminate the problem. Problem-solving abilities are crucial to prevention and skill building.**

**Est. time: 30 minutes (time may be added to practice individually or in groups)**

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**2. Introduce the activity: *Today we will be learning more about coping skills, specifically on ‘From Impossible to I’m Possible,’ a new approach to problem solving. Please think about a particular problem that you would like help solving. We will use the worksheet to address your problem.***

**3. *First, write down on a blank sheet of paper some information about a problem that you may have been facing for some time. Nothing too serious—unless you really want to. We’ll be working with partners a little later and I realize you might not be comfortable sharing certain things. Take one minute to choose the problem and write it down.***

**4. *Next, create at least three different ways to rephrase the problem starting with 'How.' For example, if your problem were that you’re always feeling stressed, you could write: How can I feel more relaxed? How can I change my thoughts? How can I organize my day differently so I feel more calm?***

**5. *From the questions that you wrote down, select the one that you think is really the most important or most relevant question the problem you’re facing.***

**6. *Now that you've identified your rephrased your problem, please find a partner.***

**7. *Partners will generate ideas together for addressing each of your problems.***

**8. *When you are first trying to generate ideas, come up with as many as you can. Don’t judge the idea as being “good” or “bad” or “useful” or “not useful.” Be as creative as you can and think as big as you can. You can build on each other's ideas. This is truly brainstorming. Take turns generating a list of ideas as you use divergent thinking for each of your problems.* (allow for 5 minutes for this part of the exercise)**

**9. *Now look at your list of options and choose the one idea you like the most. The final idea should be a S.M.A.R.T. idea—specific (realistic and significant), measurable (motivating and meaningful), achievable (attainable), relevant (reasonable and helpful), and time-based (time sensitive).* (allow for 5 minutes of convergent thinking)**

**10. *Once you have chosen your favorite idea, write it down on your paper.***

**11. *Now you’ll create a plan of action. On your paper, write down the list of steps that you will take to complete your solution. What will you do? By when? How will you know when you’ve made progress or completed? Be sure to include the due dates, with at least one action step set to take place within 24 hours. You can also enlist the help of your partner to help hold you accountable if you need it.***

**Opportunity for Discussion: If you’d like, students can be asked to share with the larger group what they have written on their papers. Ask how the process was helpful in finding potential new solutions. Could this be a useful coping tool (reframing failure as a lesson on the way to success). You can even entertain those who don’t find this useful. Why? What would have helped them or how could it have gone differently for them?**