

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN  
WITH CHRONIC PAIN

# MY STORY: BRIGHT IDEAS Workbook



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## The Bright IDEAS System for Problem Solving



**I** dentify the problem

**D** efine your options

**E** valuate your options

**A** ct out your choice

## **Worksheet 1: Optimism / Positive Problem Attitude**

In this system, the first step is adopting the frame of mind that you believe and understand that you CAN cope successfully. We call this OPTIMISM. It is an important tool you will use to make the system work for you. It is so important that we have put it in the center of the IDEAS system and we use the word “bright” (intelligent, clever, auspicious, promising) to remind you of the positive outlook that is essential for effective problem solving.

### **MY STORY:**

**Write a few positive self-statements to help you achieve and keep a positive orientation:**

## Worksheet 2: Automatic Thoughts and Feelings

The **first step** is to identify the problem, your feelings about it, and your automatic thoughts. Use the table below to capture this information. The **second step** to clearly identify the problem that you want to address now. Draw a star beside the problem that you are choosing to try and solve.

<i>Problem, Conflict, or Decision</i>	<i>Your Feelings</i>	<i>Your Automatic Thoughts</i>

### Worksheet 3: Problems To Be Solved

**Chronic pain is a difficult experience for everyone involved. Your child has been dealing with his or her own challenges, and in turn, your family has also been impacted by the pain. Here are some common problems that other parents have told us they have experienced when their child has chronic pain. Check off the problems you and your family deal with.**

#### Child function and behavior

- ☒ I can't get my child to go to school or to other activities
- ☐ My child won't do his physical therapy
- ☐ My child doesn't leave the house anymore
- ☒ I'm worried my child won't have any friends
- ☐ I'm worried my child won't graduate
- ☐ I can't get my child to do his chores

#### Parent distress

- ☐ I worry more than ever now
- ☐ I can't seem to think straight
- ☐ I have problems making decisions
- ☐ I have difficulty talking to my friends
- ☐ Most of my friends shun me
- ☐ I worry about how much to push my child
- ☐ I'm worried that my child will never get better
- ☐ I think I'm a terrible parent because I should be able to help my child
- ☐ I can't take much more of this
- ☐ I don't have any time to myself
- ☐ I feel helpless
- ☐ My life feels like it is falling apart
- ☐ I feel sad all the time
- ☐ I have trouble sleeping

#### Family and marital

- ☐ Treating my child's pain is becoming a financial burden
- ☐ I'm worried I'm going to lose my job
- ☐ Our family doesn't get along well any more
- ☐ We aren't talking a lot lately
- ☐ This situation is putting strain on my marriage
- ☐ I have no time for my other children / my spouse
- ☐ There is too little affection between us
- ☐ There is a change in family roles

#### Interactions with health care or school system

- ☐ I can't get the information I want
- ☐ I can't seem to communicate with the medical team
- ☐ I can't seem to communicate with the school staff
- ☐ I get nervous asking questions
- ☐ I don't like feeling out of control
- ☐ I get very angry waiting for so long to talk to the doctor for just a few minute

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**Write down the problems you would like to work on solving. You can write down ones from the above list and/or other problems you and your family may be experiencing.**

**Problem #1:**

**Problem #2:**

**Problem #3:**

**Problem #4:**

**Problem #5:**

## Worksheet 4: Problem Analysis Chart

Describe the overall problem:

Choose a specific problem part and analyze it by answering these questions:

- Why did I choose this problem?
- Where does this problem occur?
- Who else is involved as part of the problem?
- Why does the problem occur?
- How do I respond and feel when the problem occurs?
- How optimistic am I about solving this problem?

**Not at all  
optimistic**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Very  
Optimistic**

## Worksheet 5: Brainstorming and Defining Options (Part A)

Alternatives (Be creative!)	Will this solution solve the problem?	Can I really carry it out?	What are the overall effects on <b>me</b> (short and long term)?	What are the overall effects on <b>others</b> (short and long term)?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
	Rate (+ = generally positive, - = generally negative, <b>0</b> = neutral)			

## Worksheet 5: Brainstorming and Defining Options (Part B)

Next, **evaluate** the options you came up with and decide which is best for you. Most importantly, you have to decide what the barriers are. Are there things on your list that you are **not** willing to do? Are there things that you think **probably won't work**? Are there things that you can change without more trouble than it's worth? This is a *cost-benefit analysis*. Is the cost (what you have to change) worth the benefit (the problem getting better or becoming less of an issue)?



### Worksheet 6: Possible Solutions and Potential Barriers

<i>Possible Solution</i>	<i>Barriers</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

## **Worksheet 7: Action and Results Chart**

The next step is to start to **act** on your plan. After you've chosen the solution you're going to try, mentally create a detailed action plan on specifically how you are going to implement your choice. Write down your action plan and try it out!

**Action Plan:**

**Action Tried:**

***Results – See if it worked:***

***How satisfied are you with the result?***

**Not  
Satisfied**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Very  
Satisfied**

***Step 1: Optimism/Positive Problem Attitude:***

***Step 2: Identify:***

***Step 3: Define Options:***

***Step 4: Evaluate Options:***

***Step 5: Act:***

***Step 6: See how it went:***

***How satisfied are you with the result?***

**Not  
Satisfied**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Very  
Satisfied**