

The Community Problem-Solving Dialogue at Work: Strategies in Action

<p>Facilitator: Let's look at Decision Point #2, Scene 1, where Melissa is perplexed and feels a training overload. What are some <i>options</i> here? <i>What could be done</i> to change the situation for the better? Anyone have any <i>ideas</i>?</p>	<p>The facilitator is using the strategy Options and Outcomes here -- what she is looking for are specific actions plans which could really change Melissa's situation.</p>
<p>Group Member 1: Melissa is trained in more than technology. The preparation includes a toolbox of strategies that enable her to solve problems, negotiate with her coworkers and supervisor, and manage the extra life demands created by poverty.</p>	<p>The group member has offered a strong option for action.</p>
<p>Facilitator: So you are suggesting that Melissa be trained in a different way -- what are some possible <i>outcomes</i> of this option?</p>	<p>The facilitator calls for outcomes of this specific suggested option. The outcome strategy tests options for their feasibility.</p>
<p>Group Member 2: If Melissa is able to solve her own problems, she'll be able to deal with them as they come up or even avoid them! She'll also be able to understand more options and outcomes for her actions instead of just acting and reacting.</p>	<p>Another group member feels that this option will have a good outcome.</p>
<p>Facilitator: So this type of training will help Melissa to solve her own problems. <i>Has anything like this ever happened in your own experience?</i></p>	<p>The facilitator asks for the Story Behind the Story, which backs up opinions and ideas with real world experience.</p>
<p>Group Member 2: I know so many young women who deal with problems as they come up instead of trying to avoid them or solve them for good. Many others don't even try to solve problems anymore -- they just keep losing jobs or apartments instead of figuring out why it is happening and trying to stop it. Problem-solving skills would help these young women so much!</p>	<p>The group member's Story Behind the Story shows that her opinion comes from grounded experience with real women like Melissa.</p>
<p>Facilitator: So one outcome is that Melissa will be able to solve her own problems. <i>Are there other outcomes</i> which could result from this option?</p>	<p>The facilitator asks for other outcomes for this option -- will a person with different experience have something else to say about this option?</p>
<p>Group Member C: Even though Melissa is trained in problem solving strategies, she may be too afraid to use them. Bosses don't always want employees who are powerful in their own right -- they want their employees to follow orders and to look to them for advice. Melissa solving her own problems may seem to her like a risky behavior.</p>	<p>A third group member offers a very different outcome for the same option. This outcome doesn't mean that the option is unworkable -- but it does mean that working out this option is more complicated than we may have first thought.</p>
<p>Facilitator: Do we have any <i>other ideas for options</i> for this Decision Point? Are there any <i>rivals</i> to this first option?</p>	<p>The facilitator now asks for a rival to the first option. Rivals don't necessarily replace good options -- they qualify them by adding different perspectives. Good rivals make options more sensitive possible problems, and thus more likely to work.</p>
<p>Group Member B: The welfare to work program performs a skill inventory at the end of the program. A skill inventory would let the trainers know the gaps in Melissa's knowledge. They could then retrain her in the areas where she is weak, avoiding problems with Mr. Snyder during those first few days of work.</p>	<p>Group Member B offers an option that could work well in conjunction with Option #1.</p>