Solving Problems

**Instrument:** Solving Problems Survey

**Scale/Subscale Name:** Solving Problems

**Source:** Youth Life Skills Evaluation project at Penn State. Instrument also cited by the CYFAR Life Skills Project at Texas A&M University.

**Developers:** Barkman, S., & Machtmes, K.

**Year:** 2002

**Target Audience(s):** Youth aged 12-18 years

**Language other than English available:** No

**Type:** Behavior

**Data collected:** Quantitative

**Data collection format:** Self report – Pre/post

**Reading Level:** Flesch-Kincaid Grade level: 5.3

**Existence of test/technical manuals, user guides, supplemental materials:** Instrument and tips on administration available online at: http://www.humanserviceresearch.com/youthlifeskillsevaluation/

**Level of training necessary for administration/scoring/interpretation:** None

**Widespread Use/Professional Endorsements:** Recommended by the CYFAR Life Skills Project, Youth Development Initiative, Texas A&M University.

**Cost of Use:** There are no costs associated with the use of this instrument. The authors request that you contact them, give full acknowledgement on the surveys and reports, provide an electronic copy of the data set when available, and send a copy of the report/article that is produced from the data.
Description:
This 24-item scale assesses youth’s problem-solving ability by examining the frequency of use of the following skills that are needed to engage in problem-solving:

1. Identify/Define the Problem
2. Analyze Possible Causes or Assumptions
3. Identify Possible Solutions
4. Select Best Solution
5. Implement the Solution
6. Evaluate Progress and Revise as Needed

Psychometrics:
Information on reliability and validity are provided below. If information on a particular psychometric was not found, it is indicated as “no information provided.” It should be noted that this is not necessarily an indication of a lack of reliability or validity within a particular scale/instrument, but rather a lack of rigorous testing, for various reasons, by the developers or other researchers.

Reliability: A correlation of at least .80 is suggested for at least one type of reliability as evidence; however, standards range from .5 to .9 depending on the intended use and context for the instrument.

- **Internal Consistency:** No information provided
- **Inter-rater reliability:** No information provided
- **Test-Retest:** No information provided

Validity: The extent to which a measure captures what it is intended to measure.

- **Content/Face Validity:** This survey is based on Lerner’s 5-C’s, a well established and respected live skills model.
- **Criterion Validity:** No information provided
- **Construct Validity:** No information provided
CONSTRUCT: Problem Solving

Scale Name: Solving Problems

Developers: Susan Barkman and Krisanna Machtmes, Purdue University

Scale: 0=Never, 1=Rarely, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Always

1. When I have a problem, I first figure out exactly what the problem is.
2. I try to get all the facts before trying to solve a problem.
3. When I have a problem, I look at what is and what should be.
4. I look ahead and try to prevent problems before they happen.
5. When faced with a problem, I wait to see if it will go away. (R)
6. I look at a problem from many different viewpoints (my own, my friends’, my parents’, etc.)
7. I keep an open mind about what caused a problem.
8. When faced with a problem, I try to determine what caused it.
9. When solving a problem, I do the first thing that comes into my head.(R)
10. I look at the likely results for each possible solution.
11. When solving a problem, I look at all possible solutions.
12. When I have a problem, I do what I have done in the past to solve it.
13. I try to look at the long term results of each possible solution.
14. When comparing solutions, I look how each solution will affect the people involved.
15. When I am solving a problem, I choose the easiest solution.(R)
16. I compare each possible solution with the others to find the best one to solve my problem.
17. After putting my solution into action, I forget about it.
18. After choosing a solution, I put it into action.
19. After selecting a solution, I think about it for a while before I put it into action.
20. I tend to doubt my decision after it has been made.
21. If my solution is not working, I will try another solution.
22. Once I carry out a solution, I never look back.
23. When a solution is not working, I try to figure out what is wrong.
24. Once I have solved a problem, I step back to see how my solution is working.

Scoring:
- Reverse scoring (4=never, 0=always) for items indicated with a (R).
- Sum all item ratings together.
- Higher scores indicate greater skill at problem solving.