



# SODAS

Social Problem Solving and Decision Making Techniques

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# SODAS

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- A decision making and problem solving model
- Situation
- Options
- Disadvantages
- Advantages
- Solution



# Objectives of SODAS

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- The person will be able to
  - Think through a situation before acting
  - Learn how to adapt/change choices to become more realistic and beneficial
  - More likely create positive outcomes
  - More likely to improve quality of life
  - Become empowered and self confident
  - Get along better with others
  - Develop and maintain positive relationships

# Application of SODAS: Preparation



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- Make the person feel comfortable.
- Introduce person to the 5 steps of the SODAS process.
- Explain how using structured problem solving and decision making can benefit the person.
- Connect the process to the person's strengths and future goals.

# Application of SODAS: Situation



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- Facilitator helps the person to describe the situation as clearly and completely as possible before moving on to identifying options.



# Application of SODAS: Situation

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- Objectives:
  - Make the situation as clear and behavioral as possible.
  - Summarize the emerging description of the situation along the way so the person can react, confirm or correct the practitioner's perceptions



# Application of SODAS: Situation

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- Questions for defining the situation
  - What is the problem?
  - What are the feelings involved in the situation?  
What do you feel? How do family members feel?  
How do others feel?
  - What stops you from...?
  - How do you feel when...?
  - What happens after you...?
  - What exactly was said when...?



# Application of SODAS: Situation

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- Turn a problem statement into a goal statement





# Application of SODAS: Options

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- Facilitator helps the person to identify as many options as possible
- Facilitator must remain non-judgmental and avoid discussing the merit of each option until all options are identified

# Application of SODAS: Options



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- Solicit as many options as possible
- Reinforce and encourage the person to come up with ideas
- Suggest options or combinations of options to provide a range of choices
- Accept all options for evaluation at a later time
- Be non-judgmental

# Application of SODAS: Options



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- Questions for generating options:
  - What could be done to solve the problem?
  - How can you achieve your goals?
  - What do you want to do?
  - What else could you do?
  - What about...?
  - We have \_\_\_ on the list. Might you want to consider \_\_\_\_\_?



# Application of SODAS: Advantages and Disadvantages

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- Facilitator helps the person to identify advantages and disadvantages of each option
- Begin with the advantages of the option before exploring disadvantages

# Application of SODAS:

## Questions to Explore

## Advantages and Disadvantages

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- What are the likely benefits of this option?
- Why are those things important to you?
- What are the likely drawbacks or disadvantages to those options?
- What potential danger or harm for you could result from this option?

# Application of SODAS:

## Questions to Explore

## Advantages and Disadvantages

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- How might your family or friends feel or be affected by this option?
- What might happen for you as a result of their feelings or the impact on them?
- How about other people?
- What might happen right away? How about a week or month from now?

# Application of SODAS:

## Questions to Explore

## Advantages and Disadvantages

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- What if you changed the option a little bit?
- Might you want to combine the best of these two options?



# Application of SODAS: Solutions

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- Facilitator guides the person in selecting an option that is safe and possible to implement
- Be sure to guide, not direct, the process to ensure that the option is owned by the person.
- Be non-judgmental





# Application of SODAS: Solutions

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- Questions to help selection of solution:
  - Remember that situation you told me about in the beginning. Will this option solve that situation?
  - How feasible is that option?
  - Can you pull it off?
  - Who, what, where, and how re: actual implementation of the solution?



# Application of SODAS: Solutions

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- Modeling and role playing can help the person and supports to practice the solution



# Application of SODAS: Follow up

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- Facilitator works with person to evaluate and problem solve
  - Assist in preparing to implement a solution
  - Establish concrete steps and timelines
  - Praise any efforts to follow through
  - Provide support and encouragement
  - Encourage persistence



# Application of SODAS: Follow up

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- Facilitator works with person to evaluate and problem solve
  - Help the person to deal with unanticipated consequences or actions of others
  - Help the person to practice skills needed to implement the solution



# Strategies for Common Problems

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- The person refuses to take part in brainstorming
  - Teach them how to brainstorm
  - Provide descriptive praise for any attempts to participate
  - Ask direct questions
  - Provide rationale for how generating options might benefit the person directly

# Strategies for Common Problems



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- The person refuses to take part in brainstorming
  - Find another time to work with the person when they are not so stressed
  - Find another topic to problem solve at another time
  - As a last resort, try providing some options as examples



# Strategies for Common Problems

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- Maintaining non-judgmental openness
  - Acknowledge each option, no matter how unreasonable it seems to you
  - Avoid lecturing
  - Do not approve or condone any option
  - Do not begin the evaluation process until all options are listed
  - Watch your body language

# Strategies for Common Problems



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- Acknowledging advantages of options that you think are unfavorable
  - “Okay – that is an advantage. Can you think of any others?”
  - Avoid countering with a negative consequence
  - Learn what reinforces negative behavior





# Strategies for Common Problems

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- Dealing with harmful options selected as solutions
  - Discuss the potential harmful consequences
  - Dissuade them from engaging in behavior that could be harmful to themselves or someone else
  - Inform them if you have to break confidentiality
  - Follow up with supervisor and other key players if needed
  - Adhere to regulations and state laws