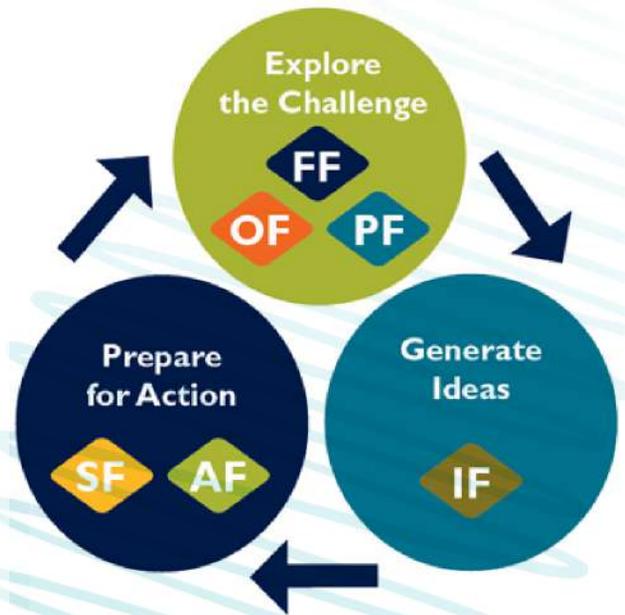


CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

“The uncreative mind can spot wrong answers, but it takes a creative mind to spot wrong questions”

Creative Problem Solving (CPS) is a proven method for approaching a problem or a challenge in an imaginative and innovative way. It's a tool that helps people re-define the problems they face, come up with breakthrough ideas and then take action on these new ideas. Alex Osborn and Sidney Parnes conducted extensive research on the steps that are involved when people solve problems, the result of which is the following 6 steps that are broken down into 3 stages:



At the same time that CPS is a structured process, it's also a very flexible one. When you begin to use and internalize the CPS process, you find that it's cyclical. You begin to see how to move from step to step, and how to jump back and forth between steps. When CPS becomes part of your own way of thinking and working, you can use one step at a time, as you need it, when you need it. Once you understand the fundamentals of CPS, you can adapt this process to every situation you encounter, thereby realizing its power.

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Objective Finding - Identify Goal, Wish or Challenge
This could be a wish or a goal. It might be the initial dissatisfaction or a desire that opens the door to using the CPS process.



Fact Finding - *Gather Data*
Assess and review all the data that pertains to the situation at hand. Who's involved, what's involved, when, where, and why it's important. Make a list of the facts and information, as well as the more visceral hunches, feelings, perceptions, assumptions and gossip around the situation. In this step, all the data is taken into consideration to review the objective and begin to innovate.



Problem Finding - *Clarify the Problem*
In this step, explore the facts and data to find all the problems and challenges inherent in the situation, and all the opportunities they represent. This is about making sure you're focusing on the right problem. It is possible to come up with the right answer to the wrong problem. Re-define what you want or what's stopping you.



Idea Finding - *Generate Ideas*
Generating ideas is much more than brainstorming. During this step, be vigilant about deferring judgment and coming up with wild, outrageous, out-of-the-box ideas. This is where you explore ideas that are possible solutions and have the most fun. It's also where you need to stretch to make connections, take risks, and try new combinations to find potentially innovative solutions.



Solution Finding - *Select and Strengthen Solutions*
First, try to strengthen and improve the best ideas generated. Next, generate the criteria that needs to be considered to evaluate the ideas for success. Apply that criteria to the top ideas and decide which are most likely to solve the redefined problem. The best idea needs to meet criteria that makes it actionable before it becomes the solution. A creative idea is not really useful if it won't be



Acceptance Finding - *Plan for Action*
In this step, look at who's responsible, what has to be done by when, and what resources are available in order to realize this idea as a full-fledged, activated solution.

