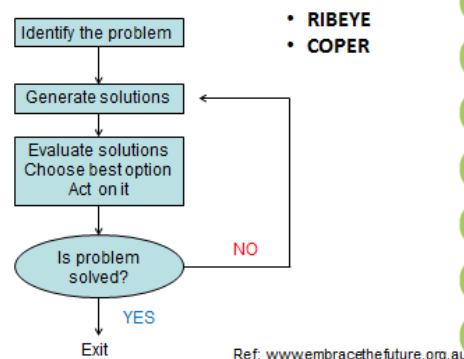## Problem Solving Technique for Youths (RIBEYE/COPER)
(v2.01 2017)

Good problem solving skills are an important protective factor for young people. Some youths may have good problem solving skills, but may not be able to solve problems due to not thinking that their efforts will be successful. Poor problem solving skills may increase risk for both depression and suicide for young people as it can make them feel more hopeless. Spending time with a young person to help them learn to work through a problem in a logical way can help give them hope and teach them new ways to approach problems that can often feel overwhelming. It can also help them find alternatives to self-harm or suicidal behaviours as a way to solve the problem.

Understand the problem

A Key step to solving any problem is to define and understand it. Help the young person to really understand what the problem is and what is bothering them about the problem. Asking them what they would like to be different and why they would like it to be different can be a helpful step with this.

Use a problem-solving strategy

Two commonly used problem-solving strategies that can be used easier are RIBEYE and COPER. These are explained below. It's important that when introducing a young person to a new skill that you explain to them, why the skill is helpful and use it to work through an example with them. It will be even more effective if you can do this with a real life problem and use it several times that they have confidence in the skill and their ability to use it. Solving the problem for them won't help them develop the skills they need to use the tool in the future.

RIBEYE

R is for relax as it is much harder to think clearly about a problem and ways to solve it when you are stressed and upset (youths often attempt to problem solve in stressed state)

I is for identifying the problem clearly – what is the issue and how would things be different if the issue wasn't there anymore

B is for brainstorming alternative solutions and write down all ideas even if they don't think they'd work at the time (encourage them to explore beyond initial options considered. Try to find at least three solutions where possible)

E is for evaluating each possible solution (pros and cons, how likely it is to work)

Y is for saying yes to one solution

E is for evaluating the outcome and reward success (encourage them to self acknowledge they attempted it and/or succeeded)

COPER

COPER is similar to RIBEYE, but some people find it easier to remember and use.

C is for current conditions/situation: what is the current condition or situation that is causing you a problem? Make sure you define it clearly so that you understand what you are trying to change.

O is for options: what are your options in this situation? What could you do to make it better or different? Where would you get help for this?

P is for plan: how are you going to make these changes? What will you need and when will you do it?

E is for execute the plan: let's do it! Put the plan into action

R is for reflect: think about what went well and what didn't go so well. What would you do differently next time?

If you would like more help with problem-solving strategies or more resources. Please contact your clinical advisor.

Reference

Reinecke, M., Dattilio, F. & Freeman, A. (2003). Cognitive Therapy for Children and Adolescents (2nd Ed.). Guildford Press: New York.