

“IsR³?” - A Problem-Solving Algorithm

In attempting to address a challenging situation, it may be helpful to spend some time, even a little bit of time, using this problem-solving method to:

- assess what you think you know about the situation, and
- come up with constructive ways of dealing with it.

Apply the method to plan how to deal with a situation, and to think whether you need more information.

I. Issues/interests – What do you see as the problem or concern? Why is this problem or concern important?

II. Stakeholders – Whose interests are at stake? Who needs to be involved to address the situation?

Success depends on identifying a) your own major interests and b) those of other stakeholders who will be most affected.

III. Rules/regulations/policies/procedures/common practices and norms. Which of these may help or hinder attempts at resolution?

IV. Resources – What resources (e.g., staff, funding) are available to help address the situation?

V. Responsible Options – Brainstorm options. Reality test the pros and cons of each option.

Success may depend on your brainstorming widely enough. If all alternatives seem inadequate, can you continue to search?