

Home Health Aide Training

Module 5. The Exploring Options Approach to Solving Problems

Goals

The goal of this module is to prepare participants to apply a person-centered approach to solving problems.

Time

2 hours

Activities	Teaching Methods	Time
1. The Exploring Options Approach to Solving Problems	Large-group discussion, interactive presentation, and brainstorming	1 hour and 5 minutes
2. Practice Applying the Approach	Small-group work and large-group discussion	55 minutes

Supplies

- Flip chart, markers, and tape
- Paper and pencils
- **Teaching Tools—Exploring Options Worksheet: Helen and Bertha Jackson**

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Learner's Book

1. Bertha Jackson and Helen, the Home Health Aide
2. The Exploring Options Approach
3. Key Issues for Solving Problems
4. Situations for Exploring Options

Worksheets

- Worksheet 1. Exploring Options

Handouts

- Handout 1. Summary of Key Information

Advance Preparation

Review all the training instructions and learner's materials for this module. Note that icons are used to remind the trainer of the following:



When you are *presenting* or covering Key Content *in the discussion*. (Key Content is also addressed in the Learner's Book and the handouts, but we use the "key" icon only when it is covered elsewhere in the learning process.)



When it is important to ask a particular question to get participants' input.



When it is time to refer to the Learner's Book.



When it is time to distribute a worksheet.



When it is time to distribute and discuss a handout.

Copy all worksheets and handouts for participants.

Gather all necessary supplies and equipment.

Please note that the Key Content is meant to be background information for the trainer. **DO NOT READ OUT LOUD TO PARTICIPANTS.**

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Activity 1. The Exploring Options Approach to Solving Problems

Prepare the following flip chart page:

- “Exploring Options to Solve Problems” (Step 3)

Review **Teaching Tools, Activity 1—Exploring Options Worksheet: Helen and Mrs. Jackson**, as preparation for facilitating discussions.

Activity 2. Practice Applying the Approach

No advance preparation needed.

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Activity 1. The Exploring Options Approach **1 hour and 5 minutes**

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

Describe how to explore options in order to solve problems.

List some of the key issues to consider in problem solving.

Explain why it is important to consider more than one person's perspective in problem solving.

Explain why it is important to consider more than one option to solving a problem.



Key Content

- For home health aides, difficulties arise daily, if not every hour! Workers are challenged by the demands of their job, by meeting clients' needs, and by the busy pace that comes along with the work. Sometimes these are simply unexpected situations to adjust to in the moment; other times they are problems that need to be addressed in order to support the health and well-being of home health aides as well as clients.
- There are many approaches to problem solving, but it is important for home health aides to use an approach that reflects the commitment to person-centered services on which this curriculum is based.


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- The “exploring options” approach to problem solving is based on the principle of respecting the viewpoints and needs of everyone affected by the problem. The process involves identifying the key issues for each person involved in the situation, identifying more than one possible solution to the problem (options), and considering which option (or combination of options) addresses the key issues best.
- Identifying more than one option for solving a problem allows a person to consider the relative benefits of each option and choose the one that is most likely to succeed. In addition, it provides a “back-up plan” in case the first option does not work as hoped.

Activity Steps

Large-Group Discussion—15 minutes

1. **Introduce activity.** Explain that participants will now consider how to deal with problems in a work situation. There are many approaches to problem solving. To help learn about some of the different ways participants approach problem solving, the group will start with a case scenario. Ask participant to turn to **1. Bertha Jackson and Helen, the Home Health Aide** in their Learner’s Book. Ask participants to read along with you while you read the scenario out loud.
2. **Brainstorm.** Ask:

 *What would you do if you were the home health aide in this situation and why?*


Keep the discussion brief; encourage different solutions; and do not comment on the validity of anyone’s ideas.

Teaching Tip

Remember that with brainstorming, anyone’s idea of a solution is acceptable and the more the better! The point of this discussion is to assess how participants currently approach problem-solving and to demonstrate that there can be more than one possible solution.

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Interactive Presentation—25 minutes

3.  **Introduce the “exploring options” approach to problem solving.** Thank everyone for their ideas. Now explain that using this same problem, you will demonstrate the “exploring options” approach to problem solving. This approach is based on the principle of respecting the viewpoints and needs of everyone affected by the problem. The process involves identifying more than one possible solution to the problem (options) and considering which option (or combination of options) best meets everyone’s needs. Refer to **2. The Exploring Options Approach** in the Learner’s Book. Then post the prepared flip chart and briefly explain each step.

Flip Chart

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>EXPLORING OPTIONS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clearly state the problem2. List who is involved3. List the key issues for each person involved in this situation4. Brainstorm options to address each of the key issues5. Think about what will happen as a result of choosing each option6. Choose the option that best addresses the key issues

4. **Revisit the case scenario.** Explain that we are going to use this approach to look again at the situation with Helen and Mrs. Jackson. Ask:

 *What is the problem?* [Answers: Mrs. Jackson was not getting good nutrition for breakfast while Helen was away; Mrs. Jackson gave misleading information to the other aides; and the uneaten candies are attracting ants]

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Who is involved in or affected by this situation? [Answers: Mrs. Jackson, Helen, Helen’s supervisor, and the other aides]



5. **Identify key issues.** Refer to **3. Key Issues for Solving Problems** in the Learner’s Book. Make two columns on a flip chart page and write the heading “Key Issues” over the left column. Read through section **3**, briefly explain each issue, and ask participants to identify which of these issues would apply to this situation. Write their responses in the left column. Note that, depending on the situation, some issues will be more important than others and some may not even be relevant.

Flip Chart

<u>KEY ISSUES</u>	

Teaching Tips

For the discussions that follow, **Teaching Tools, Activity 1—Exploring Options Worksheet: Helen and Bertha Jackson** gives sample ideas that fit this case scenario. These are not necessarily the “right” responses. Be open to other ideas from participants and use the **Teaching Tools** to help you ask questions that will make sure key issues are addressed during the discussions.

For example, in this step, it is sometimes difficult to see beyond one’s own individual perspective. You may need to ask questions that bring out Mrs. Jackson’s rights—does she want to eat candy for breakfast? Does she have that right? You may also need to ask questions that help participants see that the organization that is providing services to the client is almost always “affected” by the situation, if only because whatever happens to an individual client can be a reflection on the whole agency. The agency is legally responsible for the well-being of its clients.

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Brainstorming—5 minutes

6. **Identify options.** Write “Options” at the top of the right column on the flip chart page. Remind participants that options are possible solutions to the problem. Ask the group to brainstorm options that address each of the key issues they listed. The goal is to come up with as many options as possible, including at least one for each issue. Write the ideas on the flip chart page.

Flip Chart

<u>KEY ISSUES</u>	<u>OPTIONS</u>

Teaching Tips

Encourage participants to be creative and think outside the box. Sometimes, thinking of ideas that are not realistic allows people to see possibilities that were not obvious.

If participants *really* think outside the box, they may come up with some silly and potentially dangerous options. However, keep the tone light and note the options—they will be able to eliminate unrealistic options in the next step. But do make sure there is a good selection of realistic ones.

Large-Group Discussion—20 minutes

7. **Explain how to select the best option(s).** After participants have suggested at least six options, explain that in order to select the best option for solving the problem, they need to consider what is likely to happen as a result of each option. Then they will determine which option (or combination of options) best meets the needs of everyone involved.

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- 8. Lead discussion to consider possible results for the list of options.** Ask participants:

? *What would be the impact (both positive and negative) of each option on each of the key issues we listed?*

If any of the options have a positive impact on two or more of the key issues, put a check mark next to those options.

- 9. Facilitate choosing the best option(s).** Ask participants to consider the checked options and determine which one (or which combination) comes closest to meeting the needs of everyone involved in this situation—the client, the home health aide, and the organization. Write “Plan A” in the margin next to that option (or options). Ask:

? *What would be the “next best” option (Plan B)?*

? *Why would you want to have a Plan B?*

Teaching Tip

Sometimes one option creates a situation in which the interests of the client, the home health aide, and/or the organization are in conflict. For example, in the case of Mrs. Jackson, one option would be to allow her to keep eating candy for breakfast. This respects the client’s right to choose *but* it may place her long-term health in jeopardy.

Sometimes home health aides get involved in solving problems that are not really their own. There may not be a “problem” for Helen in this situation. Being clear about *who* has the problem can help home health aides to pull back, remain calm, and be more effective in supporting the client.

- 10. Invite reflection.** Ask:

? *How is this approach different from the one we started with?*

[Answers: more emphasis on Mrs. Jackson’s perspective, needs, and rights; less emphasis on what she “should” do; more compromise to meet the needs of all the parties involved.]

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Teaching Tools, Activity 1 Exploring Options Worksheet: Helen and Mrs. Jackson

Key Issues: List the ones that fit this situation	Options: List at least one possible solution for each key issue
<p><u>Infection control</u> (candy attracting ants, which can carry germs)</p> <p><u>Client care</u> (not getting a nutritious breakfast)</p> <p><u>Client rights</u> (What does Mrs. Jackson want to eat for breakfast?)</p> <p><u>Role of the caregiver</u> (miscommunication about what Helen was doing about Mrs. Jackson's breakfast; and why didn't other aides find the candy bars before Helen returned?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with Mrs. Jackson about not leaving food exposed, where ants can get to it• Talk with Mrs. Jackson about health consequences of not eating a good breakfast regularly• Show respect for Mrs. Jackson's right to eat how she wants, as long as she knows the consequences• Encourage Mrs. Jackson to eat a more nutritious breakfast• Communicate more between aides who are working with the same client <p>ALL OF THESE OPTIONS CAN BE DONE AS "PLAN A."</p>

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Activity 2. Practice Applying the Approach

55 minutes


Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

Demonstrate how to explore options to assist a client to solve a problem.


Activity Steps

Small-Group Work—20 minutes

1.  **Set up small-group work.** Explain that participants will now get a chance to practice using the “exploring options” approach. Divide participants into groups of three or four each. Refer to **4. Situations for Exploring Options** in the Learner’s Book. Assign a different situation to each group.

Teaching Tip

If you have more than three groups, have more than one group working on each scenario. It is interesting to see if two groups working on the same scenario come up with the same or different solutions.

2.  Distribute **Worksheet 1. Exploring Options Worksheet**. Have each group fill in the worksheet for their assigned situation. Explain that they will use the worksheet to identify the key issues that apply to their situation, and then to brainstorm at least one option for each key issue. They will discuss what might happen as a result of choosing each option and then choose the one option (or the combination) that they think will have the best results for their situation—their “Plan A.”

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Large-Group Discussion—35 minutes

3. **Facilitate reporting back to the large group.** Have the groups read their situations and share their solutions—and why they came to those solutions. Allow for brief discussion (about 10 minutes total for each situation).

Teaching Tips

If more than one group discussed the same situation, have both those groups give their reports and then discuss.

If time permits, you can ask the groups what their second options would be—“Plan B.”


4. **Wrap up activity.** Summarize by asking participants:



What did you learn about problem solving from this activity?



Aside from work, how might you use it in your own lives?

5.  **Summarize the module.** Distribute and review **Handout 1. Summary of Key Information**. Ask participants if they have any questions.

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Activity 1. The Exploring Options Approach to Solving Problems

- 1. Bertha Jackson and Helen, the Home Health Aide**
- 2. The Exploring Options Approach**
- 3. Key Issues for Solving Problems**

Activity 2. Applying the Approach

- 4. Situations for Exploring Options**

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1. Bertha Jackson and Helen, the Home Health Aide

Read this situation and think about how you would solve this problem.

Helen works in the mornings with her client, Bertha Jackson, and makes her breakfast every day. She and Bertha get along great. Bertha is 80 years old. She was married but they couldn't have children. Her husband died some years ago. She has one niece who lives nearby. Bertha has brothers and sisters, but they all live in another state. She misses being around them and their families.

Bertha has congestive heart failure and gets tired easily. She doesn't feel like doing much of anything. She is lonely and struggles with depression. Most of the time she doesn't want to eat, and she has been losing weight. She has home health aides to help with cleaning and with cooking. Her doctor really wants her to eat more so she'll stop losing weight.

Helen is returning to work after being away for a week. Helen's supervisor told her she is worried because, while Helen was away, Bertha told her other aides that she never eats breakfast. When Helen asks Bertha about it, Bertha says she made her own breakfast while Helen was away.

When Helen opens the cupboard to begin preparing Bertha's breakfast, all she can find are dozens of half-eaten candy bars covered with ants.

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2. The Exploring Options Approach

How do you choose the best way to solve a problem?

Follow these steps to explore options:

1. Be clear about what the problem is.
2. List which people are involved.
3. List key issues for each person involved.
4. Talk with others and come up with different ways to deal with each of these key issues (options).
5. Think about what will happen as a result of each of these options.
6. Choose the option (or combination of options) that best deals with the key issues. Also choose a back-up plan.

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3. Key Issues for Solving Problems

There are many issues to think about when you choose the best way to solve a problem. Here are some key issues to consider:

<u>Key Issues</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Client safety	Prevent choking. Report unsafe living conditions.
Infection control	Follow standard precautions. Keep living space clean.
Client care	Take care of body. Take care of feelings.
Client rights	Respect right to privacy. Respect right to choose. Respect right to free speech.
Respect for a person's culture	Respect values. Respect religion.
The role of the HHA	Stay within job description. Meet client's needs.
HHA safety	Report abuse of the HHA. Report unsafe space. Report broken equipment.
Agency rules	Follow care plans. Follow rules about days off. Follow health and safety rules.

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4. Situations for Exploring Options

Working with your group, read the assigned situation. Then go on to Worksheet 1.

Situation A

Mrs. Jackson has refused to eat most of her dinner for more than a month. She has lost weight. Your supervisor asks you to stay with her when she eats, to encourage her to eat more of her dinner. When you ask her if she'd like you to keep her company while she eats, she says no, she would like to be left alone.

Situation B

After much prodding, Mrs. Jackson has started to eat a little more than before. But she says the food you've prepared is too bland. She starts putting a lot of salt on her food, even though her doctor said she needs to limit salt. You ask her to stop. She tells you to be quiet and to be glad that she is eating at all.

Situation C

Mrs. Jackson has one niece who visits her once in a while and takes her out for a drive. You never know what time it will be, but it's always early in the morning. When Mrs. Jackson sees her niece, she gets too excited to eat. And when she comes back from her drive, she's too tired to eat.

Lately, on her doctor's orders, you've been trying really hard to get Mrs. Jackson to eat breakfast. Finally, this morning, she says she will have some breakfast. Just before you serve her, her niece shows up and invites her aunt out for a drive.

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Handout 1. Summary of Key Information

Page 1 of 2

- The “exploring options” approach to solving problems reflects the principles of person-centered care. It is important to consider any problem from the client’s perspective and involve the client as much as possible in finding a solution.
- Follow these steps when helping a client to explore options to solve problems:
 - Be clear about **what the problem is**—from a variety of viewpoints.
 - List all **the “people” involved**—including the agency that the HHA works for.
 - List **the key issues** for each person involved.
 - Talk with the people involved and brainstorm ways to address each of the key issues (**“options”**).
 - Think about **what will likely happen** as a result of each option.
 - Choose the option (or the combination of options) that **best deals with the key issues**. Also, choose a back-up plan, in case the first option doesn’t work.

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Handout 1. Summary of Key Information

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- In most problems that affect clients, there will be at least three “people” involved—the client, the HHA, and the agency that the HHA works for. The “key issues” from their viewpoints include:
 - Client safety
 - Infection control
 - Client care and comfort
 - Client rights
 - Respect for a person’s culture
 - The role of the HHA
 - HHA safety
 - Following agency policies

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Worksheet 1. Exploring Options Worksheet

Page 1 of 2

Working with your group, discuss the situation you were assigned in section 4 of the Learner's Book. Follow this worksheet to use the "exploring options" approach.

Circle the case your group discussed.

Situation A Situation B Situation C

1. What is the problem? (Remember, there may be more than one.)

2. Key Issues:

Decide which of these issues is important in your group's case.

Place a check mark by each issue.

- ☐ Client care
- ☐ Client rights
- ☐ Client safety
- ☐ Cultural respect
- ☐ Keeping germs from spreading
- ☐ Role of the HHA
- ☐ HHA safety
- ☐ Agency rules

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Worksheet 1. Exploring Options Worksheet

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3. Options:

List the key issues you checked off. Write down at least one way (option) to deal with each issue.

Key Issue: _____

Option: _____

Key Issue: _____

Option: _____

Key Issue: _____

Option: _____

Key Issue: _____

Option: _____

4. Discuss, for each option, what might happen—both good and bad.

5. “Plan A”: which option (or combination of options) do you suggest to address this situation?