

The Eight Tasks of Effective Helping

For the most part the exercises presented here are grouped around and follow the order of the eight tasks that need to be undertaken in the effective management of problem situations. These tasks are:

1. **Assessment.** This means helping clients find out what's going wrong and what's going right in their lives. Successful assessment helps clients identify both problems and resources. Assessment helps clients see any given problem in a wider context. Assessment goes on throughout the helping process.
2. **Focusing and initial problem exploration.** This means helping clients identify the particular concern or concerns they want to deal with and beginning the exploration and clarification process.
3. **New perspectives.** This means helping clients see themselves, their concerns, and the context of their concerns more objectively, that is, in such a way as to begin to see what they would like to do about them.

Steps 1, 2, and 3, therefore, deal with problem identification and clarification.

4. **Goal setting.** This means helping clients set problem-managing goals. A goal is nothing else but what a client wants to accomplish in order to manage a problem situation or some part of it more effectively. A goal refers to what a client would like to do about a problem situation. The next two steps taken together constitute program development. Program development deals with how clients might go about accomplishing their goals.
5. **Program possibilities.** This refers to helping clients see the many different ways that any given goal can be accomplished. It also refers to helping clients identify the resources available for accomplishing goals.
6. **Program choice.** This refers to helping clients choose the kind of program that best fits their style, resources, and environment.
7. **Program implementation.** This refers to helping clients implement the programs they have chosen and helping them overcome the obstacles they encounter as they do so.
8. **Evaluation.** This refers to helping clients monitor their participation in programs, their accomplishments of goals and their management of problem situations.

Source: The Skilled Helper, Gerard Egan