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## ***HANDOUT 3.1: PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL***

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#### **Step 1: Size up the situation.**

Sizing up the situation involves analyzing the current situation to determine:

- What is happening (and not happening).
- Who is involved.
- What the stakes are.

Sizing up means making sure that you have the full picture.

Once you have the full picture, you can accurately identify the problem(s). *Identifying the problem accurately is probably the most difficult step in the process.*

#### **Step 2: Identify contingencies.**

The next step in the process is to identify all of the contingencies.

Contingencies are what can go wrong—“Murphys.” Think about all of the things that can get in the way of resolving the problem you are facing.

#### **Step 3: Determine objectives.**

Objectives should clearly tell you what you need to do to be successful.

You should develop objectives that allow you to monitor your progress. Your objectives should also help you prioritize how you and your staff spend time and resources.

Remember to use your analysis of the situation and possible contingencies when setting your objectives.

The objectives developed will drive the alternative solutions and, ultimately, the solution selected.

#### **Step 4: Identify needed resources.**

Resources include people, information (data), and things needed to resolve the problem.

Often information is overlooked when people identify their resource needs. Don't forget to include your information needs when identifying resource requirements.

#### **Step 5: Build a plan.**

Building a plan is simply stating who will do what by when.

Plans need to be communicated to all involved parties.

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#### **Step 6: Take action.**

Implementing the solution may not be easy. There may be repercussions to any solution selected. Consideration must be given to how the solution will be implemented before selecting an alternative.

Monitoring the success and results of a solution (checking) is an ongoing process that is critical to fine tuning a course of action.

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