



Exercise: Implementing Needs-Based Problem-Solving

All emotions, thoughts and behaviours are inextricably intertwined with our core, basic human needs. Problems and conflicts in the workplace (and elsewhere) can result from work-specific needs that are not satisfied, or from threats to the satisfaction of those needs. One of the skills useful for managers seeking to improve their effectiveness and reduce negative emotions in the workplace involves knowing how to implement **needs-based problem-solving**.

There are four important steps to needs-based problem-solving:

- Identify the work-specific needs of all involved parties (e.g., appreciation, fairness and equity in decision-making, respect).
- Collaborate creatively on possible strategies for ensuring that the most important needs of all parties are met in a mutually agreeable way.
- Affirm an agreement, address any misunderstandings, and discuss a process for handling the problem in the future, if necessary.
- Document the agreement, providing all parties with a copy. (This approach is particularly effective when a worker's concentration, perception or memory is compromised.)

Review the four steps to needs-based problem-solving next time you are required to address a conflict or other problem situation. Remember to ICAD:

[I] dentify needs

[C] ollaborate creatively

[A] ffirm an agreement

[D] ocument the agreement

For more information, see the exercise handout **Understanding Basic Human Needs**.