**Proactive Problem-Solving**   
*Adapted from “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Eating Disorders”, by Christopher G. Fairburn*

**STEP 1: Identify the problem as early as possible**

* Spotting problems early is of great importance because it makes them easier to address
* For example: if there is likely to be a problem in the evening, it is easier to plan for and solve earlier in the day than last minute, under time constraint

**STEP 2: Specify the problem accurately**

* Working out the true nature of the problem is essential if the best solution is to be found
* It may emerge that there are two or more co-existing problems, in which case each problem may need to be addressed individually
* Rephrasing the problem may also be helpful in understanding it

**STEP 3: Consider as many solutions as possible**

* All ways of dealing with the problem should be considered
* Brainstorm and generate as many solutions as possible, even those that seem nonsensical or impractical
* The more solutions that are generated, the more likely a good one will emerge
* If struggling to identify numerous solutions, it may be helpful to consider what one may suggest to a friend who is in a similar situation

**STEP 4: Think through the pros and cons of each solution**

* The likely effectiveness and feasibility of each solution should be considered, including how realistic each is, what resources are needed and if one has access to them, and potential barriers to implementing

**STEP 5: Choose the best solution, or combination of solutions**

* Interestingly, if step 4 has been conducted thoroughly, choosing the best solution is often straight forward

**STEP 6: Act on the solution**

**STEP 7: Evaluate the process of problem-solving**

* Focus should be placed on the quality of problem-solving, not of the solution