



# Thinking: Problem Solving

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS TIP SHEET

Use these practical tips to help you improve your **thinking** skills:

### **Problem Solving**

Before you try to solve a problem:

- ✓ Get all the information you can by asking questions such as who, what, when, where, why and how. This may involve doing research, referring to publications (e.g. policies, procedures, reports), and speaking to colleagues and others who may have the information that you need.
- ✓ Remember to make notes as you gather information so that you can refer to them later.
- ✓ Reflect on how you solved similar problems in the past – you may be able to use these experiences to help you solve current problems.
- ✓ Ask your peers or co-workers for help – they may have dealt with a similar problem and can provide you with helpful advice.
- ✓ Try doing things in new ways. Brainstorm with a group of people to help identify different ideas and approaches to solving problems.
- ✓ When a problem affects others, consider their points of view before choosing a solution.
- ✓ When a problem is complicated, break it down into smaller parts and deal with one part at a time.
- ✓ Evaluate the pros and cons of using a particular solution.