

Visit 3: Making Decisions and Solving Problems

Objective: At this visit you will have the opportunity to review one approach to problem solving, complete two problem-solving activities and take home the rest to complete later. You will also schedule an appointment for neuropsychological testing.

In this section:

- Decision-Making Activity
- Identifying Challenging Situations

At this visit:

- Nutrition assessment- bring your 3 day food record to clinic
- Physical assessment- a brief visit with PKU doctor
- Decision-making activity
- Identifying...and solving challenging situations
- Explanation of neuropsychological testing
- Schedule neuropsychological testing

Who is involved:

- **You**
- Your support team:
 - Your parents
 - PKU clinic physician
 - PKU clinic nutritionist



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Effective Problem Solving

➤ What's the concern? What do I want?

Think of what is bothering, frustrating, making you angry, or causing worry.
It might be something you want but can't get.
Knowing what the problem is helps to solve it.

➤ What could I do?

Think of many different ways to solve the problem.
The more ways you come up with, the better.
More ways lead to better solutions.

➤ Think it over.

Think about all the ways you came up with.
Ask: what might happen if you do each one? Who would be affected? How likely would you get what you wanted? Would the results be of worth to you?

➤ Make a decision.

Decide on the solution that will work best for you.
Plan the steps to take for the solution you chose.
Ask: Who will be involved? What will be needed? When will it take place? Where will it happen?

➤ Now do it.

Do the steps of the plan for your solution to your problem.

➤ How did it work?

Think about what you did.
What happened? Did it work? How do you feel about what happened? Is there something else you need to do?
If so, you have another problem. Start again with the steps of problem-solving.



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM: Blood Draw

What's the concern? What do I want?

I have not sent in a blood level in 4 months, but I just can't seem to find the time to do a blood draw.

What could I do?

- a. Don't do a blood draw
- b. Pick the first day of each month to do a blood draw and plan other things around that
- c. Wait until the PKU clinic calls to remind me to send in a blood level
- d. When I do a blood draw I will check to make sure I have filter papers and lancets to send in a blood level the following month

Think it over.

- a. I wouldn't be able to know my phenylalanine level to monitor my control
- b. Monthly blood levels will let me know how effectively I am managing my PKU
- c. Lengthy intervals between blood levels can lead to a gradual increase in phenylalanine levels without being aware of it
- d. I will always have blood draw supplies available to send in a blood level

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM:
Weight Gain

What's the concern? What do I want?

Over the past year my weight has slowly been creeping up and now I feel like I would like to lose about 10 pounds.

What could I do?

- a. Stop drinking my formula
- b. Switch to a different formula with fewer calories
- c. Start exercising 3-4x/week
- d. Limit the amount of high fat and sugar snack foods I eat

Think it over.

- a. My blood levels would be out of control
- b. These formulas tend to more expensive and it doesn't change my eating habits
- c. Although it would take discipline I know this would help my weight and my health
- d. Again, this will require more discipline, but would ultimately be beneficial for both my weight and health

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM:
Overnight trip

What's the concern? What do I want?

My sports team is going on an overnight trip. We will be stopping for dinner at a fast food restaurant.

What could I do?

- a. Eat nothing
- b. Forget about PKU for the night
- c. Bring formula and plan low phe meal
- d.
- e.

Think it over.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM:
Work

What's the concern? What do I want?

I just got a new job and am excited about starting. I will be working an eight-hour day and will need to plan for lunch and possibly snacks. What do I do?

What could I do?

- a. I decide that I will slip away during lunch and not eat until I get home
- b. I tell my coworkers that I have PKU and drink my formula and eat low protein food with them.
- c. I eat with my coworkers but don't take my formula with me so they won't know that I have a different food plan.
- d.

Think it over.

- a. I will be hungry and miss an opportunity to get to know my coworkers.
- b. Although I may be nervous at first, I will be able to get to know them while managing my PKU.
- c. I will have to pretend and always be nervous about people's questions.
- d.

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM:
Travel

What's the concern? What do I want?

I am planning a weekend trip away from home. How will I manage my formula and food while away from "home base"?

What could I do?

- a. Forget about managing my PKU for the weekend
- b. Plan how much formula and low protein food I will need for the weekend and take it along
- c. Take my formula along and figure I can eat small amounts of restaurant food
- d.

Think it over.

- a. My blood levels will be out of control
- b. It will take time to plan and be prepared but my blood levels will be in control
- c. I may not be able to control where I eat for the entire weekend.
- d.

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM:
Dorm living

What's the concern? What do I want?

I am going away to school and will be living in a dorm. Most people will eat at the cafeteria in the building. How will I manage my formula/food?

What could I do?

- a. Forget about managing my PKU and eat what everyone else is eating
- b. Drink my formula when no one is around and eat small amounts of cafeteria food.
- c. Plan my formula and food for each meal by talking to the kitchen staff about preparing some of your food.
- d.

Think it over.

- a. My blood levels will be out of control
- b. I may not be able to consistently get away from people and my levels will still be high.
- c. Although it will take planning and may take me out of my comfort zone, I will be able to get the food I need to manage my PKU.
- d.

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Example of Effective Problem Solving

PROBLEM:
Airplane

What's the concern? What do I want?

I am planning a trip away from home and will be traveling by plane. I will need to plan a meal while in the air. How will I manage my PKU while traveling?

What could I do?

- a. Order a vegetarian meal from the airline
- b. Take my formula and food along and plan for food that doesn't need to be prepared
- c. Skip the meal on the plane and figure I can eat when I get there
- d.

Think it over.

- a. I won't be able to eat all of the meal without eating too much phe
- b. It will take time to plan and be prepared but my blood levels will be in control
- c. I may not be able to control how long I am traveling and may get too hungry and eat high phe foods.
- d.

Make a decision.

Do it!

How did it work?



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Challenging Situation

- 6:55am Gwendolyn had a bad start to her day. Her alarm clock didn't go off, and she woke up 5 minutes before she needed to leave for school.
- 7:00am She raced to the bus, starving because she didn't have time for breakfast. She thought to herself, "That's okay, I will drink my formula on the bus...oh no! I left my formula (that I prepared the night before) in the refrigerator." This had happened before, so Gwendolyn knew that she could use the \$2 hidden in her backpack (for just such an occasion to buy breakfast at school). Gwendolyn bought some hash browns, knowing that was higher than her usual low-phe breakfast, but thought to herself, "That's okay, I'll just eat really low and drink lots of formula the rest of the day."
- 10:20am Gwendolyn's first two classes went alright. She got pretty sleepy during the second class...probably because she was hungry! She used her meal card to buy lunch...her usual small green salad, but no French fries today, because she had eaten potatoes for breakfast. She figured the salad wouldn't keep her full (especially since she forgot her lunch formula too), so she bought a soda and a bag of jelly beans with the rest of her spare cash.
- 12:30pm Class number 3 was great...a fun class that Gwen really enjoyed. She started to get hungry, so ate her snack on the way to class number 4. No problem, it was her last class. During class, Gwen got sleepy again, and as she was about to doze off, she remembered, "Oh no! I promised Matt we'd work on our class project after class at the library. And I'm STARVING!"
- 2:00pm Gwendolyn trudged to the library, and Matt could tell that she wasn't going to be much help on the project. He was frustrated with Gwen, but decided to do some problem-solving. "Gwen," he said, "I can tell you're hungry, and you're going to be pretty useless on our project. Let's go to the diner across the street to work on our project. You can get a snack and we can get some work done." Gwendolyn agreed and ordered the jumbo plate of French fries...she intended to share them with Matt, but wolfed them down in a hurry.
- 4:00pm They got some work done, and Gwendolyn went home. She drank a quart of formula, and then, as she was thinking more clearly about her day, she wondered if she could have done some better problem-solving.

- ? What do you think?
- ? What did Gwen do right?
- ? What could she have done better?



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Assessment of PKU Adolescent Transition Curriculum

Session 3.

Objective: At this visit you will have the opportunity to review one approach to problem solving, complete two problem-solving activities and take home the rest to complete later.

Post Session Objective: Each participant will be able to explain an approach to problem solving and have completed problem solving activities.

I. Please tell us three things that you have learned during this visit

1)

2)

3)

II. How will you incorporate this problem-solving model into your daily activities?

III. What is the most challenging situation that you have faced and how did you solve it?

Evaluation: Looking back, did you handle the problem correctly? If so, are there alternatives that you could have done as well? If not, what are some examples of what you should have done?



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