



# Court Leadership and Problem Solving

Issue #2

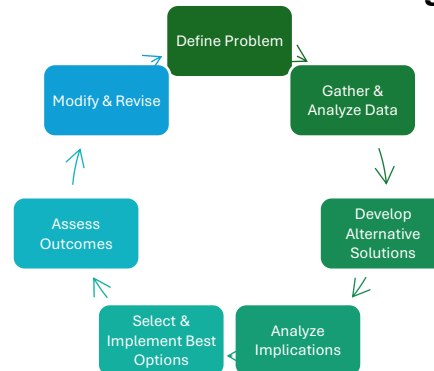
Date: 8/19/24

## This Topic and Why

Court leaders continually face the need to solve problems. This series shares different problem-solving techniques. Models build from the traditional problem-solving pattern as depicted to the right and offer different approaches, and maybe inspiration, to use a process to resolve issues.

This issue offers a framework of determining whether a particular problem needs a “technical” or “adaptive” approach.

## Traditional Problem Solving



## Focus in This Issue:

# Technical or Adaptive Solutions to Problems

**The Concept in Practice:** Use a technical versus adaptive approach to diagnose and determine actions on the topic.

### Technical Challenge

- Clear problem definition
- Clear solution and expertise available
- Clear authority to act

### Adaptive Challenge

- Unclear problem definition
- Problem requires learning new information
- Solution requires new expertise
- Need for new/different takeholders

**Technical Example:** Upon request, offer occasional remote hearing attendance via telephonic appearance, using existing equipment, and the current telephonic hearing policy (“pre-COVID19”)

**Adaptive Example:** Overhaul court docket practices to provide for 100% remote attendance via new technology, by obtaining new technology, learning new techniques, collaborating with new partners, and creating new policies (“post COVID19”)

## Technical or Adaptive Solution Checklist

Ask:	If Yes, Technical Solution Needed	If No, Adaptive Solution Needed
Do you have a clear definition and understanding of the problem? Is it a recognizable problem that you have encountered and addressed before?	Yes	No
Is a clear solution available? Is a known solution available based upon existing experience?	Yes	No
Do you have guidelines and authorities to act on the issue? Can you use exiting practices and protocols?	Yes	No
Do you have current knowledge and expertise to act on the issue?	Yes	No

## Steps To Take

### Technical Actions to Take

1. Act to address the problem
2. Draw upon current knowledge and expertise
3. Apply existing practices and protocols
4. Use current rules and authorities
5. Apply existing steps
6. Deploy existing resources to resolve the problem

### Adaptive Actions to Take

1. Define/refine the issue for problem understanding
2. Identify, partner, and collaborate with individuals close to or with understanding of the issue
3. Identify and learn new information and techniques
4. Create new expertise and resources
5. Create new protocols and practices to act
6. Establish and publish new authorities
7. Take action

### Tips with This Method

- ✓ Be willing to engage with others toward problem resolution
- ✓ Invite new partners and stakeholders to assist
- ✓ Create time and space for brainstorming and idea sharing
- ✓ Embrace learning of new practices
- ✓ Provide leadership of change management

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Revised 8/7/2024

## Resources

Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 2009  
Ronald A. Heifetz, Marty Linsky, *Leadership on The Line*, 2002

