

S.O.D.A.S. Method of Problem Solving

Description: S.O.D.A.S. is an acronym for a simple problem-solving method that is easy for children and youth to learn, understand and use. It can be effectively taught using role playing, applying it to situations children and youth see characters facing in television programs or through written exercise. It is often best understood when a child or teen uses it immediately after being involved in a situation in which they got into trouble or faced an outcome that they were not happy with. Providing children and youth with small items such as a key chain of a soda bottle is a tangible way to reinforce the method.

S = Situation

O = Options

D = Disadvantages

A = Advantages

S = Solution



How it works:

1. **S = Situation:** The child describes a situation. For example:

"Jimmy called me a name, so I punched him. Then I got sent to the principal's office and they called you (Mom)."

2. **O = Options:** The child is encouraged to list at least three options he could have considered for handling this situation. It is important that the option that caused a problem is still included as one of the possibilities. For example:

Option 1: I could punch Jimmy when he calls me a name

Option 2: I could go and tell my teacher that Jimmy called me a name

Option 3: I could ignore it and go find someone else to hang out with

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The child could think of more than 3 options for any particular situation.

3. **D = Disadvantages & A = Advantages:** Next, the child lists some disadvantages and advantages (pros and cons, or benefits and consequences) for *each* of the options. It is important to include *both* disadvantages and advantages for *each* option. For example:

*For Option 1: Disadvantage: I get sent to the principal and they call my mom
Advantage: I get my anger out and maybe Jimmy won't do it again.*

*For Option 2: Disadvantage: I get a reputation as a "rat" at school
Advantage: The teacher helps me solve the problem; I do not get into any trouble*

*For Option 3: Disadvantage: I don't get my anger out, so I am still frustrated
Advantage: Jimmy sees he can't get to me, so maybe he won't do it again, and I don't get in trouble*

4. S = Solution

Finally, after reviewing several options, each with its disadvantages and advantages, the child or teen comes up with a solution for "next time". For example:

One child may decide that option 3 will be better, while another child may be willing to be called a "rat" for the sake of getting some help with his problem.

5. One more step = Follow - Up & Practice:

Caregivers can help their children and teens use this method as a "pro-active" and preventive strategy, by following up and asking them (at dinner perhaps) if they had any opportunities to "Do a SODAS" today. Children often enjoy having opportunities to practice the steps using silly or unusual situations as well as "typical" situations that they often find themselves faced with. Also, it is helpful if parents demonstrate how they use this method to solve problems or make decisions of their own.

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Worksheet

1. Describe the Situation:

2. List 3 or more Options for handling this situation next time:
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.

 - e.

3. For EACH Option, list the Disadvantages and Advantages

	DISADVANTAGES	ADVANTAGES
Option a		
Option b		
Option c		
Option d		

4. What is my SOLUTION?