Structured problem solving

The structured problem-solving method outlined below has proven very helpful in dealing with problems that people can do something about in the short term (e.g. working out how to get to Adelaide for your next treatment).

** For worries that you can't easily do something about (e.g. wondering if the cancer will return), consider looking at the learning to let worries go *worksheet.*

1. **Write down the problem.** (Be as specific as possible.)

   (e.g. my car has broken down so I can't drive to Adelaide for my check-up on Thursday)

2. **Write down all the possible solutions.** (Think broadly – don't worry if they are not entirely realistic at this stage.)

   (e.g. I could catch the bus, get a taxi to the airport and fly, ask someone if I could borrow their car, ask someone if they could drive me, send out a text to a few of my friends and see if they know anyone who will be travelling to Adelaide on Thursday anyway)

3. **Write down the advantages and disadvantages of each option.**

   (e.g. if I fly I will get there quickest, but it will cost me a lot in taxi fares, if I ask someone to drive me I could go there and back in one day, but I find it difficult to ask people to help me, if I borrow someone's car and drive myself I won't feel as though I'm asking such a big favor, but I will have to stay the night in Adelaide and will be worried about getting a speeding fine in someone else's car)

4. **Eliminate less desirable or unrealistic solutions and put the good ones (left over) in order of preference.**

5. **Decide on a solution and work out:**
   Who will do what?
   How you will go about implementing it?
   When you will implement it?

6. **Implement the solution.**

7. **Review your progress. If you're satisfied, start solving a new problem. If not, work out what still needs to be done or if an alternative solution may be more suitable.**