PROBLEM-SOLVING GUIDE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Step 1: Problem Definition
a) Select one problem to be discussed.
b) One family member states their view of the problem in clear terms, using "I-statements" and avoiding accusations.
c) Each family member reflects that view without debating or challenging it.
d) Repeat steps "b" and "c" until each family member has had a turn.
e) Discuss only this problem; do not bring up the past or other issues.

Step 2: Listing Possible Solutions
a) Family members take turns listing ways to solve the problem.
b) Be creative; anything goes!
c) Do not evaluate the solutions suggested by each person at this time.
d) Write down ALL solutions that are suggested; stop after 8-10 solutions.

Step 3: Decision-Making
a) Family members rate each solution as positive (+) or negative (-).
b) Try not to rate a solution based on who came up with it.
c) Choose the solution(s) that has the most pluses.
d) If necessary, combine solutions that are rated as positive.
e) If you are unable to choose a solution, break down the problem into smaller parts and start again at Step 1.

Step 4: Putting the Solution into Practice
a) Decide on how long the solution will be tried.
b) Write out a plan for monitoring the success of the solution.
c) Each family member should have a role to play in the solution.

Step 5: Evaluation and Revision of the Solution
a) After the trial period, evaluate the success or failure of the solution.
b) If necessary, go back through these steps until the problem is solved.