

Module 6: Learning and Memory
Topic 6 Content: Obstacles to Solving Problems

Introduction

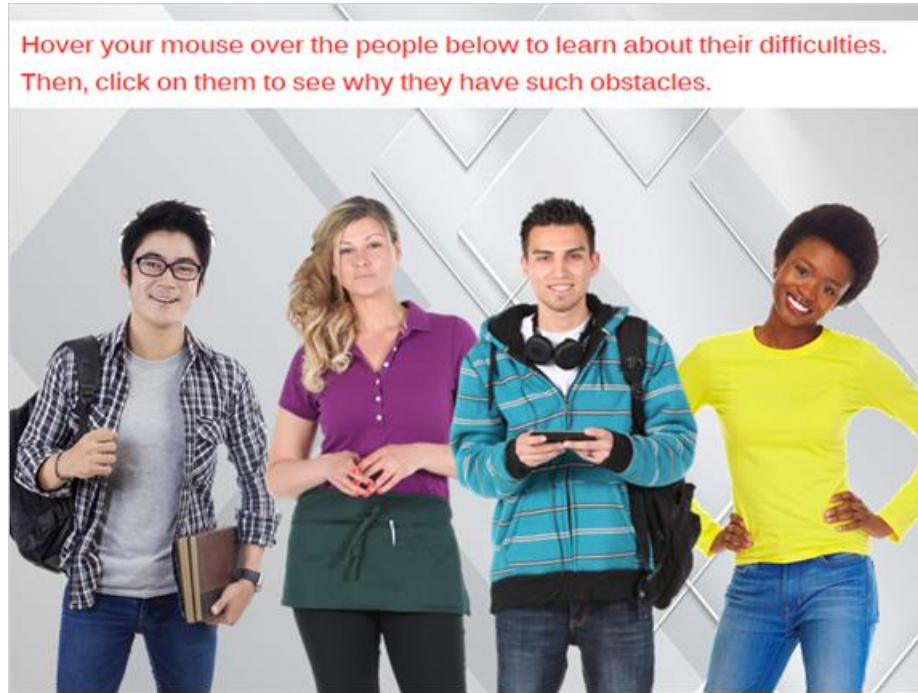


In this interactivity, you can hover your mouse over various people to learn about difficulties they are experiencing. You can also click on each person to understand why these obstacles are occurring. Click the ***NEXT*** button to continue.

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Scenarios



Hover your mouse over the people below to learn about their difficulties. Then, click on them to see why they have such obstacles.

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Mental Set



MENTAL SET

I always considered myself good at winning arguments. Actually, I'm the master of *silent treatment*. I just can't seem to win this fight I'm having with my girlfriend.

Problem solving the same way you have in the past even if that strategy does not work.

Mental set refers to your tendency to continue a problem-solving approach that worked once before, but does not anymore. For example, in the past, you may have won a disagreement by using a strategy like yelling, or giving someone the “silent treatment”. Although these approaches worked previously, they may not work to win an argument with everyone.

Click the back arrow to learn about another obstacle to problem solving.

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Fixation



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FIXATION

My work schedule is awful. At this point, I can't stand going to my shift, and there's nothing I can do about it.

Inability to see a problem from a fresh perspective.

Fixation refers to the inability to see a problem from a fresh perspective. For example, you might feel frustrated that your part-time job offers undesirable work hours. You complain about your schedule constantly and dread going to work. Despite your unhappiness, however, you fail to realize that your circumstances can change. You can seek a new job that may make you happier.

Click the back arrow to learn about another obstacle to problem solving.

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Functional Fixedness



FUNCTIONAL FIXEDNESS

Last weekend I went on a camping trip with my buddies and forgot my pillow. Needless to say I didn't get much sleep.

Tendency to think of an object's function as fixed, because you cannot imagine an alternative use for it.

Another type of fixation is your tendency to think of an object's function as fixed, or set. This is caused by an inability to imagine alternative uses for an object. For example, if you go camping and realize you accidentally forgot your pillow, could you figure out something else to use in its place? The inability to think of an alternative option would be an example of functional fixedness.

Click the back arrow to learn about another obstacle to problem solving.

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Confirmation Bias



CONFIRMATION BIAS

I cannot trust my boyfriend. He is always talking to other girls. Every time he doesn't answer my text, I know that's what he's doing.

Seeking evidence that confirms your beliefs, and ignoring facts that refute them.

Confirmation bias refers to instances when you seek evidence that confirms your beliefs, while having a tendency to ignore the facts that refute them. For example, you may have a friend who is convinced her boyfriend cannot be trusted. Therefore, she makes note of every time she sees him speaking with another girl, and jumps to the conclusion he is communicating with another girl if he does not answer her text or call right away.

Click the back arrow to learn about another obstacle to problem solving.