

THE TEAM PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

Teachers usually work to solve problems on their own before seeking consultative assistance. Typically, they try various classroom interventions, confer informally with other teachers, or meet with parents. The teacher may seek advice from a resource person because of his or her expertise or because a supportive relationship has developed between them. Most classroom problems are solved in this manner. If independent problem solving doesn't work, teachers may request assistance from a colleague at the school or district office, or from the school problem-solving team.

Meetings with a team can be requested by the teacher or suggested by a resource person, typically a methods and resource teacher, or by the school principal. Meetings must be formally arranged because of the work involved in coordinating five to seven people. Problem-solving team meetings are effective for particularly frustrating situations, or when it is deemed important to promote communication among a number of teachers.

Consultation does not end with the peer problem-solving meeting. It may be decided, for example, that it is more efficient to have an methods and resources teacher, guidance counsellor or district-level resource person work with the referring teacher to thoroughly develop the specifics of a particular intervention.