

Look Inward	What is the problem? <i>Describe it</i> <i>List some symptoms</i>	Why haven't we solved it? <input type="checkbox"/> It's new <input type="checkbox"/> It's hard <input type="checkbox"/> It's low priority <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of resources <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of authority <input type="checkbox"/> A (situational) inequity <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <i>Explain more...</i>	How are we part of the problem? What assumptions and biases surround this problem? <i>Individual, system, explicit, implicit...</i> <i>Which of these might be redesigned, reframed, or removed?</i>	Who experiences the problem? <i>When and where do they experience it?</i> <i>What consequences do they experience?</i> <i>How do lived experiences of the problem vary?</i>
	Look Outward	Who else has it? <i>Colleagues, competitors, other domains, etc.</i> <i>How do they deal with it?</i>	Who does not have it? <i>Colleagues, competitors, other domains, etc.</i> Why not? <input type="checkbox"/> Avoided <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> Solved <input type="checkbox"/> Transferred <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Who has been left out so far? <i>Let's broaden our perspective...</i>
Reframe	Stated another way, the problem is: _____			
Make it actionable: How might we _____ as we aim to _____? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: small;"> <i>(action that addresses the stakeholder/user problem)</i> <i>(objective / desired condition to be achieved)</i> </div>				

Use the problem framing canvas to explore a problem space and formulate a robust problem statement to ensure you're solving the right problem.

This approach helps teams:

- Establish consensus about the team's purpose
- Gain a sense of what "done" will look like
- Define the scope of a team's initial activities and goals
- Reduce the likelihood of working at cross purposes

HOW

Begin in the upper left corner and capture some words about the problem area. Work through the remaining boxes on the canvas and return to this box throughout the process as your understanding of the problem develops. Answer the questions that are most relevant to your problem area. Feel free to skip any questions that do not seem to apply. Use your inputs to build a problem statement in the bottom box and turn it into an actionable "How might we..." question.

Use the canvas by yourself or in a group. Doing some quick research to collect any necessary information, statistics, or data may be helpful prior to or during the activity.

FACILITATION TIPS

The Problem Framing canvas helps create an inclusive environment, where all members of the team are able to contribute to building a shared understanding of the problem at hand. Facilitators should take care to build a high-trust environment and ensure each participant is encouraged to speak up. This tool helps foster an adaptable mindset among groups, and they often end up coming up with new ways to describe the problem they are working on.

Produce an effective problem statement by avoiding problem statements that:

1. Assign a cause
2. Contain the solution
3. Are based on conjecture or belief rather than fact
4. Are too long
5. Do not describe actual current condition or problem condition
6. Do not describe the ideal or desired condition
7. Are not measurable
8. Are unclear
9. Are not specific
10. Refer to issues outside of the scope of the actual problem

QUESTION BANK (Additional Qs to help guide the discussion)

1. What is the scope? How can we expand the scope?
2. What are the elements of the problem? (Physical, social, emotional, professional, primary, secondary)
3. What prevents/ hinders/ blocks other attempts, or groups, at solving this problem?
4. What are we avoiding when looking at or solving this problem?
 - What are the stigmas associated with this problem? Is there a stigma we're trying to avoid?
 - What are the concerns or worries others may have about this problem?
 - What is unspoken about this problem?
5. What language or vocabulary do we not have and need to establish?
6. Who denies that this is a problem?
7. How does the environment or surrounding "landscape" impact this problem? What historical contexts may be influencing or biasing (our view on) this problem?
8. How are we making time to do the work that needs to be done to ensure we are designing equitably?
9. Whose perspective or experience isn't captured yet? Who doesn't immediately come to mind but also has this problem?
10. What types of inequities (uneven distribution or imbalance) exist in this problem? Power, financial, access, etc.

Note: It's common for teams to iterate through multiple Problem Framing canvases, or that certain sections of this canvas would be complemented by another ITK tool to go more in-depth.