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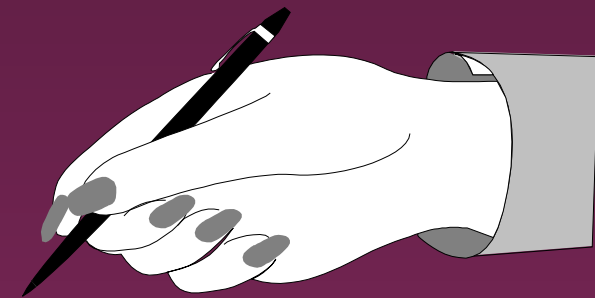
# WRITING A PROBLEM STATEMENT



# Writing a Problem Statement

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- I. Framing the Need or Problem Statement
- II. Types and Sources of Data
- III. Organizing and Writing the Statement



# Framing the Need or Problem Statement

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## A. Purpose

1. Thorough explanation
  - a. Test assumptions
  - b. Anticipate questions of others
  - c. Incorporate proposal guidelines

## Example

### *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

“...incorporating peer education into ...health education permits programs to reach a wider audience and increases clients’ access to services....”

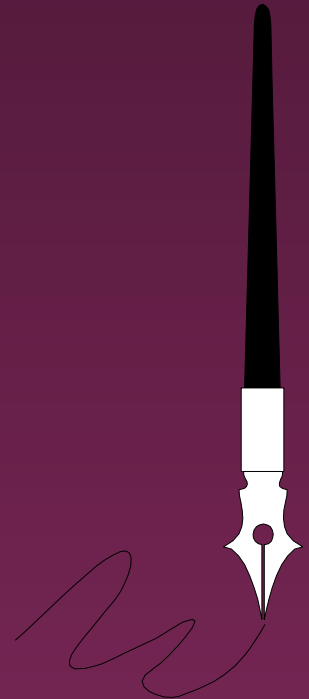


# Exercise

## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

Improve this statement by

- ▶ clarifying the assumptions
- ▶ anticipating others' questions



## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

### 2. Rooted in factual information

#### a. Define sources

- ▶ local “informants” and experts
- ▶ community leaders
- ▶ case studies
- ▶ social indicators
- ▶ surveys
- ▶ other tools



## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

- b. Use relevant facts only
- c. Note differences among theories and interpretations of facts
- d. Display using graphs and charts
- e. Use local information in all cases
- f. Link to other regions, if relevant



## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

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3. Links project to “bigger picture”
4. Identifies problems requiring attention and their causes



## Example

### *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

“...incorporating peer education into ...health education permits programs to reach a wider audience and increases clients’ access to services....”

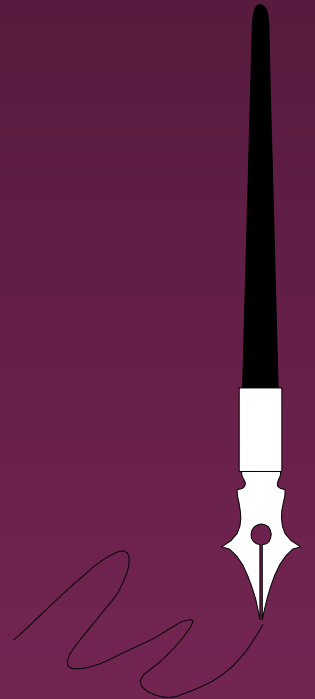


# Exercise

## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

Improve this statement by

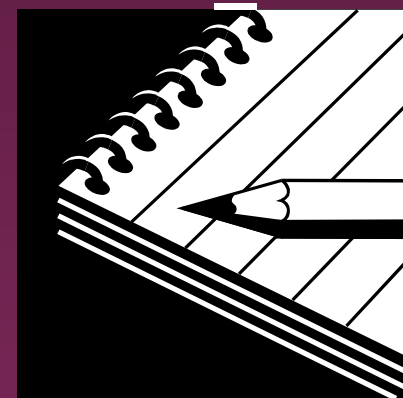
- ▶ linking it to the “bigger picture”
- ▶ clarifying the causes



## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

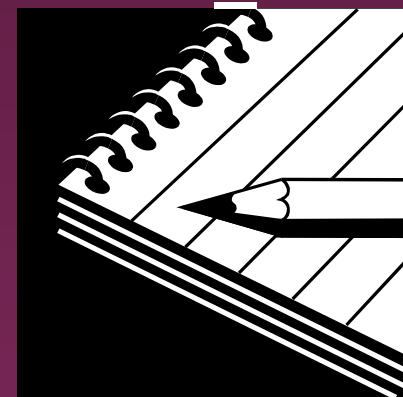
### B. Statements

1. Needs statement for programs and services
2. Problem statement for research
3. Depict needs and problems to be addressed
4. Describe causes of problem



## *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

5. Consider all factors contributing to continuation of problem
6. Describe the community clearly
7. Identify activities addressing the problem to this date
8. Introduce proposed solution
9. Show collaboration, if possible



## Example

### *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

“...incorporating peer education into ...health education permits programs to reach a wider audience and increases clients’ access to services....”

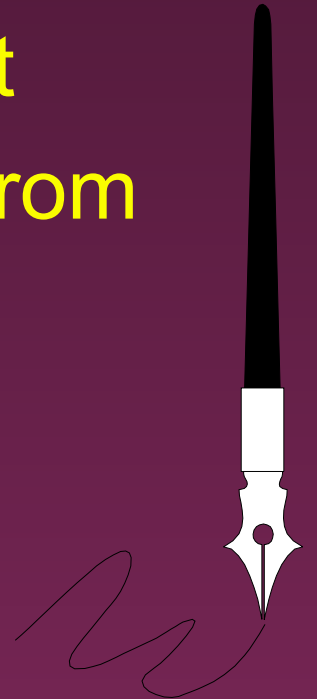


## Exercise

### *Framing the Need or Problem Statement*

Strengthen this statement by

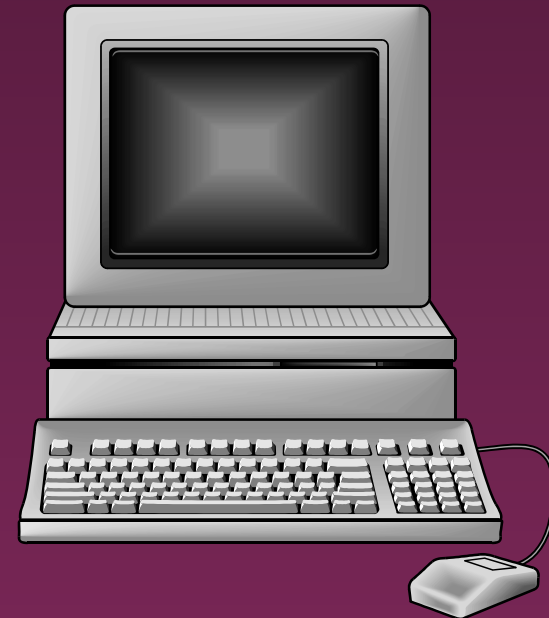
- ▶ showing the clients' backgrounds
- ▶ describing the current environment
- ▶ specifying the problems resulting from these
- ▶ barriers to solution
- ▶ your proposed, promising strategy



# Types and Sources of Data

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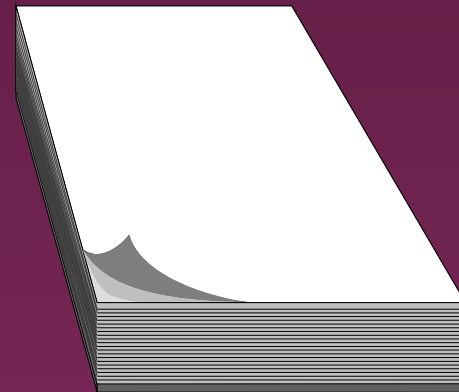
A. Use data to present objective view of problem



B. Types and sources

1. Program data

- a. Evaluation results
- b. Client intake information
- c. Client or participant surveys
- d. Waiting lists
- e. Service records



## *Types and Sources of Data*

2. Journals, periodicals, newspapers, newsletters, books
3. Reports and documents from governmental sources, advisory boards, offices, commissions, etc.
4. Reports from foundations and community groups



## *Types and Sources of Data*

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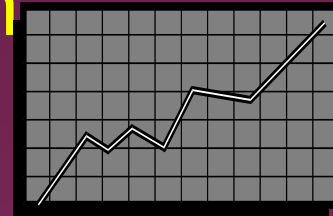
5. Interviews with experts

6. Feasibility studies and assessments



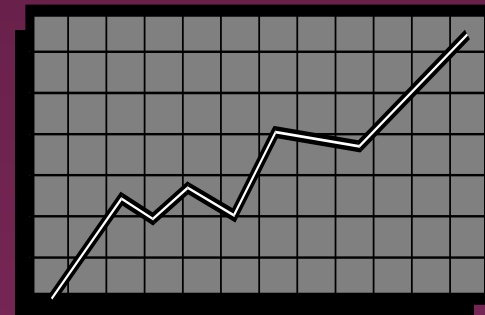
### C. Data Collection Categories

1. Incidences of problem -- increases, decreases, current status
2. Data showing factors and causes
3. Data showing related problems
4. Comparative data -- other regions
5. Consequences of no intervention



## *Types and Sources of Data*

6. Cost-analysis of these consequences
7. Data and results of similar activities
8. Evidence of demand for service
  - a. Waiting lists
  - b. Requests for service
  - c. Lack of services
  - d. Costs of neglect



## *Types and Sources of Data*

9. Data from experts
  - a. Publications
  - b. Task force and advisory board recommendations
  - c. Research findings
  - d. Surveys
  - e. Local data



## *Types and Sources of Data*

- f. Census and demographic data
- g. Public comments
- h. Comments from target group
- i. Comments from providers



## *Types and Sources of Data*

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### 10. Goals

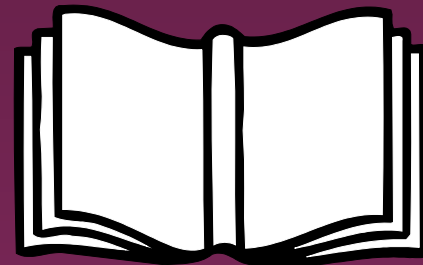
- a. Demonstrate thorough understanding of problem
- b. Show link between problem and solution
- c. Show clearly why the proposed activities are the best solution



## *Types and Sources of Data*

### D. Data Analysis and Report

1. Unbiased
2. Future directions
3. Current planning
4. New information
5. Point out any problems with original data



# Example

## *Types and Sources of Data*

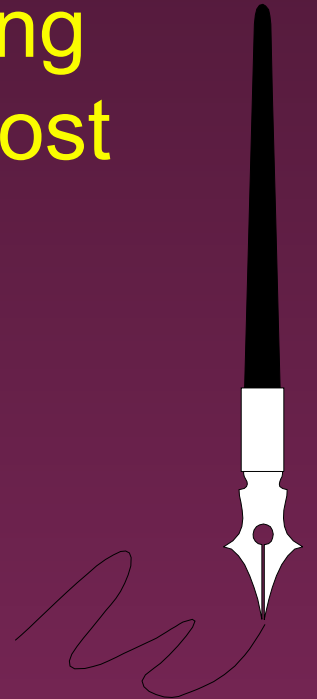
“...incorporating peer education into ...health education permits programs to reach a wider audience and increases clients’ access to services....”



# Exercise

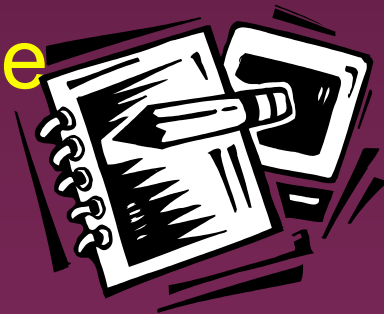
## *Types and Sources of Data*

Strengthen this statement by identifying the types of data which would be most relevant and compelling.



# Organizing and Writing the Statement

- A. Follow funding sources instructions
- B. Follow funding sources instructions
- C. Follow funding sources instructions
- D. Follow funding sources instructions
- E. Be succinct and persuasive
- F. Tell your story and build your case



## Example

### *Organizing and Writing the Statement*

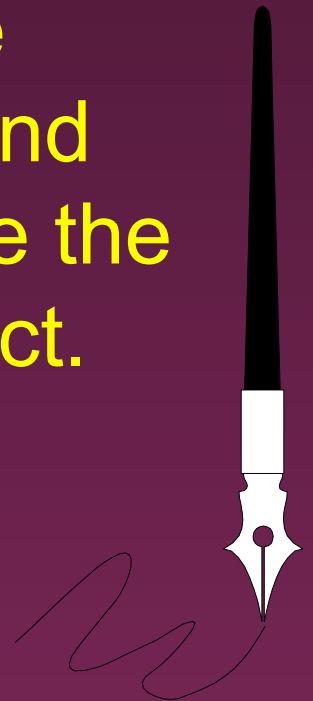
“...incorporating peer education into  
...health education permits programs to  
reach a wider audience and increases  
clients’ access to services....”



# Exercise

## *Organizing and Writing the Statement*

Using the statements which you have developed for the other exercises and the guidelines provided today, make the clearest case possible for this project.



# Writing a Problem Statement

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**Congratulations!**