

# VPS 3-4 CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

DEVELOP ESSENTIAL CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITIES REQUIRED OF VPS 3-4 OFFICERS

7 & 8  
MARCH 2022  
ONLINE DELIVERY

## EXPLORE

- ▶ Apply practical outcome-driven models for critical thinking and problem solving
- ▶ Unpack critical thinking as a mental process and set of action steps to address everyday problems
- ▶ Leverage the skills of creative and lateral thinking in complex problem solving
- ▶ Overcome common roadblocks to critical thinking and problem solving

## EXPERT FACILITATOR



**Garry Mills**  
Presenter & Coach  
Garry Mills Peak Performance

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## ABOUT THE EVENT

Aimed at VPS 3-4 officers and management, this two-day workshop will provide an opportunity to advance critical thinking and problem solving capabilities expected of VPS 3-4 officers.

Critical thinking and problem solving have been identified as key skills required of officers at many levels of the VPS. In an environment where evidence is paramount, this highly valued skill set will become a key differentiator among high performing leaders of the future. Critical thinking is at the heart of effective problem solving and decision making at any level of management. As a VPS 3-4 level officer you are at the ideal level to establish core skills in this domain.

We have developed this practical training program to kick start your journey to becoming a discerning critical thinker and seasoned problem solver. Through this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to examine, assess, and reconstruct their way of thinking in order to solve everyday problems. If you find that a problem has you stuck, unable to evolve or adapt to changes, it may be time to try a new approach. Developing your skills in critical thinking and applying innovative problem solving techniques can help you to make better decisions and overcome the challenges that you face.

Participants will learn practical skills and techniques to critically appraise problems and understand their root causes and impacts. Through a systematic approach you will be able to develop evidence-based solutions to problems as well as plan and prepare strong arguments for change and improvement.

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## DAY ONE

### Critical thinking and problem solving as a key priority in the VPS

- ▶ Review the current context and landscape for problem-solving
- ▶ Why problem-solving has been identified as a top skilling priority across all levels of the VPS
- ▶ How critical thinking provides the necessary lens to frame problems rationally and produce evidence-based solutions
- ▶ How problem-solving ability could drive your career advancement in 2022 and beyond

### Unpacking critical thinking techniques

- ▶ The cognitive principles, tools and strategies essential to critical thinking
- ▶ Reviewing critical thinking tools and taking stock of our own limitations and strengths
- ▶ How to think like a scientist - Learning how to objectively collect and evaluate evidence
- ▶ Whole-brain thinking; exploring creative thinking for generating new ideas and links, acting on intuition, imagining possibilities and connecting ideas through considering alternatives
- ▶ Understanding the barriers to sense-making and thinking rationally

### Problem-solving methods and key tools

- ▶ Reviewing common types of problems
- ▶ Exploring linear/non-linear and logic-based approaches to problem-solving
- ▶ Root cause analysis - getting to the heart of the problem
- ▶ Mapping known and considering unknown variables
- ▶ How to select the right method and apply specific tools to solve a problem
- ▶ Explore how Systems Thinking is applied to provide clarity around root causes, interdependencies, possible constraints and outcomes
- ▶ Creating a process map or mind map to provide clarity around the problem
- ▶ Creative problem-solving techniques and activities: Abstract questioning, brainstorming, role switching, visualisation, ideation and process re-mapping

### Working with others on problem-solving

- ▶ Facilitating a shared understanding of issues and problems
- ▶ Learn to prepare and present powerful evidence-based arguments and solutions
- ▶ Resolving conflict and challenges in group problem solving

## DAY TWO

### Definition: Understanding the problem

- ▶ Agreeing on the reality of the problem:  
Definition of key variables: known causal factors, structure, scope, stakeholder impact, interdependencies and constraints
- ▶ Evaluating problem impacts
- ▶ Consider solution criteria and problem-solving deliverables

### Analysis: Identifying and evaluating possible solutions

- ▶ Evaluate solutions based on feasibility, impact and risk
- ▶ How to approach complex or 'wicked problems' (problems resistant to conventional resolution)
- ▶ Review tools, priorities and resources available (including expertise)

### Implementation: The problem-solving process in action

- ▶ Approaching the problem-solving process as a system, applying a critical thinking lens at all stages, consider:
  - ▶ Problem identification, detection or framing
  - ▶ Analysis of variables, root-cause analysis and interdependencies
  - ▶ Design of possible solutions, opportunities or courses of action
  - ▶ Evaluation and selection of solution
  - ▶ Consideration of risk, including feasibility, uncertainty/error
  - ▶ Decision on Implementation
  - ▶ Deployment of solution
  - ▶ Monitoring, learning and evaluation

### Overcoming the roadblocks to critical thinking and problem solving

- ▶ Cognitive biases, ideological conflict and problems arising in groups
- ▶ Observation blind-spots and measurement errors
- ▶ The inherently challenging nature of 'wicked problems'
- ▶ Cultivating your skills and maintaining your edge as a critical thinker

## YOUR FACILITATOR

Garry's philosophy is to share the stuff he's learned and lived to help as many people as he can. He achieves this as a recognised consultant, facilitator, coach, presenter, speaker and MC. Garry creates space for people to contribute, reflect, share and clarify. His style is interactive and relaxed with humour, helping people feel at ease to ask questions and interact freely.

Garry is a certified i4 Neuroleader Practitioner, applying the i4 model and methodology to help organisations create healthier and brain friendly leaders, teams and cultures. A balanced and healthy brain positively influences our behaviour, attention, decision-making, memory and effectiveness. Neurobiology-based leadership & wellbeing programs help transform our organisations and communities from somewhere many people are just surviving, to places where they can thrive.

Garry's extensive experience includes public service executive, police officer, training manager, Prime Minister's bodyguard, Team Australia athlete in a European reality TV competition, jackaroo, screen actor, radio presenter, and Ironman triathlete. He is a member of Beyond Blue's Ambassador and Speaker Bureau, sharing his story to increase awareness and understanding of anxiety and depression in Australia, and to reduce the associated stigma.



**Garry Mills**  
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# VPS 3-4 Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

7 & 8 March 2022

Online Delivery

# Booking Form

Event Reference: VPPS0322A - O

Priority Code: I

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Organisation Name

Address Suburb State Postcode

Booking Contact Information

Title Full Name Position Email Phone

## Delegate Information

# Title Full Name or TBA Position Email

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