Problem Statement Worksheet

The problem in a doctoral dissertation is the most critical component of the study. The problem explains the rationale and validates the importance of the study. Below are the steps for writing a problem statement.

* Step 1: Provide background information.
* Step 2: State the problem.
* Step 3: Provide scholarly support for the problem.
* Step 4: Indicate the potential benefit of addressing the problem.

At the end of this guide, you will create your own problem statement.

# Sample Problem Statement

Breast cancer and the harsh treatment for the disease affects not only patients but their caretakers. While caring for a breast cancer patient, caregivers face physical and mental challenges while continuing to assume significant caretaking responsibilities. Caregiving often becomes a full-time responsibility that can last for many years. In the instance of a person with breast cancer, their partner is often the primary caregiver. A majority of caregivers report that caregiving is a burden physically, psychologically, economically, socially, and personally (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). The problem is caregivers have a demanding and exhausting caretaking schedule, resulting in failure to practice good self-care (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). According to Family Caregiving Alliance (2018) many caregivers are aware their own good health means providing better care for the patient, but often feel guilty when choosing themselves first. As a result of failing to take care of themselves, caregivers often become psychologically and physically ill, reducing the ability to care for their ailing partner (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). Gaining caregivers’ perspectives on barriers preventing good self-care could lead to the development of interventions and resources for caregivers to begin practicing good self-care.

# Breaking It Down Step by Step

# Provide Background Information

Briefly **introduce** the problem to provide context for the reader.

**Example**: Breast cancer and the harsh treatment for the disease affects not only patients but their caretakers. While caring for a breast cancer patient, caregivers face physical and mental challenges while continuing to assume significant caretaking responsibilities. Caregiving often becomes a full-time responsibility that can last for many years. In the instance of a person with breast cancer, their partner is often the primary caregiver. A majority of caregivers report caregiving is a burden physically, psychologically, economically, socially, and personally (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015).

## State the Problem

**State** the problem, including the consequence(s) of the problem. Remember: Without a consequence, you don’t have a problem; you have a situation.

The problem is [state the problem], resulting in [state the consequence].

**Example:** The problem is caregivers have a demanding and exhausting caretaking schedule, resulting in failure to practice good self-care (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015).

## Provide Scholarly Support for the Problem

**Support** the problem with literature illustrating the consequences of the problem.

**Example:** According to Family Caregiving Alliance (2018), many caregivers are aware their own good health means providing better care for the patient, but often feel guilty when choosing themselves first. As a result of failing to take care of themselves, caregivers often become psychologically and physically ill, reducing the ability to care for their ailing partner (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015).

## Indicate the Potential Benefit of Addressing the Problem

**Indicate** potential benefits to people, organizations, society, etc. of addressing the problem.

**Example**: Gaining caregivers’ perspectives on barriers preventing good self-care could lead to the development of interventions and resources for caregivers to begin practicing good self-care.

# Problem Statement Worksheet

Now it’s your turn. **Create** your problem statement!

## **Provide Background Information**

**Example:** Breast cancer and the harsh treatment for the disease affects not only patients but their caretakers. While caring for a breast cancer patient, caregivers face physical and mental challenges while continuing to assume significant caretaking responsibilities. Caregiving often becomes a full-time responsibility that can last for many years. In the instance of a person with breast cancer, their partner is often the primary caregiver. A majority of caregivers report caregiving is a burden physically, psychologically, economically, socially, and personally (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015).

Briefly provide background to provide context for the reader. Start your answer on a new line.

## State the Problem

**Example:** The problem is caregivers have a demanding and exhausting caretaking schedule resulting in failure to practice good self-care (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015).

State the problem, including the consequence(s) of the problem. Remember: Without a consequence, you don’t have a problem, you have a situation.

The problem is [enter problem here], resulting in [enter consequence here].

## Provide Scholarly Support for the Problem

**Example:** According to Family Caregiving Alliance (2018), many caregivers are aware their own good health means providing better care for the patient, but often feel guilty when choosing themselves first. As a result of failing to take care of themselves, caregivers often become psychologically and physically ill, reducing the ability to care for their ailing partner (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015).

**Support** the problem with literature illustrating the consequences of the problem. Start your answer on a new line.

## Indicate the Potential Benefit of Addressing the Problem

**Example:** Gaining caregivers’ perspectives on barriers preventing good self-care could lead to the development of interventions and resources for caregivers to begin practicing good self-care.

**Indicate** potential benefits to people, organizations, society, etc. for addressing the problem. Start your answer on a new line.

# Putting It All Together

Now…**write** your problem statement in paragraph form. Start your answer on a new line.