

Problem Statement Guide

The problem in a doctoral dissertation is the most critical component of the study. The problem explains the rationale for the study and validates its importance. Below are the steps for writing a problem statement. At the end of this guide, you will have the opportunity to create your own 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.

# Sample Problem Statement

Breast cancer and the harsh treatment for the disease affects not only patients but also their caretakers. Caregivers face physical and mental challenges while continuing to assume significant caretaking responsibilities. Caregiving often becomes a full-time responsibility, which can last for many years. In the instance of a wife with breast cancer, husbands are 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 that male caregivers have a demanding and exhausting caretaking schedule resulting in failure to practice their own good self-care (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). According to Family Caregiver Alliance (2018), many caregivers are aware that taking care of their own health means providing better care for the patient, but caregivers 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 their ability to care for their ailing spouse (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). Gaining male caregivers’ perspectives on barriers preventing good self-care could lead to the development of interventions and resources for male 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.

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| Breast cancer and the harsh treatment for the disease affects not only patients but their caretakers. Caregivers face physical and mental challenges while still assuming caretaking responsibilities. Caregiving often becomes a full-time responsibility, which can last for many years. In the instance of a wife with breast cancer, husbands are often the primary caregiver. A majority of care givers report that 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 that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (state problem) resulting in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (consequence of the problem).

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| The problem is that male 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.

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| According to Family Caregiver Alliance (2018) caregivers are aware that taking care of their own health means providing better care for the patient, but caregivers often feel guilty when choosing themselves first. By not taking care of themselves, caregivers become psychologically and physically ill reducing their ability to care for their ailing spouse (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). |

## Indicate the Potential Benefit of Addressing the Problem

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

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

# Problem Statement Worksheet

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

**Briefly provide background to provide context for the reader in the box below.**

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| Example: Breast cancer and the harsh treatment for the disease affects not only patients but their caretakers. Caregivers face physical and mental challenges while still assuming caretaking responsibilities. Caregiving often becomes a full-time responsibility which can last for many years. In the instance of a wife with breast cancer, husbands are often the primary caregiver. A majority of care givers report that caregiving is a burden physically, psychologically, economically, socially, and personally (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). |

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

The general problem is:

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Resulting in:

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

**Support the problem with literature illustrating the consequences of the problem in the box below.**

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| Example: According to Family Caregiver Alliance (2018) caregivers are aware taking care of their own health means providing better care for the patient, but caregivers often feel guilty when choosing themselves first. By not taking care of themselves, caregivers become psychologically and physically ill reducing their ability to care for their ailing spouse (LeSeure & Chongkham-ang, 2015). |

**Indicate potential benefits to people, organizations, society, etc. for addressing the problem in the box below.**

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

**Putting it all Together**

Now, write your **Problem Statement** in paragraph form.

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**References**

LeSeure, P. & Chongkham-Ang, S. (2015). The experience of caregivers living with cancer patients: A systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Journal of Personalized Medicine, 5*(4), 406-439.

Family Caregiver Alliance. (2018). *Programs and services overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.caregiver.org/programs-and-services-overview>