**Critical thinking** applies reasoned consideration to evidence, context, and methods to inform decision-making. Critical thinking is best supported when individuals or groups apply evidence-based approaches to evaluate problems and propose potential solutions.

**Cultivating Critical Thinking**
Critical thinking involves developing a deep understanding of the problem to inform data-driven decisions. The following table represents key components involved in the critical thinking process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Questions Addressed</th>
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</table>
| Interpret the problem           | Apply multiple perspectives and knowledge (often multidisciplinary) to pinpoint the actual nature and cause of the problem. | • What is the problem?  
• Why is this an important problem to explore? |
| Identify relevant information   | Develop actionable lines of injury to provide and synthesize well-founded, objective information that captures the context of the problem. | • What information is necessary to understand this problem?  
• What contextual factors may influence the problem? |
| Analyze and evaluate evidence   | Analyze extant evidence to better understand the problem, including the dynamics and assumptions that underlie them, and evaluate alternate approaches to solving the problem. | • What story does the evidence tell?  
• How can we view this problem from another perspective? |
| Propose solutions               | Generate solutions that apply logical, purposeful judgment and decision-making. | • Based on available information, what solution(s) can best address this problem? |
| Self-regulate decision-making   | Monitor own reasoning and proposed solutions for possible assumptions or deficiencies involved in the decision-making process. | • What assumptions or self-interest may impact my analysis of the problem and/or proposed solutions? |

**Assessing Your Critical Thinking Competency**
Critical thinking promotes an evidence-based approach to decision-making. As you assess personal development in this competency, consider the extent to which you have:
• employed diverse, multi-disciplinary thinking regarding the nature of the problem,
• gathered broad information to understand the underlying context of the problem,
• evaluated alternate approaches to solving the problem, and/or
• decided future direction based on all available evidence.

**References**