

LEARNING TO MAKE DECISIONS

PSC Note: The three (3) activities in this series of lessons are “bundled” in order to provide a systematic and sequential approach to addressing decision-making skills; however, with slight modification, any one of the activities may be used as a single lesson OR expanded to additional lessons to provide more in-depth learning about the topic (e.g., who influences decisions). In addition, the lessons’ print materials (e.g., student thinking papers) may be used independently with other decision-making lessons you already use in the classroom.

You may want to use some of the ideas in the [Peer Pressure](#) (EI PS.1.A, 2.B, 3.A) bundle of activities (especially Lesson 1: The Me I Work to Be—Every Day In Every Way!) to enhance and/or expand these decision-making lessons. The influence of others (positive and negative) is a key element of the Peer Pressure lessons.

Purpose: This series of three (3) lessons emphasizes students’ awareness of what is important to them, what influences their decision-making and the importance of compromise AND standing-up for what is personally important. The more students learn about themselves, the higher their self-esteem and the more likely they are to make safe and healthy choices.

Lesson 1: What Influences Your Decisions? (Lesson 1 converts to 2 lessons with slight modification) This lesson helps students examine the decisions they make every day— those that make a difference in their lives as well as those that are easy and/or automatic. Students identify the things (values) that are important to them and relate actual decisions to the things that are important to them. They explore answers to the question: How did/do the things (values) that are most important to you influence the decisions made today (and every day)?

Materials: [Student Thinking Paper: Decisions, Decisions](#)

Lesson 2: What Would You Do? In this activity, students make a decision about a situation and then analyze why they made that decision. In analyzing the decision, students encounter conflicts within themselves as well as among members of their groups. They must compromise in order to reach a group consensus.

Materials: [Student Thinking Paper: What Would You Do?](#) (copies for each student + 5 or 6 extra copies to be used during small group discussions)

Lesson 3: Decision-Making: It Is Up To Me! Students often make decisions based on how they feel rather than analyzing and evaluating the possible consequences and then making the best choice. This activity reviews the Eight Steps in the decision-making process.

Materials: Enlargement of PSC/Student Resource: [Eight Step Decision-Making Process](#); PSC Resource: [Do You Make Your Own Decisions About...? PSC and Student Resource: Pocket Guide of Eight Step Decision-Making Process](#); Student Thinking Paper: [What If?](#); [Assessment Student Thinking Paper: I Am A Decision-Maker!](#)

Time: Three (3) 60-minute lessons **Group Size:** Whole Class **Grade Level:** 4-6

Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP) Strand/Big Idea/Concept:

Strand: Personal And Social Development (PS)

Big Idea: PS 3 Applying Personal Safety Skills and Coping Strategies

Concept: PS.3.A. Safe and healthy choices







American School Counselor Association (ASCA): Domain/Standard:

Personal/Social Development Domain

Standard B: Students will make decisions set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Link to Sample MCGP Units/Lessons (Note: this listing does not include all possible related Units/Lessons—they are merely examples of how the activity fits with the MCGP Guidance eLearning Units/Lessons)

The activities in this series of lessons strengthen any MCGP Unit which requires the application of decision-making skill. The following units, while not directly addressing the acquisition of decision-making skills, address the importance of making safe and healthy choices:

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| 4 th Grade PS.3.A&B | Unit: Keeping Myself Safe by Making Safe and Healthy Choices (esp., Lesson 1-Bullying) |   |
| 5 th Grade PS.3.A&B | Unit: Keeping Myself Safe by Making Safe and Healthy Choices (esp., Lesson 1 Peer Infl.) |   |
| 5 th Grade PS.3.A&B | Unit: Keeping Myself Safe by Making Safe and Healthy Choices (esp., Lesson 2 Coping...) |   |

Show Me Standards: Performance Goals (check one or more that apply)

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| | Goal 1: gather, analyze and apply information and ideas |
| X | Goal 2: communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom |
| | Goal 3: recognize and solve problems |
| X | Goal 4: make decisions and act as responsible members of society |

This lesson supports the development of skills in the following academic content areas.

| Academic Content Area(s) | Specific Skill(s) |
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| X Communication Arts | 1. speaking and writing standard English (including grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) 4. writing formally (such as reports, narratives, essays) and informally (such as outlines, notes) 6. participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas |
| Mathematics | |
| Social Studies | |
| Science | |
| X Health/Physical Education | 2. principles/practices of physical/mental health (e.g., personal health habits, nutrition, stress management) |
| Fine Arts | |

Enduring Life Skill(s)

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| X | Perseverance | | Integrity | X | Problem Solving |
| X | Courage | | Compassion | | Tolerance |
| X | Respect | | Goal Setting | | |

Assessment: acceptable evidence of what learners will know/be able to do as a result of this lesson:

See individual lessons

Lesson Preparation/Motivation

Essential Questions: People make difficult decisions every day! How do they know what to do? How do I decide between two things when I don't like the consequence(s) of either one (a dilemma)?

Engagement (Hook): See individual lessons

Procedures

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| <i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i> | <i>Student Involvement:</i> |
| LESSON 1: WHAT INFLUENCES YOUR DECISIONS? (Lesson 1 easily converts to two lessons.) Materials: Student Thinking Paper: Decisions , Decisions (Reminder: make 5 or 6 extra copies of | LESSON 1: WHAT INFLUENCES YOUR DECISIONS? |

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| <p><i>thinking paper to be used during group discussions.); students need pencils and paper</i></p> <p><i>PSC Note: Throughout this lesson, observe systematically as students work. Be aware of and make note of students who choose not participate in discussions and/or are hesitant or resistant to writing about what is important to them. Note, too, individuals who become forceful or refuse to accept others' ideas. Emphasize that often decisions are made on the basis of satisfying the most important idea and compromising on others.</i></p> <p><i>Hook: Come into class with a stack of 3 or 4 objects, such as, books or swatches of material or CDs/DVDs—any stack of multiple items that requires a choice to be made. Say something that indicates indecision, e.g., I just can't decide...."</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to help you by telling you about how they make decisions. Invite several students to tell how they make decisions. Invite a volunteer to act as a recorder—write ideas presented by students as you list on board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to their processes—especially, when they mention “importance” or “like” or any other word that implies values entered into decision. • Point out the “importance” or “like” words and mention choice based-on importance. <p>Ask students if it would help you with your decision to think about what is important to you (YES). Ask students to give you some examples. Tell them to think about what is most important to them; after about 30 seconds of wait-time, say:</p> <p>SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT...ONE AT-A-TIME (with inside shouts) the things they thought of that are important to them; write their contributions on the board (verbatim).</p> <p>Acknowledge the helpfulness of their ideas and continue by identifying what is important to you in relation to which (object) to choose. Enlist students' help evaluating each object by comparing it to the criteria or criterion you identified. Make a choice. Thank students for help.</p> 2. SHOW-ME: Thumbs up or down: Is it always that easy for you to make a decision? | <p>Reminder: Speak loudly and clearly enough for everyone to hear your great ideas.</p> <p><i>Hook: Observe school counselor's actions with curiosity. What IS his or her point?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer to tell school counselor and classmates how you decide when you can't decide. <p>Think about what is most important;</p> <p>Contribute to SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (inside shouts) the things that are important to you.</p> 2. Participate in SHOW-ME thumbs up or down: Thumbs up if it is always easy to make a decision; Thumbs down if it is not. |

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| <p>3. Continue by acknowledging that making decisions is really difficult sometimes—sometimes what we decide REALLY matters in our lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing from among the <u> (objects in Hook)</u> will not make a big difference in my life; however, other choices (e.g., to become a professional school counselor) did and do make a big difference in my life. • When we make decisions that matter, it is important to think about what is important to us (our values). <p>4. Tell students that the rest of this lesson is devoted to examining the decisions they make every day— those that make a difference in their lives as well as those that are easy and/or automatic.</p> <p>Ask students to think about (in their heads) decisions that have made a difference in their lives. Instruct them to choose one of the situations that required making an important and difficult decision.</p> <p>5. Their next step is: Write a brief narrative (1 or 2 paragraphs) about the difficult decision. Each narrative will recount the situation and list the values (things of importance to them) that influenced the decision. If they have trouble thinking of a specific decision, provide an example from your own life when you were their age. (See Student Involvement for more specific criteria).</p> <p>6. When students complete their narratives, invite several to publicly read their narratives to classmates and relate how their values (what is important to them) did/did not influence choices.</p> <p><i>PSC: This is a good breaking point if you want to divide this lesson into 2 lessons; if so, be sure to keep list from Step 1 to write on board for Steps 7-11).</i></p> <p>7. Review the list developed in Step 1 (how they make decisions/what’s important to them). Add any ideas they have thought of since first making the list.</p> <p>8. Ask: Does everyone in our class think the same things are important? Help students recognize and acknowledge that not all people consider the same things important. Encourage students to ask about the opinions/values of others, to show respect for varying opinions/values AND to courageously & respectfully talk about why they value the things that are important</p> | <p>3. Listen and think about easy decisions and difficult decisions especially, decisions that made a difference in life.</p> <p>4. In your head, continue to think about decisions that made a difference in life. Choose one to write about.</p> <p>5. Write a 1 or 2 paragraph narrative recounting an important decision; list the values that influenced the decision. Use: conventions of standard English; precise and descriptive words to describe the situation; the factors that made it difficult, the decision made and the reasons for the choice. Within the narrative OR in a list at the end of narrative, tell your audience about the things of importance that entered into decision.</p> <p>6. Volunteer to read narrative to classmates. Be sure to use your voice as an actor would—read with meaning, clearly articulate words, read loudly enough for everyone to hear.</p> <p>7. Look over the list you and your classmates developed in Step 1; contribute new ideas to the list.</p> <p>8. Consider differences in what is important to you and your classmates. This is important to remember when working collaboratively in small groups—differences of opinion will emerge.</p> |

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| <p>to them, especially as decisions are made.</p> <p>9. SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT...ONE AT-A-TIME: (inside shouts): decisions they have made so far today. Suggest some examples such as what to wear, what to have for breakfast, and where to sit on the bus. List decisions on board. Explain that people make hundreds or thousands of decisions every day. Some are made automatically and/or without realizing a decision was made (e.g., getting up in the morning is a decision as is what they do the first thing when they get to school).</p> <p>10. Help students relate the first part of this lesson (identifying things of importance) to the decisions made so far today. How did what is important influence decisions made today? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If good health is important, how were their breakfast choices influenced by valuing good health? • If honesty is important, what kind of decisions did he or she make about telling the truth? • If integrity (doing the right thing) is important, how they would respond if a friend asked them to do something they did not want to do. <p>11. Distribute the <u>Decisions, Decisions Student Thinking Paper</u>. Read the daily decisions to students while they follow-along. Tell students to put a ✓ in the “Automatic” column if the decision is automatic or a ☆ in the “Important” column if the decision requires thinking about what is important to them. Invite students to add decisions in the blank rows of the table.</p> <p>Lead a conversation about their responses and what influenced their decisions.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: (Step 6 & Step 11) Each student identifies and describes one situation</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: On the back of their <i>Decisions, Decisions</i> thinking paper, instruct students to complete the following sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I discovered/re-discovered that I value ____. • When making decisions, I learned I ____. • For me, making decisions is difficult when ____. <p><i>Collect narratives and thinking papers. Review for</i></p> | <p>9. Contribute to SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): decisions you have made today.</p> <p>10. Recall the list of things that are important to you and your classmates (Step 1). Review the decisions made so far today. Compare what is important with decisions/choices. Are values (what is important) reflected in choices?</p> <p>11. Listen as school counselor reads; place check or star in the appropriate column for each decision. Contribute to conversation about responses.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: Step 6: Complete narrative using criteria identified in Step 6. Complete thinking paper <i>Decisions, Decisions</i> demonstrating ability to differentiate between “automatic” decisions and “important” decisions.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: On the back of the <i>Decisions, Decisions</i> thinking paper, complete the following sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I discovered/re-discovered that I value ____. • When making decisions, I learned I ____. • For me, making decisions is difficult when ____. |

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| <p><i>students': 1) age-appropriate command of conventions of standard English; 2) ability to articulate thoughts and feelings in 1st person language.</i></p> <p>CLOSURE: Ask students to tally the number of decisions they make every day until the next lesson. Help them decide how/where they will keep their tallies (e.g., at the end of every hour, they tally the decisions they made during that hour in their assignment planners). Encourage students to make a written note about decisions that are difficult to make.</p> <p>LESSON 2: WHAT WOULD YOU DO? Materials: Student Thinking Paper: What Would You Do? (copies for each student + 5 or 6 extra copies to be used during small group discussions)</p> <p><i>PSC Note: Throughout this lesson, observe systematically as students work. Be aware of and make note of students who choose not participate in discussions and/or are hesitant or resistant to writing about what is important to them. Note, too, individuals who become forceful or refuse to accept others' ideas. Emphasize that often decisions are made on the basis of satisfying the most important idea and compromising on others.</i></p> <p>1. Review the previous lesson: SHOW-ME: with your hands, how many decisions have you made since our last lesson? Invite 2-3 students to tell about the automatic decisions made and 2-3 other students to tell about the important decisions made (the ones that required thought). Mention difficulty of making some decisions and invite several additional students to talk with classmates about one of their difficult decisions.</p> <p><i>Hook:</i> A friend has asked you for help deciding what to do in a tough situation. What's the first thing you will say to start helping? Write it down. Tell us...2 or 3 students tell what they would say first. Compare responses for similarities and differences. Continue by saying there are some steps they can follow to be helpful.</p> <p>In this lesson, you have a chance to help three friends, Seth, Maggie and Grace, decide what to do in several important decision-making situations by telling what YOU would do in each situation. In small groups, you will discuss the situations and decide, as a group, the best way to help.</p> | <p>CLOSURE: Keep a tally of the decisions made every day until the next lesson. Decide how/where to keep tally. Make a written note about decisions that are difficult to make; be ready to discuss at the beginning of the next lesson.</p> <p>LESSON 2: WHAT WOULD YOU DO? Reminder: Speak loudly and clearly enough for everyone to hear your great ideas.</p> <p>1. Review tallies of decisions made: Demonstrate with hands the number of decisions made. Volunteers tell about automatic decisions made; other volunteers tell about the important decisions made.</p> <p><i>Hook:</i> Write the first thing you will say to your friend who needs help making a decision. Volunteer to tell the rest of the class what YOU would say.</p> |

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| <p>2. Distribute the What Would You Do-Student Thinking Paper; read each decision-making situation aloud (Part I).</p> <p>Explain the directions for Part II. Invite clarifying questions and instruct students to answer the questions independently.</p> <p>3. After students have individually completed the Student Thinking Paper, divide class into groups of four. Randomly assign each group one of the situations; give each group one blank What Would You Do-Student Thinking Paper on which one of the members will record the group’s consensus in each situation. During discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student must support his or her view based upon what is important to him or her. • Students must agree on one solution to each situation. <p>4. Following discussion and consensus decisions, each group chooses a reporter to report what was agreed upon in the assigned situation AND (without using names) differences of opinion (conflicts) that may have occurred and how consensus was reached.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: (Step 2) Students complete Part II of What Would You Do? student thinking paper(s) using conventions of standard written English. Student responses demonstrate an ability to identify actions to take and what was important to them as they thought of the situation and decided what to do. In addition, students’ ability to work collaboratively in a small group is monitored.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Complete Part III of What Would You Do? thinking paper. Students demonstrate the ability to articulate: 1) conflicting issues of importance in the situations, 2) the most difficult situation in which to make a decision and the reason decision was difficult.</p> <p><i>(Collect thinking papers to review/assess responses for use of standard written English, ability to identify what is important to them and the “reasonableness” of their suggestions. Students’ ability to write about the personal difficulty of making a decision is noted.)</i></p> <p>CLOSURE: SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): For YOU, tell us, please, one idea that stood out from all the others today? Time permitting,</p> | <p>2. Follow with school counselor as he or she reads each situation.</p> <p>Listen to directions for Part II; ask clarifying questions. Thoughtfully respond (in writing) to the questions about each situation.</p> <p>3. Contribute your ideas to small group discussion. Communicate and collaborate in your group.</p> <p>Express/support your view and what is important to you. Listen to others’ views. Be flexible and help group integrate everyone’s ideas and arrive at a consensus for each situation.</p> <p>4. Choose a reporter to present your group’s solution to each situation; reporter also reports (without using names) differences of opinion and how consensus was reached.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: (Step 2) Complete student Part II of thinking paper(s) using conventions of standard written English. In writing be sure to identify actions you would take and identify what was important as you thought about the situation and decided what to do. Work collaboratively in a small group to reach a consensus.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Complete Part III of <i>What Would You Do?</i> thinking paper. Articulate: 1) conflicting issues of importance in the situations, 2) the most difficult situation in which to make a decision and the reason decision was difficult.</p> <p>CLOSURE: SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): Identify one idea that stood out during today’s lesson. State your idea using a complete</p> |

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| <p>do a whip-around--start at specific place in group (e.g., middle) and let every student have an opportunity to contribute one idea (remember—ok to pass—although student takes responsibility—“I pass, today.”)</p> <p>Encourage students to continue to monitor decisions between now and the next lesson—especially those that are difficult.</p> | <p>sentence AND speak loudly enough for EVERYONE in room to hear...it is ok to pass; must say in equally confident voice “I pass today.”</p> <p>Identify a place to write difficult decisions you make. Be prepared to discuss them at the beginning of the next lesson.</p> |
| <p>LESSON 3: DECISION-MAKING: IT IS UP TO ME!</p> <p>Materials: Prior to lesson, (if possible) enlarge the <i>Eight Step Decision-Making Process</i> to poster-size; make copies of Eight Step Decision-Making Process PSC/Student Resource for all students; PSC Resource: Do You Make Your Own Decisions About...? PSC and Student Resource: pocket guide for the <i>Eight-Step Decision-Making Process</i>; Student Thinking Paper: What If?; Assessment Student Thinking Paper: I Am A Decision-Maker!</p> <p><i>If need be, this lesson is easily converted to two lessons.</i></p> <p><i>PSC Note: Throughout this lesson, continue to observe systematically as students work. Note, individuals who become forceful or refuse to accept others’ ideas. Emphasize that often decisions are made on the basis of satisfying the most important idea and compromising on others.</i></p> <p>Hook: Review the previous lesson: SHOW-ME: Who made an important decision since our last lesson? Invite 2-3 students to tell their peers about the important decisions they made; invite another 2-3 students to tell about the challenges they had making important decisions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the statements listed on the PSC Resource: Do You Make Your Own Decisions About...? Ask students to raise their hands if they currently make their own decisions about these issues. Invite students to discuss any of the decisions listed. 2. SHOW-ME with your hands: On a scale of 1-5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How confident are you with your ability to make automatic decisions? • How confident are you with your ability to make important decisions? • Want to learn more about how to make important decisions (before you start middle/junior high | <p>LESSON 3: DECISION-MAKING: IT IS UP TO ME!</p> <p>Students: During this lesson, courageously volunteer and be sure to speak loudly and clearly enough for everyone to hear your great ideas. Use complete sentences and conventions of standard English in speaking and writing.</p> <p>Hook: Respond to school counselor’s query by raising hands; volunteer to tell classmates about important decisions, encourage all students to tell about experiences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise hands as school counselor reads each decision item. Contribute thoughts to discussion, especially for those items that are “sometimes” decisions made on own. 2. Think about personal decision-making confidence and, then, respond to questions posed by school counselor. |

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| <p>school)?</p> <p>3. What decisions do you wish you could make on your own, but adults (school counselors, teachers, parents included) won't let you make those decisions?</p> <p>What decisions do you wish adults would still make for you? (Provide examples of "other kids you know" wanting parents to make decisions about what time to be home) Are there rules you want your parents to make for you so you can say "My parents would sooo ground me if I...!"</p> <p>4. Acknowledge the challenge of growing up and wanting to make decisions but still wanting adults to make some decisions for them. Talk about the kinds of decisions for which they still need input from adults.</p> <p>5. Refer to decisions students make automatically, e.g., their teeth brushing routine. At one time, they had to be taught the steps to take in order to effectively clean their teeth. Now, they don't have to think about what to do first, second.... The steps are automatic.</p> <p>Making difficult decisions is more complicated because the situation is different and they don't have a set routine as they do when brushing their teeth. HOWEVER...</p> <p>As you distribute the Eight-Step Decision Making Process Student/PSC Resource, explain to students that they CAN establish a thinking routine that will work in almost every difficult decision-making situation. It is called the Eight-Step Decision-Making Process.</p> <p><i>PSC Note: Students may be familiar with a decision-process, if so, this will be a review. In order to provide a consistent decision-making vocabulary for students, identify and use the common vocabulary used in classrooms.</i></p> <p>6. Suggest to students that they take notes on their copy of the decision-making process. Using the 8-Step poster as an anchor point, discuss the steps: Step 1: Define the situation and decision clearly: What's going on? What is your dilemma (difficult choice between 2 [or more] options)? Step 2: Establish criteria for your choices: What is important to you? What is the cost—</p> | <p>3. Listen, think and respond to questions school counselor asks.</p> <p>Be brave, be honest when answering the question about decisions you want adults to make for you.</p> <p>4. Think, listen contribute ideas as appropriate regarding the kinds of decisions for which you STILL need input from adults.</p> <p>5. Listen & think about decisions you make as school counselor tells class about automatic and difficult decisions.</p> <p>Look over the eight step decision-making process.</p> <p>6. As school counselor talks about each step in the decision-making process, take notes, think, listen, follow-along and contribute when appropriate. Think about a recent important decision you have made. Use that decision as a point of reference as each step is discussed; on your paper, briefly answer the questions posed at each step.</p> |

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| <p>financial/emotional? What is the benefit— short-term/long term? Will parents approve?</p> <p>Step 3: Search for alternatives. Brainstorm as many choices and alternatives as possible.</p> <p>Step 4: List the pros and cons of each alternative: (Use criteria identified in Step 2); eliminate any alternatives that you already know won't work.</p> <p>Step 5: Brainstorm probable consequences for each remaining alternative.</p> <p>Step 6: Choose the best alternative. After weighing and analyzing the probable consequences for the alternatives, decide which one is best.</p> <p>Step 7: Implement decision for specified period of time</p> <p>Step 8: Evaluate effectiveness of choice/modify actions, if necessary.</p> <p><i>(This is a good place to end this lesson and use the remainder of the activity as another day's lesson. Doing so, will allow a more thorough processing of the What if... thinking paper.)</i></p> <p>7. Distribute the "What If...?" Student Thinking Paper. Explain the directions. Invite clarifying questions. Remind students to use the eight-step decision-making process as they complete the <i>What If...</i> thinking paper.</p> <p>The completed thinking paper serves as the assessment of content and demonstrates students' ability to identify the dilemma, list a minimum of three choices, the consequences for each choice and their final decision</p> <p>8. Place students in groups of 4; distribute a copy of the "What If...?" Student Thinking Paper to each group. Each group chooses a recorder to summarize discussion (on copy of <i>What If...</i>) students discuss their responses to the <i>What if...</i> scenarios. Guide small-group discussions to include a comparison of similarities and differences among their responses— especially what they identified as the dilemma in each scenario and the differences among ideas. (If time is limited, assign each group one of the three scenarios for discussion.)</p> <p>9. Invite discussion (especially about differences in ideas). Ask students how they arrived at their decisions. How did they use the 8 Steps?</p> | <p>7. As school counselor explains directions: read along, listen, think and ask clarifying questions. Complete thinking paper individually. Include: the dilemma, a minimum of three choices, the consequences for each choice and final decision.</p> <p>8. In small group, contribute to discussion by sharing responses and listening to others' responses. How are they the same? How are they different? What influence did what is important to each group member have on decisions.</p> <p>9. Contribute ideas to whole-class discussion. Listen for differences and how individuals arrived at decision.</p> |

| <i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i> | <i>Student Involvement:</i> |
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| <p>Tell students to staple their group’s <i>What If...</i> thinking papers together with the recorder’s notes on top. Tell recorder to keep papers until end of lesson.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: See Step 8--<i>What If...</i> thinking paper.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: <i>Note: This aspect of assessment may be completed orally and/or shortened as appropriate for students’ developmental level.</i></p> <p>Distribute and explain the Assessment Student Thinking Paper: I Am A Decision-Maker! Invite clarifying questions. Emphasize that responses must “make” a complete sentence with prompt.</p> <p>CLOSURE: SHOW-ME...with words...one-at-a-time...What will you remember forever about decision-making? Distribute the pocket guide of the 8 decision-making steps (Lesson 3 Student Resource). Tell students to put the pocket guide where they can find it to guide them when they have a difficult decision to make.</p> <p>Before collecting <i>I Am A Decision Maker</i> and the bundles of <i>What If...</i> thinking papers, inform students that you will be reading their papers and returning them to their classroom teacher; he or she will return papers to students. The classroom teacher might read the papers. Is that OK?</p> <p>If not “OK,” write “PLEASE DO NOT SHARE” at top of paper.</p> <p>Collect thinking papers.</p> <p><i>After class, review/assess responses for use of standard written English, ability to identify dilemmas, choices, consequences and final decisions. Review I Am A Decision-Maker to assess students’ ability to reflect on their experiences in this lesson. Note those who have difficulty with any aspect.</i></p> <p>Return thinking papers to classroom teacher for distribution to students. Honor the privacy of students who write “PLEASE DO NOT SHARE” on papers. Personally deliver papers to those students after your review.</p> | <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: (See Step 8)</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Listen and think while school counselor explains the Assessment Student Thinking Paper: <i>I Am A Decision-Maker!</i></p> <p>Ask clarifying questions, complete the thinking paper and remember to check responses to assure they “make” a complete sentence with prompt.</p> <p>CLOSURE: Volunteer to answer the question: What will you remember forever about decision-making?</p> <p>Put 8-step pocket guide in a “safe place”; use it to guide you when a decision requires extra thinking.</p> <p>If you want your responses to be private between you and school counselor, write “PLEASE DO NOT SHARE” at top of paper.</p> <p>Give thinking papers to school counselor.</p> |

Classroom Teacher Follow-Up Activities (Suggestions for classroom teacher to use to reinforce student learning of Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum concepts)

Provide classroom teacher with an overview of lessons and a copy of each of the printed materials used ([*Decisions, Decisions! What Would You Do?*](#), [*Eight Step Decision-Making Process*](#); [*Do You Make Your Own Decisions About...?*](#), [*Pocket Guide of Eight Step Decision-Making Process*](#); [*What If?*](#) and [*I Am A Decision-Maker!*](#))

Summarize your Systematic Observations: Identify students who consistently had difficulty identifying dilemmas, choices, consequences and making final decisions. Note especially those who had difficulty reflecting on their experiences in this lesson, e.g., appeared to lack the ability or confidence to identify:

- Issues/ideas important to them,
- Difficult decision-making situations
- The personal difficulty of making decisions
-
- Conflicts within self when faced with a difficult decision
- Personal application of the 8-Step Decision-Making Process.

Note those who have difficulty with any other aspect of the lessons, e.g., students who(se):

- Chose not to participate in discussions
- Repeatedly engaged in distracting behaviors
- Rarely (if ever) voluntarily contributed to class conversations
- Consistently attempted to take over class discussions and/or partner collaboration
- Became forceful or refused to accept others' ideas in groups
- Were unable/unwilling to compromise with others
- Responses to thinking papers were inappropriate or lacked depth/sincerity.
- Were hesitant or resistant to writing about issues of importance to them
- Consistently used non-standard written/oral English.

Consult With The Classroom Teacher about your observations and determine if he or she observes the same kinds of behaviors in the classroom. If so, collaborate with the classroom teacher to further identify the extent of the challenge. How is it evidenced in the classroom? Determine if the difficulty is a “will” or a “skill” or cultural issue. For example, does the student know HOW to make decisions and identify important issue but lacks the motivation or confidence to take the risk to openly discuss personal dilemmas or processes (will)? Or does the student lack the skills of working cooperatively in groups or lacks the vocabulary to express self (skill)? In some cultures talking about personal issues may be seen as focusing on self rather than the good of the group.

Collaborate With Classroom Teacher to plan appropriate classroom, individual and/or small group interventions. Interventions might include (and are not limited to) additional decision-making classroom guidance activities, Responsive Services involvement (e.g., individual/group counseling regarding cooperative and collaborative work with others, self-confidence building regarding expression of personal ideas. In some case, more intense parental involvement may be indicated).

If the student behaviors are limited to classroom guidance lessons, consider reasons, for example: What are the unique factors that might be influencing these students' responses during classroom guidance lessons? Have the behaviors occurred during other classroom guidance lessons? All lessons? Topic-specific lessons? Motivated by peers?

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Name: _____ **Class:** _____ **Date:** _____

Everyone makes decisions daily. Some decisions are more important than others. Some are so important that they require thought, study, and investigation before a decision can be made; other decisions are automatic. Listed below are some decision-making situations that require choices.

Directions: Read the list and consider how YOU would make each decision. Place a ✓ in the “Automatic” column if your decision comes automatically. If you must think about it and your decision is based on what is important to you, place a ☆ in the “Important” column. If you think of other decisions you might make daily, write those in the blank rows of the table.

| Decision | Automatic | Important |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. To get up early or late in the morning | | |
| 2. What to eat for breakfast. | | |
| 3. To tell a lie--or not | | |
| 4. To criticize a friend --or not | | |
| 5. To smoke--or not | | |
| 6. What to read | | |
| 7. To study or watch TV the night before a test | | |
| 8. To tattle on your friend--or not | | |
| 9. To go to school--or not | | |
| 10. To cheat on a test--or not | | |
| 11. What to buy as a gift | | |
| 12. To save part of your allowance or spend it | | |
| 13. To join a gang--or not | | |
| 14. To wear your hair long or short | | |
| 15. To tattle on your younger brother or sister--or not | | |
| 16. What to have for a snack | | |
| 17. To do your chores--or not | | |
| 18. To go to a friend's house or stay home | | |
| 19. | | |
| 20. | | |
| 21. | | |
| 22. | | |

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Directions: *Part I:* Read along as school counselor reads each of the situations. **Part II:** After reading/listening to each of the three situations, write what you would do and why. **Part III:** After discussing the situations with your colleagues, (on back of paper) respond to Part III.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? Part I

#1: Grace's Situation

The student council at your friend Grace's school has purchased trees for the school. Students worked to raise the money. She attended the assembly the day the trees were planted and shares the feeling of accomplishment. Several weeks later, Grace passed the school and saw several cars parked near the front of the school. Loud laughing and conversation could be heard. She saw the cars drive over the curb and head for the newly planted trees. The first car drove over a tree and cut it in half. She felt sick with disgust and walked faster toward home. As she turned the corner, the car passed her. She recognized one of the drivers. It was her friend's older brother.

#2: Seth's Situation

Last week, Seth's best friend asked him to go to the movies on Saturday. Today, a very popular student at school invited Seth to go with his family to the water park. Seth had wanted to go to the water park for a loooong time.

#3: Maggie's Situation

Maggie was with a group of friends on the playground at recess. The class bully called her a name. Her friends urge her to fight. Maggie knows that if she fights, the bully will win (and they both will get in trouble), but she does not want her friends to call her a "wimp."

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? PART II

#1: Grace's Situation

What would you do?

What was Important to you when making this decision?

#2: Seth's Situation

What would you do?

What was Important to you when making this decision?

3: Maggie's Situation

What would you do?

What was important to you when making this decision?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? PART III—Respond from YOUR perspective.

***What conflicting issues of importance were a part of the situations?
In making a decision, which situation was most difficult for you?
What made the decision difficult for you?***

DO YOU MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS ABOUT...

Read the following statements; ask students to raise their hands if they currently make their own decisions about these issues.

1. What to wear to school
2. Whom to invite home
3. What to wear on weekends
4. To own a pet or not
5. How to spend your allowance
6. To do chores or not
7. What to eat for breakfast
8. What time to come home after school
9. When to go to bed on school nights
10. What time to come home in the evening
11. When to go to bed on weekends
12. To bring lunch or buy lunch
13. When to do homework
14. Who will become your best friend
15. Whom to have as friends
16. To whom you write letters
17. What shows to watch on TV
18. Whom to invite to your party

Ask the students to add other decisions they make by themselves.

WHAT IF?**Name:** _____ **Class:** _____ **Date:** _____**Directions:** *For each situation, determine your dilemma; list your options (possible choices); the consequences of each possible choice and your final decision.*

1. A classmate dropped her lunch money on the playground at recess. She didn't realize it. You are the only one who noticed.

What is your dilemma? _____

Possible Choices: _____

Consequences of each choice possible choice: _____

Your Final Decision: _____

2. Your mom tells you to come straight home from school. Today your new best friend asks you to stop by his or her house to play a new video game. His or her mom says it's OK for you to come.

What is your dilemma? _____

Possible Choices: _____

Consequences of each choice possible choice: _____

Your Final Decision: _____

3. Your friends want you to try drinking a beer with them. You tell them you don't want to try it, but they laugh and call you a "nerd" they ask you again to just "try it, one drink won't hurt."

What is your dilemma? _____

Possible Choices: _____

Consequences of each choice possible choice: _____

Your Final Decision: _____

COMMENTS or QUESTIONS? Write them here or on the back.

EIGHT-STEP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Step 1: Define the situation and decision

clearly: What's going on? What is your dilemma (difficult choice between 2 [or more] options)?

Step 2: Establish criteria for your choices:

What is important to you? What is the cost—financial/emotional? What is the benefit—short-term/long term? Will parents approve?

Step 3: Search for alternatives. Brainstorm as many choices and alternatives as possible.

Step 4: List the pros and cons of each

alternative: (Use criteria identified in Step 2); eliminate any alternatives that you already know won't work.

Step 5: Brainstorm probable consequences for each remaining alternative.

Step 6: Choose the best alternative. After weighing and analyzing the probable consequences for the alternatives, decide which one is best.

Step 7: Implement decision for specified period of time

Step 8: Evaluate effectiveness of decision & modify actions, if necessary.

I AM A DECISION-MAKER!

Directions: Complete the following sentences with your thoughts and feelings about making decisions. Be honest and thoughtful as you complete the sentences. Re-read your response to be sure it “makes” a complete sentence.

1. We discussed a thinking routine that will work in almost every difficult decision-making situation: The Eight-Step Decision-Making Process.

From now on, the 8-Step Decision-Making Process _____
_____.

The easiest thing about the 8-Step Decision-Making Process _____
_____.

The most difficult thing about the 8-Step Decision-Making Process _____
_____.

2. In making a decision, the most difficult situations are _____

_____ ,
because _____
_____.

3. I felt conflicts within me when _____.

4. The issues of importance to me _____.

5. Overall, my decision-making ability is _____.

6. I want to learn more about _____.

7. Other comments and/or questions I have _____

EIGHT-STEP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Step 1: Define the situation and decision clearly:** What's going on? What is your dilemma (difficult choice between 2 [or more] options)?
- Step 2: Establish criteria for your choices:** What is important to you? What is the cost—financial/emotional? What is the benefit—short-term/long term? Will parents approve?
- Step 3: Search for alternatives.** Brainstorm as many choices and alternatives as possible.
- Step 4: List the pros and cons of each alternative:** (Use criteria identified in Step 2); eliminate any alternatives that you already know won't work.
- Step 5: Brainstorm probable consequences** for each remaining alternative.
- Step 6: Choose the best alternative.** After weighing and analyzing the probable consequences for the alternatives, decide which one is best.
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