



# Grade 6-8 Decision Making

## Background Information:

Students make decisions everyday, however, many of the decisions they see and experience may not have been carefully considered. It is important for students to understand that the use of this skill will allow them to sort through problems, brainstorm options, analyze the positive and negative outcomes, and then implement and reflect on the choices they make. When applied to health issues, this process gives students the ability to make decisions individually, or collaboratively, to improve their quality of life.

The decision making model for grades 6-8 involves five basic steps. It is a good idea to have these steps posted in the room or available as a handout. The model and an example should be shared with students during the teaching of the skill. By understanding how to make good decisions students will learn that they will have more control over their lives.

## The Model



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# The Steps

Skill Steps	Teaching progression	Grades MS Decision Making Example:
<b>Step 1: Identifying a Decision That Needs a Decision</b>	<p>Before students can identify a decision, they need to be able to have a discussion about circumstances that can help or hinder healthy decision-making.</p> <p>They need to anticipate when and where situations will arise that will require them to make a healthy decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going to a party with friends</li> <li>• Parents are gone-what are kids expected to do here?</li> <li>• Choosing healthy foods</li> </ul> <p>The next step is being able to evaluate when a thoughtful decision is needed versus an everyday decision. For example, smoking marijuana vs. what to wear to school.</p> <p>Another concept for students to examine is the difference between an impulsive versus a thoughtful decision.</p> <p>Students should discuss what situations they will need help with a decision.</p> <p>Finally, students need to be able to verbalize why this decision is important to their health and how making a healthy decision will benefit themselves and/or others.</p>	<p>A couple of my friends have gone to parties and are bragging about smoking cigarettes. I am going to a party this next weekend and I am afraid that I may be pressured to smoke. "If someone at the party asks me to smoke, am I going to say yes or no"</p>
<b>Step 2: Brainstorm Possible Options</b>	<p>Make a list of all of the possible options you would consider.</p>	<p>Brainstorm Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Don't go to the party at all.</li> <li>2. Go to the party and try smoking.</li> <li>3. Go to the party and say no.</li> </ol>
<b>Step 3: Identify the Positive and Negative Outcomes for Each Option</b>	<p>The use of a chart is beneficial in listing all of the positive and negative outcomes of each option: The criteria to be used is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the option healthy or unhealthy?</li> <li>• How does the option affect myself?</li> <li>• How does the option affect others?</li> <li>• Does this option support my values?</li> <li>• How do these options affect my goals?</li> <li>• Does the decision follow the law?</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Don't go to the party at all. Outcomes, positive no pressure to smoke, negative I miss out on being with friends.</li> <li>2. Go to the party and try smoking. Outcomes, positive fit in with my friends; negative labeled by others as a smoker and may become addicted.</li> <li>3. Go to the party and say no. Outcomes, positive not breaking the law, be with my friends, negative, might lose my smoking friends</li> </ol>
<b>Step 4: Make a Decision and Follow Through</b>	<p>Students are now ready to make their decision based on their analysis of the positive and negative outcomes.</p>	<p>The decision will be to go to the party and say no.</p>
<b>Step 5: Reflect on the Decision That was Made</b>	<p>Students need to take time to reflect on the decision that was made and analyze the outcome of the decision. Students can answer a variety of questions related to the decision making process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the decision I made?</li> <li>• Why did I make the choice that I did?</li> <li>• Did the decision that I made work? Why or Why not?</li> <li>• How did this decision affect my health?</li> <li>• Would you make this decision again?</li> </ul>	<p>Use the reflection questions to analyze if the decision was the correct one for me.</p> <p>It was good choice because I was able to be with my friends and I did not break the law. They accepted my decision to say no.</p>

# Sample Student Handouts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Decision-Making Process

**STEP 1: Identify the decision to be made**

Describe the situation that involves a decision that needs to be made:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the decision to be made? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this decision important to me and my health? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this situation require me to use the decision-making process? YES or NO  
Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can I make this decision alone, or do I need the help of an adult or trusted resource?  
Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will this decision affect me the rest of my life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Teaching Tips:

- Vocabulary, outcomes, positive, negative, reflection, decision, values
- Time needs to be spent differentiating between an easy decision and a thoughtful decision.
- Middle school students can also make impulsive decisions. Discussing how the brain works at this age level and having kids practice stopping and thinking before engaging in an activity are important.
- The use of role-play to practice decision making can be beneficial because it allows students to consider the potential outcomes.
- Time also needs to be spent recognizing which situations might require the help of an adult or other trusted resource.
- More time is spent on the role of values in decision making at the high school level. However, this is a good time to introduce what a value is and how it can influence decision making.
- Decision making is different than refusal skills. Decision making should be done before students actually get into an unhealthy situation, while refusal skills helps students get out of a situation

## What Does Mastery of Accessing Information Look Like:

Grades 6-8 students will have mastered the skill of decision making if they can first of all, anticipate situations where they might have to make a thoughtful decision. Then, they should be able to identify the decision to be made and determine if the decision can be made alone, or if they need the help of an adult or trusted source. Next, students will be able to list healthy options and predict positive and negative outcomes. Finally, they will be able to make a healthy decision and then analyze the outcome of the decision and how it will benefit their life in the future.

## Teaching/Student Resources

### The Colorado Education Initiative

<http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/resources/che/pe/>

### RMC Health

<http://www.rmc.org/>

### Colorado Department of Education

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cohealthpe/statestandards>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Decision-Making Process



## STEP 1: Identify the Decision to be Made

Describe the situation that involves a decision that needs to be made:

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What is the decision to be made? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why is this decision important to me and my health? \_\_\_\_\_

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Does this situation require me to use the decision-making process? YES or NO

Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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Can I make this decision alone, or do I need the help of an adult or trusted resource?

Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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How will this decision affect me the rest of my life? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Step 2: Brainstorm Possible Options

## Step 3: Identify Possible Outcomes

Options	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
1.		
2.		
3.		



## Step 4 - Make a Decision and Follow Through

According to the options above, which one looks like the best and circle it.

Now, look at the criteria below, answer each question about the option you chose. If you answered no to any of the questions, then you need to re-evaluate your option.

	YES	NO
Is the option healthy?	_____	_____
Does this decision respect my mind and body?	_____	_____
Does this decision respect people that care about me?	_____	_____
Does this option support my values?	_____	_____
Does this option promote my goals?	_____	_____
Does this decision follow the law?	_____	_____

Which healthy option did you chose? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

