

## Health Skill:

# Decision-Making



## Background Information

The health skill, *Decision-Making*, focuses on the fact that people make decisions everyday. These decisions can be everyday decisions, impulsive decisions, quick decisions, or thoughtful decisions. Identifying the level of importance for each decision allows for an intentional process to be utilized when needed. Taking the time to make thoughtful decisions, especially regarding one's health, helps maintain positive health behaviors and change unhealthy behaviors. It is important for students to understand that the use of this skill allows them to sort through problems, brainstorm options, analyze the outcomes, follow-through, and reflect on the choices they make. When applied to health, the steps in this health skill model gives students the ability to make decisions individually, or collaboratively, to improve their quality of life. The health skill also allows students to make decisions outside of high-risk and high-stake contexts, increasing the likelihood of making healthy choices when facing potentially unhealthy situations. Mastery of *Decision-Making* empowers students to work through difficult situations by keeping the impact of the decision on their health in mind. Mastering *Decision-Making* prepares students for the other health skills, such as *Goal-Setting*, *Self-Management*, and *Advocacy for Self & Others*.

### Notes on Grade Level Progression

Activities, vocabulary, and language throughout the grade levels are vertically aligned and build upon one another.

If students require scaffolding, refer to previous grade levels for additional ideas for activities and instruction that address gaps in student skills. For enrichment activities, look at higher grade levels in order to provide additional practice opportunities or for ideas on how to deepen understanding.

#### PreK-2

- Identifying decisions related to health
- Knowing when to get help
- Choosing between two options
- Learning from decisions

#### 3-5

- Identifying options
- Predicting outcomes
- Reflecting on decisions

#### 6-8

- Defining different types of decisions (everyday, impulsive, thoughtful)
- Analyzing collaborative and individual decisions
- Predicting and evaluating outcomes
- Using strategies to help follow-through on decisions
- Identifying potential obstacles to health decision-making

#### 9-12

- Using more complex prioritization strategies (pro/con lists, values rating)
- Using collaborative decision-making strategies

### NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD (NHES) 5:

Students will demonstrate the ability to use *decision-making* skills to enhance health.

*National Health Education Standard Rationale: Decision-making skills are needed to identify, implement, and sustain health-enhancing behaviors. This standard includes the essential steps that are needed to make healthy decisions as prescribed in the performance indicators. When applied to health issues, the decision-making process enables individuals to collaborate with others to improve their quality of life.*



### Grades 9-12 Framework

In grades 9-12, students work to identify how to best make responsible decisions. Because high school students are making more major life decisions, they will focus on important strategies for making meaningful, responsible decisions for themselves and their future. *Decision-Making* begins with students identifying types of decisions they make in their life. After delineating the types of decisions they will encounter, students in grades 9-12 practice building the habit of pausing before making a decision. Stopping and thinking helps them determine if the decision requires them to apply the decision-making process. Once students determine the type of decision, they use prioritization strategies to critically think through their options, and ultimately, make a responsible decision. Students next follow through with their decision. Finally, to ensure students learn from decisions, reflection is an included crucial step in decision-making, allowing students to connect choices to their future.

Mastery of *Decision-Making* for grades 9-12 means students are able to identify decisions that require a responsible decision-making process, use a variety of decision-making strategies, make and follow through on healthy decisions, and reflect on decisions in order to impact future decisions.

## The Steps:



### Step 1: Pause and Think

**Step Overview:** It is important when making decisions to take time to stop and think in order to slow down and prevent impulsive decisions. The main goal of this step is to develop awareness for when decisions need to be made using a responsible decision-making process. It is important for students to understand that they do not have to go through these steps with every decision they make because that can be unrealistic and overwhelming. By focusing on the important decisions related to their health, students are better equipped to recognize when they need to slow things down. It also allows them to make decisions ahead of time rather than in stressful moments where it is more difficult to make health decisions. In addition to distinguishing between when a thoughtful decision-making process is needed, students also explore when decision-making must be done with others because the decision affects more than just themselves. For example, students should explore important decisions that require agreement or consent from another person.

#### Sub Skill(s):

- Define different types of decisions (Everyday, Impulsive, Responsible)
- Identify the decision
- Determine if a situation requires slowing down decision-making
- Determine if a situation requires an individual or collaborative decision



## Step 2: Use a Prioritization Strategy

**Step Overview:** People face a variety of decisions in their life, which means they need a variety of decision-making strategies to sift through their options and select the one that is best for them. In Step 2, students should learn a variety of strategies that aid in decision-making: creating a pro/con list, listing options, listing consequences, using values to weigh some options heavier than others, pretending to give advice to a friend, identifying if help is needed, etc. The Sub Skills included in this step are only a few of the many strategies students can use to aid them in making healthy decisions. Teachers should use additional strategies to meet the needs of their students.

### Sub Skill(s):

- Use a variety prioritization strategies
  - Pro/Con list
  - If this... then this...
  - Consequence list
  - Weighted options
  - Give advice to a friend
  - Eliminate some options
  - Seek out support



## Step 3: Make a Decision

**Step Overview:** Once a person has listed options and predicted outcomes, it is important to make the decision and follow-through. It can sometimes be easy to get stuck in Step 2 because it is hypothetical. However, it is important that a decision is actually made. Step 3 provides students opportunities to practice making decisions.



## Step 4: Follow Through

**Step Overview:** Learning to follow through on decisions is especially important for high school students as they are entering a phase where they must hold themselves accountable. It is important that teachers provide strategies to follow through on decisions, such as communicating decisions clearly and making a plan. The *Teaching Progression* for this step provides some strategies, however, teachers should use additional strategies to meet the needs of their classroom.

### Sub Skill(s):

- Communicate decisions
- Identify barriers to following through with my decision
- Make a plan for when a healthy decision is difficult
  - Seek out support
  - Make a schedule to manage personal time
  - Avoid friends who constantly peer pressure
  - Ask for advice from a teacher/ trusted adult
  - Determine what is within my control



### Step 5: Reflect

**Step Overview:** Learning to reflect takes practice and intention. After a decision is made, it is important to learn from the consequences, both positive and negative. This step allows students to take time to connect this decision to future decisions. Developing metacognition in decision making allows a person to make decisions more quickly in moments where they don't have time to go through all of the steps explicitly.

#### Reflection Question(s):

- How did the decision make me feel?
- What options did I think about at first?
- Why did I choose the option you did?
- What might happen next after this decision?
- How did asking for help make my decision healthier?
- How does this decision affect others?
- How does this decision affect my relationships?
- How does this decision align with my values?
- How does this decision affect my goals?
- Would I make that decision again? Why or why not?
- What do I want to remember next time I have to make the same decision?



### Teaching Tips

- Teach *Decision-Making* for each health topic covered. Prompt students to identify decisions they will need to make related to that health topic. For example, when substances, such as tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol, have students use the steps to decide whether or not to use these substances.
- Prompt students to use a variety of prioritization strategies in order to choose healthy options. For example, students first predict outcomes, use a weighted options list, and give advice to a friend for a single decision to see which worked best for them.
- Provide opportunities for students to role play communicating their decisions to others and asking for support. Communicating decisions increases the likelihood that an individual will follow through.
- Allow students to use decisions they are facing in order to apply the decision-making process to their life.
- Pair Decision-Making with *Stage 2: Refusal Skills & Boundary Setting* of Interpersonal Communication to help students follow through on decisions when facing difficult situations.

See *Teaching Progression* for suggested learning activities.



## Teaching Progression:



### Step 1: Pause and Think

#### SUB SKILL(S):

- Define different types of decisions (Everyday, Impulsive, Responsible)
- Identify the decision
- Determine if a situation requires slowing down decision-making
- Determine if a situation requires an individual or collaborative decision

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What types of decisions take very little processing to make? What types of decisions need a more thorough, thoughtful decision-making process? What makes some decisions so much more important than others? When do I need to include others in my decision making process?

#### NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.12.2) Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. (5.12.3) Justify when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.

#### VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*decision, process, healthy, unhealthy, thoughtful decisions, everyday decisions, impulsive decisions, individual, collective, collaborative*

### Step 1: Pause and Think

#### Sub Skill: Define different types of decisions (Everyday, Impulsive, Responsible)

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that not all decisions are equal in terms of importance. Define for students the different types of decisions. Allow students to interact with these definitions to help them better understand them.

- Everyday Decisions: *Decisions that don't have long-lasting impacts on one's life and health.*
  - Example: I order a pizza with pepperoni instead of mushrooms.
- Impulsive Decisions: *Decisions that are made without thinking through the impacts of the decision. They can have negative consequences, especially in stressful situations.*
  - Example: I'm hanging out with friends and someone offers me a beer. I take it without thinking that I have to drive home later.

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*The decision being made is an example of a \_\_\_\_\_ decision because \_\_\_\_\_.*



### Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

- Responsible Decisions: *Decisions that are made by going through the decision-making model. These are decisions that are made with intent and forethought, and the individual has considered the impact of alternative decisions for the given situation.*
  - Example: I am hanging out with friends when someone offers me a beer. I pause to think about the impact of drinking now and in the future. I decide to decline the beer because drinking underage is illegal, I need to drive home in an hour, and I don't want to risk getting a ticket and losing my scholarship.

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- Use additional types of decisions, definitions, or examples to support the needs in your classroom.



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Have students identify the three types of decision making by evaluating different relevant scenarios. Read out loud different scenarios of people making decisions. Have students identify if each scenario is demonstrating a person making an everyday, impulsive, or responsible decision. For each scenario, have students move to an area of the room designated to represent each type of decision. After students identify the type of decision made, have students turn and discuss their thought process using the *Language of Health Literacy* provided. Ask students to explain their answers based on the definitions you have provided.



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Instruct students to create three columns on a piece of paper, one for everyday decisions, one for impulsive decisions, and one for responsible decisions. Have students identify either past decisions they have made for each category or decisions they anticipate will come up for them in the future. Have students share out examples with peers.

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- Monitor student examples and engage in conversations with students who identify decisions that feel unsafe and/or unhealthy.
- Do not make students share decisions that they do not feel comfortable sharing with others. Instead, allow them to share decisions that are less personal or identify decisions that a person could make.



## Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

### Step 1: Pause and Think | Sub Skill: Identify the Decision



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that when they face a decision, they need to determine precisely what decision needs to be made. Tell students that sometimes there are complex decisions that may require several decisions they can make, while other situations present clear singular decisions. Explain to students that they must be clear on the decision they are making in order to choose the correct decision making strategy.

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*The decision that needs to be made is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I need to decide what to do about \_\_\_\_\_.*

*In this situation, some decisions I need to make are \_\_\_\_\_.*

Have students identify the decision/ decisions that need to be made given different scenarios. For each scenario a student is provided, have the student state clearly the decision or decisions the individual needs to make.

- Example Scenarios:
  - You are at a party. You see a person that you don't really know set their drink down and leave. You think you see someone mess with the person's drink. They return and pick up their cup.
  - You are meeting with your counselor. He tells you that you need to have three recommendation letters and two essays to complete your scholarship application by the end of the month.
  - You were accepted to your dream school and two other colleges. Your dream school did not offer you any scholarships, but you did receive financial aid to one of the other schools.
  - You and your friends are planning your prom day activities.
  - You are at a party, and you see the person who is supposed to drive you home drinking. When it is time to leave, your driver tells you that they are fine. They aren't slurring and don't seem drunk, but you saw them take two shots within the last hour.

### Step 1: Pause and Think

#### Sub Skill: Determine If A Situation Requires Slowing Down Decision-Making



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that not every decision will require a thoughtful, responsible decision making process; so the first thing a person needs to do when approaching a decision is to determine the importance of that decision. Explain to students that the following questions can help them quickly determine if the decision is important enough to apply a responsible decision-making strategy.

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*This decision can/cannot have a meaningful impact because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I believe this decision needs a more thoughtful/responsible decision making process because \_\_\_\_\_.*





### Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

Provide students with a handout or post the following questions for students:

- Can this decision have a meaningful impact on me now?
- Can this decision have a meaningful impact on my future?
- Do I feel scared, uncomfortable or unsure?
- Can I get hurt by this decision?
- Does this situation affect my health?
- Does this situation affect my relationships?
- Does this situation connect to my values?

Tell students that if they answer “Yes” to any of the previous questions, they need to pause and think more critically about the decision they are about to make.

Explain to students that people can find it challenging to pause and think because people often build the habit of making impulsive decisions. Define *impulsive* to students. *An impulsive act is when we do something without thinking through the action and its implication on our life.* Tell students that they will learn strategies to build habits to pause and think before acting to make more responsible and thoughtful decisions when needed.

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- See *Resource Bank* below for an article on brain science, teens and impulsive decision making.



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Give students 4-5 decisions a student their age could face. Include both meaningful decisions and less important decisions. Tell students to rank the decisions from most to least important. Next, have students start with the most important decision and answer the questions from Suggested Learning Activity 1 (above) to determine how important each decision could be for the individual. Students can write out their responses in a journal, or talk through their thinking with a partner.

Once students complete the activity, use the following questions to lead the class in a reflective discussion:

- How do the questions provided help a person determine the importance of a decision?
- How can these questions help a teenager slow down their response to a decision?
- What question best helps you know if a decision is more serious, requiring a more thoughtful process?



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Explain to students that the more often you behave a certain way or perform an action, the more that behavior gets physically hardwired into your brain's memory. Tell students that we often call these repeated actions and behavior habits. Explain to students that the more we repeat an action or behavior the easier it is for our brain to recall that habit. Explain that people must actively work to retrain their brains to build new habits, including slowing down the decision-making process. Tell students that today they will learn specific strategies to start building the habit of pausing before making decisions and taking action.

Give students a list of options to support them in pausing before making a decision. Have students play a game with a small group (4-5). While playing the game, have students use strategies provided to slow down their decision-making process.





## Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

When students complete the game, lead the class in a reflective discussion:

- What strategies did you use to slow down your decision making?
- How could this be helpful in your actual life?
- Why can it be challenging for people to pause before making decisions?
- Which strategy did you find most helpful for you to pause?

### TEACHING NOTES:

- See *Resource Bank* below for an article explaining the creation of habits in the human mind.
- See *Resource Bank* below for suggested games.
- Example strategies to stop and pause: count backwards from 10, take three deep breaths, recognize your gut response and ask yourself, "Is this the best response?". Take a break from the situation and do something else.

## Step 1: Pause and Think

### Sub Skill: Determine If A Situation Requires An Individual Or Collaborative Decision



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Tell students that once they determine the importance of a decision they need to decide if they can make the decision on their own or if they must include others in the decision making process. Explain to students that when making a decision collaboratively they are not asking for another person's opinion, they are including others in the decision because the impact of the decision affects others. Define *collaboration* for students. *Collaboration is the action of working jointly with others to create an outcome.*

Tell students that to determine if they need to work in collaboration to make a decision, they can use the following questions:

- Will this decision affect another person?
- Do I need another person to take action for me to make this decision?
- Do I need to work with another person to accomplish this decision?

Explain to students that if they answer *yes* to any of these questions, they will need to work alongside other people in order to make the decision.



See *Stage 4: Collaboration of Interpersonal Communication* for more detailed guidance on collaboration strategies.

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*This decision can be handled by the individual because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*This decision should be handled collaboratively because \_\_\_\_\_.*



## Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Place 4-5 pieces of poster paper around the room. On each poster, pose the following prompts:

- A decision you need to make everyday...
- A decision you need to make this week...
- A decision you need to make to graduate...
- A decision you need to make to earn an "A" in this class...
- A decision you need to make to be healthy...

First, have students rotate around the posters to write examples. Give students 3-5 minutes to complete their examples. Next, have students review their peers' responses. Tell students to ask the three questions to determine if the decision can be made individually or collaboratively. While reviewing responses have students indicate which decisions can be made individually versus collaboratively using a symbol next to peer responses. After students analyze peer responses, have students give examples of individual versus collaborative decision making.



## Teaching Progression:



### Step 2: Use a Prioritization Strategy

#### SUB SKILL(S):

- Use a variety of prioritization strategies
  - Pro/Con list
  - If this... then this...
  - Consequence list
  - Weighted options
  - Give advice to a friend
  - Eliminate some options
  - Seek out support

#### VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*strategy,*  
*consequence,*  
*pro, con, option*

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What decision do I need to make? What decision making strategy can I use to make this decision? How can different decisions impact me now and in the future?

#### NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.12.4 ) Generate alternatives to health-related issues or problems. (5.12.5 ) Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of each alternative on self and others.

### Step 2: Use a Decision-Making Strategy

#### Sub Skill: Use A Variety of Prioritization Strategies



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that once they know the decision they must make, they can use one of the following strategies to make a thoughtful, responsible decision. Tell students that different decisions will require them to use different decision making strategies, and that some strategies are better for individual decision making while other strategies better support collaborative decision making.

Have students return to the scenarios presented previously in Step 1. For each scenario, students should first determine if the decision should be made individually or collaborative. Next, have students decide which decision making strategy would be best given the scenario. Have students write out how they would use their chosen strategy to make a more thoughtful, responsible decision.



**Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Use a Decision-Making Strategy (Cont.)**

Decision Making Strategy	Language of Health Literacy:	Example:
<p><i>Pro/Con List</i> - Create a list of the possible positives and negatives associated with the decision they make.</p>	<p>My decision is to _____. The positives could be _____. However, the negatives could be _____.</p>	<p>My decision is to get in the car with my friend who was drinking earlier. The positives could be that I get home quickly and get away from this party that is making me feel uncomfortable. However, the negatives could be that we get pulled over, or get into a crash, which is dangerous and unsafe.</p>
<p><i>If this... then this...</i> - Make a quick "if this, then this" statement to assess the serious consequences of the decision. Make your "If this, Then this" statement with the most costly consequence to quickly evaluate the weight of your decision.</p>	<p>If I decide to _____, then _____ could happen.</p>	<p>If I decide to get into the car with my friend who is drinking, then I could get seriously hurt in a car accident.</p>
<p><i>Consequence List</i> - Create a list of possible consequences for your decision. Note that consequences can be positive and negative.</p>	<p>If I decide to _____, the possible consequences are _____.</p>	<p>If I decide to spend \$200 on my prom dress, then the possible consequences are: I will need to work more to save, won't be able to spend as much on eating out, won't be able to get my hair done, will get the dress that I have wanted for the past three months, and will have a unique dress that expresses my style.</p>
<p><i>Weighted Options</i> - Create a list of possible options for your decision. For each possible option predict the outcome if that were your decision. Next, give each option a value on a scale of 1-5 based on how important that outcome would be for you. Finally, tally your points for each option to find the option with the highest score.</p>	<p>My possible choices are _____. _____ is the best decision for me because _____. This decision is better aligned with my values because _____.</p>	<p>Decision: Which college should I attend? Options: University of Colorado-Denver, School of Mines Predictions: CU would be cheaper, closer to home, and allow me to continue my internship. School of Mines is more expensive, allows me to have more independence, and provides a better engineering program. Personal Value: CU-Financially 4, Family Time 5, Future 3; Mines- Financially 2, Family Time 3, Future 4 Tally: CU - 12; Mines - 9</p> <p>My possible decisions were CU Denver and School of Mines. CU Denver is the best decision for me because it allows me to save money, be closer to my family and continue my current internship. This decision is better aligned with my values because it allows me to spend quality time with my family which is something I truly value over independence.</p>
<p><i>Give Advice to a Friend</i> - Pretend that you are giving advice on the decision to a friend. Try to remove your personal, emotional bias and view the problem through the lense of an outsider.</p>	<p>Your decision is to _____. I think you should decide _____ based on _____.</p>	<p>Your decision is to complete the essay for language arts throughout the week or this weekend. I think you should decide to spend 30 minutes every week night working on the essay, based on the fact that you like to relax on weekends after track meets.</p>
<p><i>Eliminate Some Options</i> - For your given decision, determine the most important feature for that decision. Brainstorm a list of all possible decisions and cross off any that do not meet your most important feature. Repeat until left with only the most relevant options.</p>	<p>The most important thing to me is _____ and _____ can't do that, so I can eliminate them.</p>	<p>I need to decide on which college I want to attend next year. I have acceptance letters from five universities. The most important aspect is being able to play soccer. Only two allow me to play soccer. I eliminate the other three and narrow down my decision to two. My second most important factor is studying journalism. One of the two remaining universities has a great journalism program.</p>
<p><i>Seek Out Support</i> - Certain decisions can best be made with the help of others. Determine if there is an expert, family member, or friend who can help you process your decision. Approach that support person with specific questions for making your decision.</p>	<p>I need to decide _____. _____ can help me figure out _____. I will ask _____ about _____.</p>	<p>I need to decide which classes to take my senior year. My guidance counselor can help me determine which classes I am required to take for graduation and which classes will help me be prepared for college. I will ask my guidance counselor about classes I must take and which classes they recommend for someone wanting to study biology in college.</p>



## Teaching Progression:

### Step 3: Make a Decision

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

Why is it important to make decisions?

#### NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.12.7) Evaluate the effectiveness of health-related decisions.

#### VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*decision,*  
*alternatives,*  
*choice*

### Step 3: Make a Decision



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that the most important step in *Decision-Making* is actually making the decision.

Facilitate a whole-class discussion by asking students the following questions:

- Why is it important to make a decision?
- What problems arise when we get stuck in the decision making process?

#### Language of Health Literacy:

*After weighing my options, I have decided to \_\_\_\_\_ This is a healthy option for me and my future self because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I feel confident in the decision I made because \_\_\_\_\_.*

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:



Give students a realistic decision that they may soon face. Have students use one of the decision making strategies to work through the options and consequences of their decision. Then, have students justify the decision they choose to make using the *Language of Health Literacy* to support their responses.

#### TEACHING NOTES:

- Example Decision: You are struggling in chemistry and have a lower than usual grade. You have five weeks left in the class to bring up your grade. What do you do?
- Allow students to complete Steps 1 and 2, if needed.
- Make sure students explain verbally or in writing why they chose the option they did, explaining why the option is healthy.



## Teaching Progression:



### Step 4: Follow Through

**SUB SKILL(S):**

- Communicate decisions
- Identify barriers to following through with my decision
- Make a plan for when a healthy decision is difficult
  - Seek out support
  - Make a schedule to manage personal time
  - Avoid friends who constantly peer pressure
  - Ask for advice from a teacher/ trusted adult
  - Determine what is within my control

**GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

How do I make sure I follow through on my decisions? What situations make it difficult to follow through on decisions? Why is it important to communicate important decisions to the people around us?

**NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

(5.12.1) Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making. (5.12.6) Defend the healthy choice when making decisions.

**VALUABLE VOCABULARY:**

*peer pressure,  
help, hinder,  
circumstance,  
healthy,  
unhealthy*

### Step 4: Follow Through | Sub Skill: Communicate Decisions



**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:**

Explain to students that communicating our decisions is one way we make sure to follow-through. It is important to voice our decisions to people, so they know our choices and can support us if we need help. Model communicating a decision you made by using the *Language of Health Literacy*. Ask students to share out what they noticed about how you communicated your decision, highlighting the important elements of the *Language of Health Literacy*.

**Language of Health Literacy:**

*After weighing my options, I decided to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. I would really like your support in this decision.*

*I have decided to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. I know you want me to \_\_\_\_\_, but I am not going to do that.*



See *Stage 1: Communication Techniques of Interpersonal Communication* for speaking and listening strategies for communicating decisions effectively.



## Teaching Progression: Step 4 | Follow Through (Cont.)



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Place students in pairs and have them practice telling their peers a decision they have made recently. After sharing, the partner who was listening decides if that decision makes sense for them and explains why. Have students switch roles.

### TEACHING NOTES:

- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support student responses.

## Step 4: Follow Through | Sub Skill: Identify Barriers



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Tell students that they may face barriers when it comes to following through with a decision they have made. Explain to students that they need to identify these barriers and come up with possible solutions for dealing with barriers to adequate follow through with their decisions. Provide students with a short story of a person attempting to follow through with a decision but facing several barriers. Have students annotate the text to identify all the barriers they notice the individual faces.

### Language of Health Literacy:

*A barrier I could face following through on this decision is \_\_\_\_\_.*



### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Have students brainstorm challenges they could face after making a decision. Write out ways students predict they could be challenged. Tell students that when it is time for them to follow through with their decision, they need to be ready to stand up for their decision and communicate it to those who may pressure them to make a different decision.

Have students create a situation where they could be challenged to not follow through on their decision. Have students make statements to clearly communicate their decision to others.

### TEACHING NOTES:

- Example Scenario: You are at a party and your friend wants you to drive their car, but you already had a drink.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Have students write their own narratives explaining a time they faced a decision with difficult barriers to overcome. Have students explain the decision they made, the barriers they faced, and strategies they used to overcome these barriers.



See *Stage 2: Refusal Skills & Boundary Setting* to support students in upholding their decisions when someone pressures them to change their mind.





Teaching Progression: Step 4 | Follow Through (Cont.)

Step 4: Follow Through |

Sub Skill: **Make A Plan For When A Healthy Decision Is Difficult**

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:**



Tell students that when they better understand the barriers they may face to follow through on a decision they will be better prepared to make a plan for their decision. Explain to students that making a plan, especially for more complicated decisions, can relieve stress, help them be more prepared, and increase the likelihood they follow through with their decision even when it is challenging. Have students refer to their narrative from the previous activity. As a class, create a model for students with your own challenging decision how you could make a plan to ensure you followed through with your decision.

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:**



Have students go back to the story they annotated to identify barriers one could face when following through on a decision. Have the entire class discuss possible strategies for overcoming barriers to follow through with a decision. Write out the possible strategies on the board.

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:**



Have students select a decision they have made for themselves recently that they are struggling to follow through. Instruct students to create a plan that supports them upholding this future.

**Language of Health Literacy:**

*I know my choice is difficult, so I will \_\_\_\_\_ to be more prepared.*

*To ensure I can follow through with my decision, I need to \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I need to make this decision by \_\_\_\_\_ (time).*

*To complete my decision, I need the support of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I need \_\_\_\_\_ resources to successfully follow through with my decision.*

*I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about my decision. This could impact my follow through by \_\_\_\_\_. I will \_\_\_\_\_ cope with this feeling and follow through with my decision.*

**TEACHING NOTES:**

- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support students in creating their plans for following through on decisions.
- Provide strategies for students overcoming barriers, such as seek out support, make a schedule to manage personal time, avoid friends who constantly peer pressure, ask for advice from a teacher/ trusted adult,



See *Goal-Setting* for specific strategies on SMART goals and creating plans to reach goals.



## Teaching Progression:



### Step 5: Reflect

#### REFLECTION QUESTION(S):

- How did the decision make me feel?
- What options did I think about at first?
- Why did I choose the option you did?
- What might happen next after this decision?
- How did asking for help make my decision healthier?
- How does this decision affect others?
- How does this decision affect my relationships?
- How does this decision align with my values?
- How does this decision affect my goals?
- Would I make that decision again? Why or why not?
- What do I want to remember next time I have to make the same decision?

#### VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*reflect,*  
*negative,*  
*positive,*  
*outcome*

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do I reflect on my decisions? How do I know when I have made a healthy decision?

#### NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.12.7) Evaluate the effectiveness of health-related decisions.



#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY:

Ask students questions that will help them understand the importance of looking back on their decisions and learning from them. For example ask the following questions:

- How did the decision make me feel?
- What options did I think about at first?
- Why did I choose the option you did?
- What might happen next after this decision?
- How did asking for help make my decision healthier?
- How does this decision affect others?
- How does this decision affect my relationships?
- How does this decision align with my values?
- How does this decision affect my goals?
- Would I make that decision again? Why or why not?
- What do I want to remember next time I have to make the same decision?

Ask students to share their reflections aloud about different decisions related to health. Celebrate students for naming the specific reasons they chose certain options. Remind students that reflecting, or looking back, at their decision and how they made it, will help them make healthy decisions in the future.

See Next Page For Teaching Notes.



## Teaching Progression: Step 5 | Reflect (Cont.)

### TEACHING NOTES:

- Provide many opportunities for students to answer these questions.
- Allow students to reflect in a variety of modes, including: through drawing, writing, partner discussion, whole-class discussion, and one-on-one conferencing.
- Model this reflection process for a decision you have made.



# Assessing Mastery of Decision-Making Grades 9-12

Students in grades 9-12 will have mastered *Decision-Making* by demonstrating their ability to showcase the performance indicators identified in Standard 5. Use the student friendly language below to support rubric creation and feedback to students.

**Standard 5:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

**5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.**

- I can identify barriers to health decision making.
- I can create a plan for how to overcome barriers to healthy decision making.

**5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.**

- I can determine if a situation requires a thoughtful decision-making process.

**5.12.3 Justify when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.**

- I can determine if a situation requires an individual or collaborative decision

**5.12.4 Generate alternatives to health-related issues or problems.**

- I can identify different options for decisions.

**5.12.5 Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of each alternative on self and others.**

- I can use a variety of decision-making strategies to choose from a list of options.

**5.12.6 Defend the healthy choice when making decisions.**

- I can communicate my decisions to others.
- I can uphold my decisions when faced with challenges.

**5.12.7 Evaluate the effectiveness of health-related decisions.**

- I can reflect on decisions I have made.

**ASSESSMENT TOOL #1 (5.12.4, 5.12.5, 5.12.6, 5.12.7)**

Provide a menu of decisions students their age will need to make. These could include whether or not to vape, whether or not to post something on social media, whether or not to have a significant other. Have students select one of the decisions and work through the decision-making steps they learned, including making the decision and reflecting on the potential outcomes of those decisions. If students choose unhealthy options, conference with students to learn more about their choice and provide support for making healthier choices in the future. If appropriate prompt students to defend their decision, citing their reasons and making connections to health.

**ASSESSMENT TOOL #2 (5.12.1, 5.12.6)**

Have students create a skit to show how they would communicate their decisions and uphold their decision when they encounter barriers. While watching the skits, have students in the audience identify the strategies being used to communicate and uphold their decision as well as the barriers that arose.



### ASSESSMENT TOOL #3 (5.12.7)

Have students keep a "Daily Decisions Journal." Provide time for students to identify decisions they have made and describe the outcomes of the health-related decision. Use the reflection questions in Step 4 in the *Teaching Progression* to support student journal entries.

#### Reflection Questions:

- How did the decision make you feel?
- What options did you think about at first?
- Why did you choose the option you did?
- What might happen next after that decision?
- How did asking for help make your decision healthier?
- How does this decision affect others?
- How does this decision affect my relationships?
- How does this decision align with my values?
- How does this decision affect my goals?
- Would you make that decision again? Why or why not?
- What do you want to remember next time you have to make the same decision?



## Content Area Connections

Build content understanding through connections with other courses. Share suggestions with teachers to develop plans for content overlap and student language connections.

Utilize content structures and topics in classrooms to reinforce student understanding and to support ongoing student development. *Decision-Making* can be used across content areas when students are struggling with individual decisions. Remind students to consider who may influence them when they are making choices and how understanding these influences can support them in their development.

Reinforce the understanding that the need to make decisions occurs in all areas of life by exploring the following questions with students across contents. Add specific content information in place of the italicized words as necessary. These questions are meant to be used when students are making decisions regarding content, choosing partners or group members, or when reflecting on choices that have already been made. These questions can be a guide for independent reflection when students are challenged to understand the choices that led to a particular incident, and how others may have influenced them on their path towards that choice.

- What options do you have for *this decision*?
- What do you think led you to choose *this option*?
- How might *this* influence your choice or decision?
- What support do you need with *this decision*?
- How can you make sure you follow through with *this decision*?

### VOCABULARY REINFORCEMENT:

Utilize the vocabulary words below to reinforce student understanding and to showcase the ability to use words across content areas. For example, an entire grade-level team can decide to teach these words within the specific contexts of their classes to deepen understanding of vocabulary and language use.

*barrier, choice, decision, strategy, outcome, options, predict, consequences, thoughtful, healthy, unhealthy, enhance, prioritize*



# Resource Bank

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## RMC Health

- [Health Education Skills Models](#)

## Teens and Decision Making Article

- [http://headsip.scholastic.com/sites/default/files/NIDA6-INS4\\_Stu\\_Mag.pdf](http://headsip.scholastic.com/sites/default/files/NIDA6-INS4_Stu_Mag.pdf)

## The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zVS8HIPUng>

## How Habit Form in the Mind

- <https://www.npr.org/2012/03/05/147192599/habits-how-they-form-and-how-to-break-them>

## National Health Education Standards

- [Standards & Performance Indicators](#)

## Games for Building Decision-Making Skills

- <https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/games-for-building-decision-making-skills>