

## The Decision-Making Process

Let us look at the process involved in making a decision. Process implies that some *procedures or steps are involved in developing a skill.*

1. **Clearly identify the problem.** This sounds easy: however, it is not only the most important step, but it can also be a difficult one. Be sure that you have a grasp on the real problem and that it is well-defined.
2. **Identify all of your possible choices.** Picture what the situation would look like if the problem were solved. What choices to solve it do you have? Try to think of as many as possible. Ask for input from your parents, other adults you can talk to, or others that the problem may involve.
3. **Consider and evaluate the consequences of each choice.** One way to identify the consequences is to ask yourself, "What will happen if I...?" Again, you may want to see input from others. The objective is to examine all parts of the problem and the possible solutions. Will the alternative you are considering solve your problem or just temporarily ease it? How will other people important to you be affected?
4. **Select the best choice and act.** This means that you know and accept the consequences of your actions.
5. **Evaluate the results of your choice.** Did your actions solve the problem or create a new problem? What did you learn?

Of course, you probably will not use such a detailed process for every problem with which you are faced. However, you might find it easier to practice your skills on easier problems. Then, when faced with more difficult decisions, you will be better prepared.

One of the most important points to remember in this process is that *you are the one responsible for your choice.* If you have examined the consequences before deciding, you should not have a list of excuses when someone asks you about your actions. "I didn't know you'd be mad", "She made me", "Everyone else went" are excuses and examples of not taking responsibility for your choice.

Each of us makes some very important decisions in relation to our health. Making responsible, healthy decisions can be difficult, but is very important to our overall wellness.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## THINKING THROUGH A DECISION

STEP 1: In a few words, DEFINE THE PROBLEM to be solved.

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STEPS 2 & 3: GATHER INFORMATION and EXAMINE ALTERNATIVES. What are 3 possible solutions to the problem? List these solutions and the positive (good) and negative (bad) aspects of each solution.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION #1: \_\_\_\_\_

### POSITIVE ASPECTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### NEGATIVE ASPECTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

POSSIBLE SOLUTION #2: \_\_\_\_\_

### POSITIVE ASPECTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### NEGATIVE ASPECTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

POSSIBLE SOLUTION #3: \_\_\_\_\_

### POSITIVE ASPECTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### NEGATIVE ASPECTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

STEP 4: PREDICT THE CONSEQUENCES (RESULTS):

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF SOLUTION #1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF SOLUTION #2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF SOLUTION #3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

STEP 5: IDENTIFY ANY POSSIBLE OUTCOMES (NOT LISTED PREVIOUSLY):

Who will this effect besides me and how? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will this affect my self-esteem? My beliefs? My reputation?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

STEP 6: Compare the alternatives and DECIDE.

My choice is \_\_\_\_\_

STEP 7: LIST 3 STEPS THAT WILL HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH YOUR PLAN.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

STEP 8: EVALUATE THE DECISION. Did my decision work out in the best way for me? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Things to think about: Is my choice safe? Legal? Appropriate? Is it in agreement with my values and my family values? Is this a healthy choice for me and others? Will anyone be hurt by my decision? Will this increase my self esteem?  
(Author Unknown)