

MODULE #2: Decision-Making Skills

Objectives

- Participants will learn about the model for appropriate decision-making.
- Participants will enhance their decision-making skills by solving different situations and learning what type of a decision-maker they are.

Context



In subsequent modules we will learn about interests, values and goals and how they are important in shaping our lives. Knowing our values, dreams, goals and interests help us to make responsible decisions.

Handouts & Resources Needed:

Handout 2.1: STAR Vision Decision Making Model

Handout 2.1A: Situation Role Play

Handout 2.2B: Sticky Situations Exercise

Handout 2.3: What Kind of a Decision Maker Are You?"

Pens/pencils

Sheet of paper – one for each participant

Journals – one per students

Activity #1: Decision-Making (55 min)

Procedure

- Icebreaker
- Participants will review Handout 2.1 STAR Vision Decision-Making Model for making appropriate decisions.
- Ask for two volunteers to role-play a situation. Provide volunteers with a scenario for the role-play Handout 2.1A: Situation Role Play. While the volunteers are acting out the skit, instruct other participants to write on their handout 2.1 what they would do for each STAR Vision step if they were in that situation. Tell them that in the center of the STAR Vision on their handout Tool, write the important value that helped them make that decision.
- Debriefing

Activity #2: Decision-Making II (30 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Depending on whether participants are middle or high school students, the facilitator will give participants a situation from the Sticky Situations Exercise (Handout 2.2).

- Have the participants write down what they would do for each step in the STAR Vision model in order to help them handle the situation.
- Debriefing

Activity #3: What kind of a decision maker are you? (30 min)

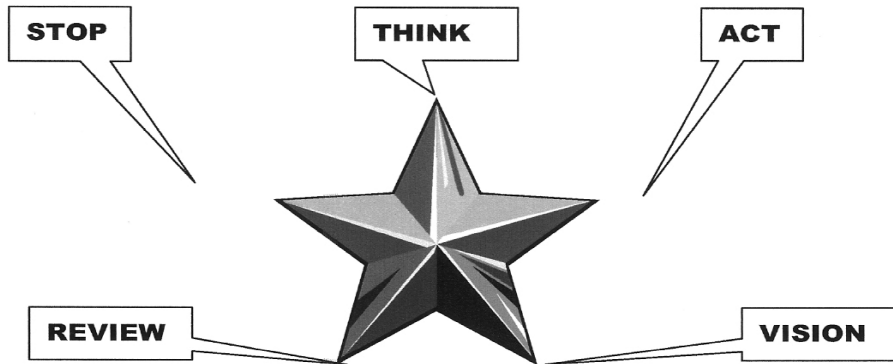
Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Begin by explaining that making decisions can be an intimidating task. Sometimes it can be as easy as choosing a TV channel or more complicated like choosing a mayor. Explain that some decisions impact our lives more than others. For example choosing a spouse or a career impacts our lives.
- Provide participants Handout 2.3 and review: "What kind of a decision maker are you?" to learn about decision-making styles and discuss each one of the styles.
- Ask students to break into groups of 3-5.
- Have participants examine their own style of decision making and engage in a discussion.
- Debriefing

Tool 6.2

STAR Vision Decision Making Model

This decision-making model will be used to help you think through the “sticky situation” reviewed in class and in small groups. The STAR Vision Decision Making model will help you make a decision in a particular situation.



Stop: Step back from the situation. Give yourself some time to think.

Think: What are my options? What are the consequences? What’s my decision?

Act: Do what you decided to do. And tell the other person about it.

Review: What happened? How else could I have handled it? Can I live with the consequences?

Vision: Is this decision in line with my values and future goals? How does this decision impact my future?

Write a few words describing the role-play situation. What would you do for each STAR Vision step in that situation?

STOP:

THINK:

ACT:

REVIEW:

VISION:

Adapted and used with permission from Healthy Oakland Teen Project.

Situation Role Play¹

Narrator Begins:

A group of friends are over at Sarita's house for a party, and her parents have just left to see a movie. Everyone but Juan and Carla has been going out for two months. As they decide to go get something to eat and rent a video, Juan and Carla are left in the house alone, and Carla suggests that they go make out in Sarita's bedroom. Juan is unsure, and as they think about it they both realize that they don't have protection.

Carla: They'll be coming back soon. Come to Sarita's room with me while we still have time.

Juan: I want to, but I don't know if we should.

Carla: Why not?

Juan: I don't have any protection with me.

Carla: I knew we were getting more serious so I just started taking the pill, and it's not like we have AIDS or anything.

Juan: Carla, I don't know . . .

Narrator: CUT to STAR Vision!!! Juan and Carla have to make a decision. What does the STAR say they need to do?

Give students appropriate time to answer.

Facilitator: The first thing to do is **STOP**. STOP means get out of the situation for a moment if you can, and give yourself some time to make your decision. Step back from the pressure you may be feeling from other people, and take a second to remember yourself and what's important to you.

Juan: I need to get a drink of water. I'm going to go to the kitchen for a minute, okay?

Carla: Okay.

Juan: (Juan leaves to get a drink of water in the kitchen.)

Narrator: CUT to STAR Vision!!! What does the STAR Vision say to do next? Give students appropriate time to answer.

Facilitator: Use this time to THINK about what you want to do. These are some things you can ask yourself:

- What is happening? Do I like what is happening?
- What do I want to happen?
- What are my options?

¹ Adapted and used with permission from Healthy Oakland Teen Project.

- What will happen if I do X? What will happen if I do Y?
- Think through the possible consequences of your actions.

Handout 2.2A

Handout 2.1A: Situation Role Play

What are consequences?

Consequences are the results of your actions. They can be good or bad, sometimes they're both, and sometimes they're neither. After you've thought it out, then make your decision.

Narrator: Juan and Carla think about the situation, their options and the consequences.

**Narrator comes in again when they have each made their own decision.*

Juan: I really want to make out with Carla, but we don't have any condoms and it seems like she is ready to take that next step. If we go to Sarita's room, we may end up having sex. She's on the pill, so she won't get pregnant. It could be that everything would be fine, but either one of us could have HIV, or some other STD like herpes or syphilis. We may not even **KNOW it** and the other could get infected too. Maybe the other kids or Sarita's parents will come back and catch us.

If we don't go to Sarita's room, Carla might think I don't like her. She might tell her friends I wouldn't do it with her, and the guys at school would be looking at me like there was something wrong with me. She might never talk to me again or it might be cool with her, and we can just wait. I've also been thinking about waiting to have sex until I was really in love with someone, so I would marry them if we ever got pregnant. I'm not sure if I'm at that point. I've always thought that feeling good and being true to myself is more important than what other people say or think about me. I'll tell Carla that I want to wait because I want us both to feel good, not only now, but also after tonight.

Narrator: Cut to STAR Vision!!! Now that Juan has made a decision, what comes next?

Facilitator: The next step is to **ACT**. This includes telling the other person what you've decided. Talking about your decisions can take more courage than just doing what you've made up your mind to do. It also means that the other person will understand why you're doing this. It shows that you care about how the other person feels and communication shows that you respect each other.

Narrator: Juan and Carla come back together and talk about what they've decided. They talk until they each understand what the other person is saying.

Juan: I've thought about it, and I've decided I don't want to go upstairs with you tonight.

Carla: How come?

Juan: I don't want you to think I don't like you, because it's not that at all. I just don't think we are ready for sex. I care about my health, and yours, too. I want us both to feel good, not just for now, but after we've made our decisions. Besides, we can still hang out and have fun until the other kids get back. We don't need to have sex for that. 22 4

Carla: It's funny that you decided that, because I was just thinking that maybe this isn't the best time for me either.

Juan: I'm glad you understand.

Handout 2.1A

Narrator: Cut to STAR Vision!!! What is the last step?

Facilitator: The final step is to REVIEW your decision when it's over.

These are some things Juan can ask himself...

- How do I feel about what happened?
- How does Carla feel about what happened?
- What could I do differently next time?
- What else could I have done to give myself some time?
- Did I think of all my options?
- How well did I communicate my decision to Carla?
- Did I stand by my decision?
- How could I avoid getting into this dilemma next time?

Narrator: Look over the consequences of your decision. Are they consequences you can live with? This is the best way to tell if you made a good decision. Another important part of your review is checking in with the other person afterwards. The next time Juan sees Carla, he will ask her how she feels about what happened. Juan should also think about his vision in this process. How does this decision affect his vision or plans for the future?

STICKY SITUATIONS EXERCISE² (For High School Students)

Situation A: You have been going out with someone for two weeks, but you never talk when you are together. It seems as though you only make out, and each time it gets more and more serious. You do not even know the person very well and everything is moving very quickly. You are thinking that you want to stop seeing him/her. What do you do?

Situation B: You have been spending a lot of time with a new friend. You are starting to worry about your friendship, because she/he likes you in a romantic way and you do not feel the same way. You really like the person, and do not want to hurt their feelings, but you don't want to give him or her the wrong idea. What do you do?

Situation C: Your best friend has been cutting classes a lot and acting differently than usual. You know your friend's parents are splitting up and it has your friend pretty upset, but he/she hasn't been willing to talk to you about it and seems really distant. One day, you notice needle marks on your friend's arm. What do you do?

Situation D: You are at a party that is winding down. You have been flirting with someone who seems to like you. Your parents are out of town, and your friend wants to go to your house after the party. However, you have a feeling that things could start to move too quickly for you once the two of you are alone. What do you do?

Situation E: You go over to a friend's house for dinner. His/her parents leave, and before you know it your friend's older brother has brought out a bottle of Vodka. You have never drunk alcohol before, and you are not really sure you want to. Your friend is encouraging you to have some. What do you do?

Situation F: Your partner of six months asks you how you feel about sex. He/she really wants to have sex with you. You feel pretty sure that you are not ready and would like to wait until you are at least engaged, but you are afraid that he/she will want to break up if you say no. What do you do?

Situation G: You are out with a group of friends to see a movie. After the show, three of them say they want to go to a party they heard about from some other friends. You know about the party and you know your friends want to go there to get high (smoke marijuana). You are the only one who isn't sure about going, and they want you to come with them. What do you do?

² Adapted with permission from the Healthy Oakland Teen Project (1996) 22 7 22 8

STICKY SITUATIONS EXERCISE³ (For Middle School Students)

Situation A: You have liked someone for two weeks, but you never talk when you are together. It seems that each time you see each other it gets more and more serious. You do not even know the person very well and everything is moving very quickly. You are thinking that you want to stop seeing him/her. What do you do?

Situation B: You have been spending a lot of time with a new friend. You are starting to worry about your friendship, because she/he likes you in a romantic way and you do not feel the same. You really like the person, and do not want to hurt their feelings, but you don't want to give him or her the wrong idea. What do you do?

Situation C: Your best friend has been cutting classes a lot and acting differently than usual. You know your friend's parents are splitting up and it has your friend pretty upset, but he/she hasn't been willing to talk to you about it and seems really distant. What do you do?

Situation D: You go over to a friend's house for dinner. His/her parents leave, and before you know it your friend's older brother has brought out a bottle of Vodka. You have never drunk alcohol before, and you are not really sure you want to. Your friend is encouraging you to have some. What do you do?

Situation E: You are out with a group of friends to see a movie. After the show, three of them say they want to go to a party they heard about from some other friends. You know about the party and you know your friends want to go there, but you do not. What do you do?

³ Adapted with permission from the Healthy Oakland Teen Project (1996) 22 9

Handout 2.3

What Kind of a Decision Maker are You? Decision-Making Styles⁴

Not all individuals approach decision making in the same manner. There are also different styles of decision making. There are “Inner Reliant” decision makers who take responsibility for their decisions and “Outer Reliant” decision makers who try and transfer the responsibility to others for their decisions. The following list identifies a number of different decision-making styles. As each of these styles is described, assess whether that style is “inner reliant” or “outer reliant”.

Impulsive Decider	One who takes the first alternative that is presented: “Decide now; think later. Don’t look before leaping.”
Fatalistic Decider	One who leaves the resolution of the decision up to the environment or fate: “Whatever will be will be”.
Compliant Decider	One who goes along with someone else’s plan rather than making an independent decision, especially when that plan doesn’t agree with one’s own beliefs: “If it’s okay with you, it’s okay with me. Anything you say”.
Delaying Decider	One who delays thought and action on a problem: “I’ll think about it later.”
Agonizing Decider	One who spends much time and thought gathering data and analyzing alternatives only to get lost amidst the data gathered: “I can’t make up my mind. I don’t know what to do.”
Intuitive Decider	One who decides based on what is felt, but cannot be verbalized: “It feels right”.
Paralytic Decider	One who accepts the responsibility for decisions, but is unable to do much toward approaching it: “I know I should, but I just can’t get with it. Can’t face up to it.”
Escapist Decider	One who avoids a decision or makes up an answer to deflect inquiry. For example, if asked by a relative about a college major, this type (although still undecided, but considering teaching), would respond, “I’m thinking about pre-med.” This allows the escapist to give a socially acceptable answer without taking responsibility

⁴ Adapted from Rutgers University Career Services

Play –it-Safe

One who almost always picks the alternative with the perceived lowest level of risk: “I like anthropology, but I can get a job in accounting.”

Planner

One whose strategy is based on a rational approach with some balance between the cognitive and emotional: “I’m the captain of my fate; I’m the master of my soul.”