

Decisions, Decisions!

Grade Band: 3-5

Objectives:

- Identify ways that decisions they make now impact their future
- Apply a decision-making model to various authentic scenarios
- Identify how thoughtful decisions can help them reach their goals

Materials:

- Posters or construction paper of different colors
- Student Activity Sheet: So many options! – one per student
- Student Activity Sheet: Decisions and Choices – one per student

Suggested Time Frame: 2-3 class sessions (based on 45-minute intervals)

Instant Expert:

Throughout their lives, students will be faced with a multitude of decisions regarding their health and wellness. What to eat, whether to be physically active, whether to apply sunscreen, wear a seatbelt or bike helmet, and how much sleep to get are just a few. To maintain personal wellness, students must make decisions about balancing physical, social, and mental/emotional wellness. Learning how to make informed, confident decisions is an important foundational aspect of this unit.

In this lesson, students will learn about a decision-making process and have an opportunity to apply that process to several decisions related to wellness. As students learned in Lesson 1, the three components of the wellness triangle are:

1. Physical Wellness – Total care of your body; physical activity (60 minutes per day); hygiene; healthy eating patterns and nutrition intake per USDA’s 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans)
2. Social Wellness – Getting along with others in a variety of settings and online – including friends, family, and teachers
3. Mental/Emotional Wellness – Liking who you are and accepting yourself; expressing emotions in a healthy way; managing stress; and managing pressures, goals, and decisions

The decision-making model that is introduced in this lesson is:

Step 1: Identify the decision you have to make.

Step 2: Consider your choices.

Step 3: List the benefits (positive impacts) and consequences/trade-offs (negative impacts) of each choice. With some choices, you may need to gather information or help from an adult or trusted friend with this step.

Step 4: Make your decision. Try to make the best decision for you.

Step 5: Evaluate your decision and change it if you think there is a better one.

You may want to share with students that:

- There are more than just one or two options for many decisions. Be creative!
- Decision-making is often an ongoing process. With many decisions, you can change your mind if you realize you have made a mistake.
- If you are gathering information to help you make an important decision, make sure it is from a trusted source or a person who will want the best for you.
- When thinking of consequences, make sure that you can accept the ones that relate to the decision you've chosen.

Note: As always, you will want to be sensitive to individual students' unique situations and follow your school or district's policy when it comes to the collection of personal information related to minors.

Additional Resources

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention BAM! Body and Mind:
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/safety/index.html>
 - Choices and Consequences <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/choices.html>
 - Feeling left out (risky behaviors activity) <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/leftout.html>
 - KABAM! Comic Creator – Help solve scenarios <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/kabam.html>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Literacy: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>
- USDA's 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>

Procedure:

Session 1: Introducing the Decision-Making Process

1. Before class, hang construction paper of different colors in different spots around the room.
2. Show students the different-colored papers around the room, and invite them to stand by their favorite. Ask each color group to talk about how they decided on their favorite color. Ask them if they have ever changed what their favorite color was and why? Remind students that making decisions is sometimes easy and sometimes hard. Would they consider this decision easy or hard, and why? Was there any negative result of choosing one color over another? If so, what? Sometimes, we need to think really hard about a decision and what could happen after we make it. Explain that today, students are going to learn about a process for making decisions that can help them with more difficult decisions (e.g., When should I do my homework? When should I study for a class test? Who will I play with at recess? Where do I sit at lunch?).
3. In color groups or new small groups, present one of the following decision-making situations. Challenge each group to reach a decision.
 - Physical Wellness Topic:** Our class has earned a class party and we can choose between extra recess or a pajama party. Which should we choose?
 - Social Wellness Topic:** You are sitting with two friends, Jamie and Chris, at lunch. When Jamie leaves to throw away his trash, Chris makes fun of Jamie's sneakers. What should you do?
 - Mental/Emotional Topic:** A lot of your friends are allowed to watch a television show that you are not allowed to watch because it comes on past your bedtime. You feel left out when your friends talk about the show. What can you do so that you don't feel left out?
4. Give student groups a set amount of time (no more than five minutes) to reach a decision. Have each group present its answers. Then discuss:
 - Was it easy or hard to reach a decision?
 - Were you happy with the decision your group reached?
 - Did all group members agree?
 - What steps did your group take to reach your decision?
 - What steps do you use when you have to make an important decision?
 - What are some important decisions you have had to make?

5. Tell students that many of the decisions they make *today* can affect them as they get older. Can they think of any decisions they currently make that will affect them next month? Next year? In middle school? In high school?
6. Distribute the “So Many Options” student activity sheet, and challenge students (individually or as a class) to create a list of six decisions they made the day before or in the past week. Ask them to consider the three areas of wellness (physical, social, mental/emotional) as they write down their decisions. You may need to give younger students some examples such as deciding what time to get up, what to eat for breakfast, what to wear, or what time to do their homework. Then have them follow the directions to complete the rest of the activity sheet. *At this age, students may not understand how what they eat, how active they are, how much sleep they get, whether they brush their teeth, or whether they complete their homework can affect them later in life. You may need to help them recognize some of the long-term effects.*
7. Ask student volunteers to choose one decision from their list and share the steps they took to make it. If possible, highlight a decision related to personal wellness (physical, social, or mental/emotional wellness). You may want to write some of these steps on the board. Ask students why it might be important to have a step-by-step process on which they can rely when they have to make important decisions.

Session Two: Give Decision-Making a Try!

1. Distribute the “Decision-Making Process” student activity sheet and review the decision-making process on the second page with students. Allow students to choose from the scenarios on the first page or provide a different scenario to each group to discuss. If students have access to computers, students may have the options to review the scenarios on KABAM! Comic Creator Share (<http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/kabam.html>). Remind students that, while there may be other processes with other steps, any process should include considering the positives and negatives of each possible option.
2. Read the story on the activity sheet aloud to students and have them complete the worksheet individually, in groups or as a class. Review answers together.
 - a. What are the options?
 - b. What decision do they think the person should make?
 - c. What were the strongest influences for the decision they chose?
 - d. If students do not agree, have them justify their decisions using the model they’ve worked through.
3. Ask student groups to go back to the decision-making situation from the beginning of the lesson and apply the decision-making model to that decision. Use the Activity Sheet

- 3 Sample Capture Sheet. Did students come up with the same decision after using the model or did their answer change?
4. Share with students that many decisions are made by thinking about what we want our lives to be like or what things we want in the future. For example, students may decide to save their money instead of spending it so they can buy a bike, game, or toy. Or they may decide to eat a nutritious breakfast so they do well on their science test and have enough energy to play basketball. Or they may want to exercise each day so that they have a healthy heart later in life. Have students share some decisions they have made that will help them in the future.
 5. Distribute the slips of paper. Have each student write:
 - a. Something they want to have or achieve in the future that relates to wellness. (The future could be this week, one month, one year, or even when they are in middle school or high school)
Examples may include:
 - Physical** – Join a sports team; use safety equipment while riding a bike; sleep 8 hours every night; exercise or play every day for 60 minutes or more; eat a variety of foods (fruit, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and dairy)
 - Social** – Make new friends at recess; join a club or activity at school, the recreation department or local library; say no to tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
 - Mental/Emotional** – Read daily; share happy or sad feelings with family or friends; learn a new math concept (even when it is really hard); complete homework daily; identify a chore I can do at home to help my family and complete it
 - b. At least one decision they could make now that could help them reach that goal.
 - c. A person or source that could help them.
 6. If students are comfortable, ask them to share. If not, find a safe place where students can keep their slips and refer back to them in the future.

You Decide: *This feature helps to reinforce decision-making with students and can be integrated into the lesson or serve as an extension.*

Alone or with a partner, challenge students to apply the decision-making model they explored with the decision they have to make or one of the decisions below.

Physical Wellness:

You have to make up some work that you missed when you were sick. Your teacher asks you if you want to make up the work after school or during recess. What do you do?

Social Wellness:

Two of your friends are arguing over who gets the ball first in your basketball game. What do you do?

Mental/Emotional Wellness:

Your friend always stresses out and gets worried when she has a test. What do you do?

Family Connection:

Challenge students to work with family members to identify a decision they must make that will affect all of them. Ideas include what they will do on their next day off together, how they can be physically active, what they will eat for dinner, or whether or not the family should get a pet. Then have them work through the decision-making process to make the best decision considering benefits and consequences of each choice.

For other tools to extend learning outside of the classroom, refer to the School-to-Home activities on TogetherCounts.com. Begin these activities together at school and then encourage students to continue them with their families.

Community Connection:

Invite a local pediatrician, police officer, or athlete to the class to talk about the consequences of making poor decisions. Identify what area of wellness example decisions are linked to (physical, social, mental/emotional). Have students prepare questions ahead of time to ask the guest speaker. Encourage students to share what they learned with other classes.

Standards Correlations:

National Health Education Standards

- Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

SHAPE America, National Physical Education Standards

- Discusses the relationship between physical activity and good health.

- Gives corrective feedback respectfully to peers.

Common Core State Standards, Speaking and Listening

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

Student Activity Sheet: So Many Options!

What should I eat? What time should I go to bed? Should I wear a bike helmet? Have you ever tried to make decisions like these? It's hard to believe but many of the decisions you make today will affect your life even when you get older! So, it's important to make sure that you really think about the best decision for you.

- A) First make a list below of five decisions you made yesterday or in the past week. Ex: Yesterday, I decided to play soccer outside with my friends or I read a book during recess.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

- B) Put a (P) next to physical wellness decisions.
C) Put a (S) next to social wellness decisions.
D) Put a (M) next to mental/emotional wellness decisions.
E) Put a check (✓) next to the decision that was easiest to make.
F) Put a star (★) next to the decision that was hardest to make.
G) Circle all of the decisions that you think could make a difference in your life when you get older.
H) Choose one of the circled decisions and complete the following sentences.

My decision could affect my life when I get older because:

I would/would not make this decision again because:

Student Activity Sheet: Decisions and Choices

Decisions can be hard to make! Read the story below and then apply the decision-making process to help our friends decide what to do.

Scenario 1:

Every morning, Reuben's dad takes him to school. Most days, his dad does not make him breakfast because he expects Reuben to make it himself. Reuben says he does not have any lunch money to buy breakfast at school. What can Reuben do to make sure he eats breakfast every morning?

Scenario 2:

At recess, Juniper plays games with the same group of friends and is always on the same team when they pick teams. People do not understand why she will not play with other people at recess and ask her, "Why don't you play with us? Why do you always play with the same people?" What should Juniper do?

Scenario 3:

Every day at lunch, we get to choose who we get to sit next to at Ms. Gilbert's class table. Everyone always argues about who gets to sit with Juan and Bryce. No one wants to sit with MacKenzie. What should you do?

Scenario 4:

Tyrell loves to play the piano. He has a music performance on Friday night at school and is really excited. Tyrell also plays football for the Gators. He has football practice three nights a week Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Football practice and his piano concert are both on Friday. What should Tyrell do?

Scenario 5:

At College Park Elementary School, students have daily homework. They have to read for 30 minutes and complete a math activity. This week, they have a project to design and create a life-like caterpillar. Marisol leaves her homework at school and does not complete it. Her parents do not know she is doing this. Marisol's parents get a phone call home, letting them know she has not been doing her daily homework. What should Marisol do?

Decision Making Process

Step 1: Identify the decision you have to make.

Step 2: Consider your choices.

Step 3: List the benefits (positive impact) and consequences (negative impact) of each choice.

With some choices, you may need to gather information or help from an adult or trusted friend with this step.

Step 4: Make your decision. Try to make the best decision for you.

Step 5: Evaluate your decision and change it if you think there is a better one.

Let's Help Our Friends Make a Decision

Step 1: What is the decision? Is it Physical, Social, or Mental/Emotional Wellness or are there multiple areas?

Step 2: What are the choices?

Choice 1:

Choice 2:

Choice 3:

Step 3: List the advantages (+) and disadvantages (-) of each choice below.

Choices	Advantages (+)	Disadvantages (-)
Choice 1:		
Choice 2:		
Choice 3:		

Step 4: What decision would you make if you were the person in the scenario?

Step 5: How might they know if the decision was a good one or a bad one? Consider balancing physical, social, and mental/emotional wellness in your response.
