

4-H Grab and Go: *Don't Let Emotions Get in the Way!!*

Concept:

Emotions affect decisions.

Age/Grade Level:

Middle School: Ages 12-15

Education Standard:

National Health Education Standard 5: Use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Life Skill:

Decision Making, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking

Success Indicator:

Youth will use decision-making skills and predict consequences of options selected. Youth will recognize how emotions affect decisions.

National 4-H Curriculum:

Health Rocks!

4-H ■ HEALTHY LIFE SERIES

PREPARATION

Time: 30 – 45 minutes

Space:

Classroom

Materials:

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Chalkboard/chalk or flip-chart/markers

Background Information:

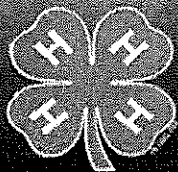
Youth often do things on the spur of the moment or rely on their emotions to help them make a decision. The parts of the brain that control impulse and are critical for controlling or holding youth back from taking part in risky behaviors are not fully developed until later adolescence or early adulthood. More frequent and intense emotions are also experienced in the teenage years. As a result, feelings of negativity and having less control over inhibitions may lead youth to a greater likelihood of engaging in substance abuse. Emotions have a direct effect on decisions. In other words, if we are happy, angry, dislike someone, etc., these emotions affect our decisions.

Knowing decision-making steps may help to make decisions that are not just based on emotions. (Note: These could be written on chalkboard/or flipchart.)

1. Identify decision to be made.
2. Brainstorm possible options or choices.
3. Identify best options to consider.
4. List positives and negatives of each selected option. Think about short-term and long-term consequences.
5. Choose best option.

Instructions:

1. Have a participant read (or role play) the following scenarios:
 - A. Sam and Joan have both applied for the same \$250 award money. They have both completed the form correctly and have scored the same on everything. Sam has a slightly higher grade point average than Joan. Who do you choose to receive the award money?
 - B. Same scenario as above but Joan is your very best friend. Who do you choose to receive the award money?
 - C. Same scenario as above but Joan has a very sick mom and has to pay for a lot of things. Who do you choose to receive the award money?
2. Discuss the following questions:
 - Did your decision stay the same each time? Why or why not? What made the decision difficult? Why?
 - How did emotions get in the way of your decisions?
 - What emotions played a role in your decision?



Don't Let Emotions Get in the Way!!

Youth Development Tip:

To increase interest and understanding, have youth role play scenarios.

Open Ended Questions:

- How do emotions affect making the right decision?
- You are a member of a team and other team members have asked you to drink with them. What emotions would you experience?
- If you knew that there was a group of youth headed for big trouble but you also knew that if you told an adult that group would be mad at you, how would you feel? What would you do?
- In life there are many instances when you may be forced to make a decision based on your emotions and values. How can you use what you have learned to help make a better decision?

3. Ask a volunteer to read the following story. As the story is being read, have the group write down or act out the emotions they are feeling and what they think the decision should be each time the reader asks them to decide the outcome.

Story:

Some members of the school basketball team were caught drinking. The rules are that those members who were caught drinking have to sit out two games. You have to make the decision about the consequences for team members. Consider the viewpoints of each of the following:

- You are the coach. What are your emotions? What decision should you make?
- You are a team member. What are your emotions? What decision do you think should be made?
- You are a student at the school. What are your emotions? What decision do you think should be made?

The plot has thickened. You have just learned the reason the basketball team was caught drinking is that they were celebrating because they made it to the playoffs. Once again, you have to make the decision about the consequences for team members. Consider the viewpoints of each of the following:

- You are the coach. What are your emotions? What decision should you make?
 - You are a team member. What are your emotions? What decision do you think should be made?
 - You are a student at the school. What are your emotions? What decision do you think should be made?
4. Discuss the emotions and decisions youth wrote down. What might happen because a certain action is taken?

5. Review **Open Ended Questions**.

Additional Notes/Extension/Glossary

Consequences - something that naturally follows from an action or condition.

Learn More

The following websites provide additional information:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/headsup/intro/index.asp?article-decisionmaking_brainscience

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5301.html>