

Lesson 6

Making Safe Decisions

Overview

This lesson focuses on decision-making skills. Students briefly review the seriousness of unintentional injury and identify ways young people can be injured. Then they learn decision-making steps and work in pairs to apply the decision-making process to a variety of risky situations.

Time: 45–60 minutes

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate decision-making skills that can be used to avoid or reduce the risk of unintentional injuries.

Materials & Preparation

Prepare

- Have **Decision-Making Steps** (Slide 6), or make a transparency, if needed.

Copy

- **Making Safe Decisions Scenarios** (Master 4), enough for the students in each pair to have the same scenario.

Review

- **Making Safe Decisions** (*Student Workbook* pages 11–12), and Scoring Rubric, page 178.

National Health Education Standards

Standard 5: Decision Making

Performance Indicator

5.8.1: Identify circumstances that can help or hinder healthy decision making.

Performance Indicator

5.8.2: Determine when health-related situations require the application of a thoughtful decision-making process.

Performance Indicator

5.8.3: Distinguish when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.

Performance Indicator

5.8.4: Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy alternatives to health-related issues or problems.

Performance Indicator

5.8.5: Predict the potential short-term impact of each alternative on self and others.

Performance Indicator

5.8.6: Choose healthy alternatives over unhealthy alternatives when making a decision.

Performance Indicator

5.8.7: Analyze the outcomes of a health-related decision.

Health Terms

Review the teaching steps, slide, master and activity sheet for any terms or concepts your students may not know, and be prepared to explain them. Examples:

- consequence
- evaluate
- decision making
- outcome

Support for Diverse Learners

To ensure student success with comprehending concepts:

- Pre-teach new concepts and terms. Write new terms on the board. Frequently use verbal checks for comprehension.
- Make copies of the **Decision-Making Steps** slide and distribute to students. Review the steps as they apply to the concept of injury prevention (e.g., risk taking, dares, following safety rules).
- Allow students to refer to their notes from previous lessons on ways young people can be injured.
- Create flash cards that have one of the decision-making steps on each card, and have students place them in the correct order. Use the cards to help guide students through the decision-making process for a sample situation, having them explain an appropriate response for each step.

To ensure student success with writing:

- Pair students with stronger writing skills with students who may need help completing the **Making Safe Decisions** activity sheet. Or allow students to record or draw their responses.

Introduction

■ Get students ready for learning

Transition

Pretend you have to make a decision or choice about something that's important to you. On a piece of paper, write the different things you would do, or steps you would take, to make that decision.

Allow students to focus and work quietly for a minute or two.

We will come back to and use what you wrote later in the lesson.

Debrief

How did the talk with your parent or another family member about taking risks go? Does anyone want to share something you learned from the talk with your family member?

*Take a few minutes to follow up on students' experiences with taking the **Time to Talk: Dares & Risks** family sheet home and the talks they had with their parents or other family members.*

Motivate

You make decisions or choices every day. Some decisions are simple, such as what to wear, while some are more complex. Even decisions that seem simple at first can have important consequences. For example, choosing what to eat for one meal can be a simple decision. But, over time, the choices you make about what food to eat can have a big effect on your health.

Would anyone like to share a decision you made recently?

Call on a few students to briefly share their experiences. If the decision named lends itself to further discussion, follow up by asking how the student made the decision—What kinds of things did he or she think about? Did someone help?—and what the outcome was—Would he or she make the same decision again?

Today you're going to learn about making decisions that can help keep you safe.

Teaching Steps

Review ways injury can happen

Review & Discuss

What are some situations or ways people your age get injured?

Allow students to respond to the question and discuss their ideas.

Summarize

Young people can be injured in many situations. Areas to think about include:

- Motor vehicles
- Water
- Fire
- Recreation
- Firearms
- Being a pedestrian
- Falls
- Severe weather

Explain

Sometimes when people have been injured in these situations, they feel like it “just happened.” But, if you look closely, they made choices that led to taking a risk. Today, you’re going to learn steps that will help you make safe decisions and avoid or prevent injuries in these situations.

Teach about decision making

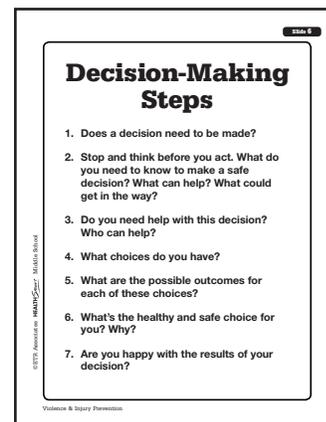
Prepare

Show the Decision-Making Steps slide.

Explain

These steps can help you make the best decision in any situation.

- The first step is to recognize that a decision needs to be made.
- Then you need to stop and think. What do you need to know to make a safe decision? Do you have the information you need? If not, how can you find it? What can help you make a safe and healthy decision? What could get in the way?



Slide 6

- Sometimes you can make a decision on your own. Sometimes you may need help from someone else. So the next step is to decide if you need help, and who can help if you need it.
- Once you have the information you need and know who can help, it's time to look at your choices, or options. What are all the possible choices you have in this situation?
- Then, you need to think about what the possible outcomes, or consequences, of each choice could be. Think about what positive things could come from this choice. Then think about what negative or dangerous things could happen.
- After you've thought about all the possible choices and their outcomes, it's time to make your decision. Use the work you've done so far to make the best, healthiest or safest choice for you.
- Later you can *evaluate* your decision. Are you happy with the results? Would you make the same choice again? What would you change the next time?

Every situation and decision is different for each person. The key is to stop and think it through before you act so you can avoid unsafe risks. These steps can help.

Model

Let's go through the decision-making steps for a sample situation.

Read the following scenario to students:

You and your good friend Sam both like to swim. Sam discovered a lake that is not far from your house, so the two of you hike over to check it out one sunny Saturday afternoon. When you get to the lake, the water looks cool and inviting. There's a rope tied to a branch of a tree that hangs over the lake. Sam says, "It would be fun to swing out on that rope and drop into the water. Come on. You go first." What will you decide to do?

*Then show the **Decision-Making Steps** slide again and go through the steps, using the sample scenario to show students how to apply them.*

1. Does a decision need to be made?

Yes, you need to decide if you're going to try the rope swing.

2. Stop and think before you act. What do you need to know to make a safe decision?

- How deep the water is

- Whether there are any rocks or other hazards in the water under the swing
- If the branch holding the rope swing is strong enough to hold your weight
- If there is anyone else around
- How well you can swim—would you be able to swim back to shore?

3. Do you need help with this decision? Who can help?

- You can make the decision yourself.
- You might want to have Sam think about the decision with you, so you can both make the safe choice.

4. What choices do you have?

- You can swing on the rope.
- You can refuse to swing on the rope.
- You can let Sam go first to see what happens.

5. What are the possible outcomes for each of these choices?

If you swing on the rope:

- Possible positive outcomes—It could be fun. Sam would be happy.
- Possible negative outcomes—The rope could break. The tree branch could break. The water could be shallow or have hazards in it. You could be injured. You could drown.

If you refuse to swing on the rope:

- Possible positive outcomes—You'd avoid the risk and stay safe. Sam would respect you for being safe.
- Possible negative outcomes—Sam might make fun of you or get mad.

If you let Sam go first:

- Possible positive outcomes—You'd know if it was safe. It could be fun.
- Possible negative outcomes—Sam could be injured or drown if the rope or branch breaks, or if the water is too shallow.

6. What's the healthy and safe choice for you? Why?

The safest decision is to not swing on the rope. But you might choose to go on the rope swing if you check out the situation thoroughly and find out that the water is deep enough, the rope is in good condition, the tree branch is sturdy and both you and Sam are good swimmers.

7. Are you happy with the results of your decision? Why or why not?

You would be happy with the decision if both you and Sam stayed safe and didn't get hurt.

Explain

People have different skills and experiences. For example, in the rope swing situation, if you didn't know how to swim, it wouldn't be safe to go into the water at all. But if you were a good swimmer, there were other good swimmers around, and you checked out the situation carefully and found that the risks were low, it might be OK for you to use the rope swing to jump into the water. This is why it's so important to stop and think, and to gather all the information you need, before making a decision.

■ Students practice decision-making skills**Practice**

Now let's go through the steps again, for another sample situation. This time, I want you to answer the decision-making questions.

Read the following scenario to students:

Daryl is your best friend. You both play on the soccer team. One day Daryl says, "My brother's home from college and is going to pick me up after practice tomorrow. He can give you a ride home too." You know your mom is going to be busy tomorrow afternoon, so you agree.

After practice the next day, Daryl's brother is waiting in the parking lot. When you open the car door, you smell alcohol and there's an open beer can in the cup holder. Daryl climbs into the back seat. Daryl's brother laughs when you hesitate and tells you to get in the car.

*Show the **Decision-Making Steps** slide. Then go through the process, asking students to brainstorm answers to each of the questions. Use the guide below to reinforce appropriate answers.*

1. Does a decision need to be made?

Yes, you need to decide if you're going to accept the ride from Daryl's brother.

2. Stop and think before you act. What do you need to know to make a safe decision?

The safety rule is NEVER to ride with a driver who has been drinking or using other drugs.

3. Do you need help with this decision? Who can help?

You can make the decision yourself.

You may want to ask your coach or another adult for help, especially if Daryl's brother puts pressure on you to get in the car.

4. What choices do you have?

You can get in the car and let Daryl's brother drive you home.

You can refuse to get in the car.

5. What are the possible outcomes for each of these choices?

If you get in the car:

- Possible positive outcomes—Daryl and his brother won't get mad. You might get home without a problem.
- Possible negative outcomes—Daryl's brother could lose control of the car and get in a crash. You and Daryl could be badly injured or even killed. Daryl's brother might be pulled over by the police and arrested for driving under the influence.

If you refuse to get in the car:

- Possible positive outcomes—You'd avoid the risk and stay safe. Daryl might get out of the car and stay safe too. You'd feel good about following a very important safety rule.
- Possible negative outcomes—Daryl's brother might get mad. You will have to find another ride home.

6. What's the healthy and safe choice for you? Why?

The only safe decision is to refuse the ride. Riding in a car with a driver who's been drinking is very dangerous.

7. Are you happy with the results of your decision? Why or why not?

You would be happy with the decision if both you and Daryl stayed safe. In the future you might choose not to accept a ride home with someone you haven't met before. You might want to ask your mom about it first, and that you can call her to come get you if the ride didn't work out. You may also want to ask your parents for advice on what to do if you are ever in a situation like this again.

Assessment & Closure

Students demonstrate learning

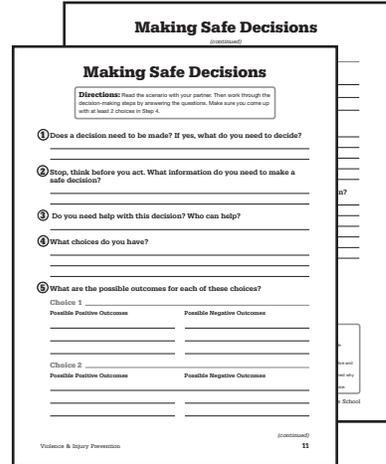
Complete

Direct students to turn to **Making Safe Decisions** on page 11 of the Student Workbook.

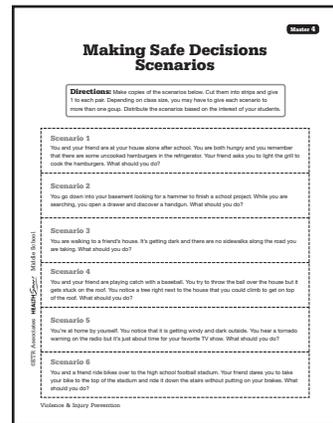
Now you'll have a chance to use the decision-making steps we just learned to help you make a safe decision. You and a partner will be given a scenario. After you read the scenario, you both need to complete the steps on the **Making Safe Decisions** activity sheet.

Pair students and distribute copies of one of the **Making Safe Decisions Scenarios** to each pair. Depending on class size, some scenarios will be completed by more than one pair.

Allow time for students to complete the activity sheet. Circulate as pairs work to provide guidance and feedback.



Workbook pages 11–12



Master 4

End the lesson

Close

Read each of the **Making Safe Decisions Scenarios** aloud and ask the pair who responded to that situation to share the decision they made in Step 6 and explain why this is a healthy and safe decision. If more than one pair completed a scenario, ask them if they came up with the same decision.

As each pair shares, ask the class to give a thumbs-up if the decision named was a safe decision, or a thumbs-down if it was an unsafe decision. If any students give a thumbs down, as them to share why they think the decision is unsafe and to suggest a safer one.

Not all injuries can be prevented. But most can be avoided if you think about how to avoid or reduce the risks. Stopping to ask questions and think through the possible outcomes of different choices can help prevent many injuries.

Assess

*Collect students' **Making Safe Decisions** activity sheets and evaluate their work for this lesson.*

Assessment Evidence

Objective 1

Students demonstrated decision-making skills that can be used to avoid or reduce the risk of unintentional injuries by:

- Completing the **Making Safe Decisions** activity sheet.

(Scoring Rubric, page 178)

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Making Safe Decisions Activity Sheet				
Objective	4	3	2	1
1. Decision-Making Skills	<p>Correctly completes all 7 of the decision-making steps based on the assigned scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating that a decision needs to be made and what that decision is. • Identifying any additional information needed to make a safe decision. • Correctly assessing whether help is needed in making the decision. • Clearly identifying 2 or more possible choices. • Clearly stating 1 or more positive and 1 or more negative possible outcomes for each choice. • Identifying a healthy and safe choice and clearly explaining why the choice is healthy and safe. • Offering a reasonable and realistic way to evaluate the decision based on the results. 	<p>Correctly completes 5 or 6 of the decision-making steps based on the assigned scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating that a decision needs to be made and what that decision is. • Identifying any additional information needed to make a safe decision. • Correctly assessing whether help is needed in making the decision. • Clearly identifying 2 or more possible choices. • Clearly stating 1 or more positive and 1 or more negative possible outcomes for each choice. • Identifying a healthy and safe choice and clearly explaining why the choice is healthy and safe. • Offering a reasonable and realistic way to evaluate the decision based on the results. 	<p>Correctly completes 3 or 4 of the decision-making steps based on the assigned scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating that a decision needs to be made and what that decision is. • Identifying any additional information needed to make a safe decision. • Correctly assessing whether help is needed in making the decision. • Clearly identifying 2 or more possible choices. • Clearly stating 1 or more positive and 1 or more negative possible outcomes for each choice. • Identifying a healthy and safe choice and clearly explaining why the choice is healthy and safe. • Offering a reasonable and realistic way to evaluate the decision based on the results. 	<p>Correctly completes only 1 or 2 of the decision-making steps based on the assigned scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating that a decision needs to be made and what that decision is. • Identifying any additional information needed to make a safe decision. • Correctly assessing whether help is needed in making the decision. • Clearly identifying 2 or more possible choices. • Clearly stating 1 or more positive and 1 or more negative possible outcomes for each choice. • Identifying a healthy and safe choice and clearly explaining why the choice is healthy and safe. • Offering a reasonable and realistic way to evaluate the decision based on the results.