

Decision Making Activity Supplement

by Gina Halpin

This activity supplement will help support young people in decision making and enable them to reflect on the ways in which they make decisions and the factors that influence them. The activities will also highlight to the young people that decisions they make have consequences both positive and negative and so called 'bad' decisions can assist in future learning and decision making.

Icebreaker What's in the Bag?

Aim: To help the young people get comfortable with each other and begin to think about how they make decisions.

Materials: Four different types of bags and four treats.

- Place a treat inside each bag.
- Ask for three volunteers from the group and ask each of them to choose a bag based on how it looks.
- Each volunteer can keep their bag, swap it with someone else or swap it for the extra fourth bag.
- Now ask the volunteers to feel the object inside the bag without looking.
- Then they have the option to swap again.
- Finally, each young person opens their bag and sees what is inside.

The youth worker should ask why certain bags were chosen and what changed their minds about the bag. Ask the young people if they felt confident in the decisions they made, what influenced them and if there were moments of doubt.

Source: www.ehow.com

Activity One Good Decision, Bad Decision

Aim: This activity will help young people reflect on past decisions and look at how the learning can be applied in future decision making situations.

Materials: Flip chart paper and pens.

It is important for the youth worker to give an introduction to this activity about the learning that can be gained from even the most awful outcomes of

decisions we have made, such as some people believe that there are no such things as mistakes, that everything is an opportunity for learning!

- In pairs ask the group to think of two situations – the first being a time when they made a 'bad' decision, i.e. one that turned out differently to what they expected. Maybe it felt like a mistake at the time.
- Ask them to focus on how they had come to that decision – what were their priorities at the time. Repeat this process focusing on a 'good' decision.

Review Questions:

What did the 'good' and 'bad' decisions feel like at the time? Were they different?

Source: *Body, Mind & Society*, by Melanie Revolta, 2002



Activity Two Making Decisions

Aim: To support young people in looking at the way they make decisions and the factors that influence them.

Materials: Flip chart paper and markers

This activity is ideal for a small group setting but does not work so well with large numbers as you will need the young people to feel comfortable sharing both positive and negative experiences

- Ask each young person to think of two decisions that they have made recently. They do not need to be big life changing decisions, but rather every day ordinary decisions such as what to wear, where to go at the weekend etc.
- Now ask each person to turn to the person next to them and share the two decisions they have identified.
- Invite the group to share any key influences or themes around how decisions identified have been made.

Facilitate a short discussion on the way decisions are made and suggest that most decisions are made in the following ways:

- After listening to friends.
- Instinctively.
- On the spur of the moment.
- At the last minute.
- After thinking it through.



- Ask the young people to think of an example of decision making for each process, for example moving your hand quickly away from a hot kettle is instinctive, whereas deciding on what you want to do after school is considered and thought through.
- Ask them to write down on the flip chart paper a sample decision for each process.

After 20 minutes bring the group back together and encourage them to challenge or ask further questions about decision making processes they use in everyday life. Close the session by identifying the positive and negative factors for each decision making process.

Source: Young People and Citizenship: A resource handbook for youth workers, Connexions personal advisers and PSHE teachers, by Vanessa Rogers 2001

Activity Three Moon landing

Aim: This is a fun activity that will help young people to bring strategic thinking and analysis into their decision making.

As the young people work together in teams of 4, sharing their thoughts and ideas. Tell them that they are members of a space crew scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. However, due to mechanical difficulties, the ship was forced to land at a spot 200 miles from the rendezvous point.

During re-entry and landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged and since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip.

9 items are listed as being intact and undamaged after landing. Their task is to rank them in terms of their importance for the crew, to allow them to reach the rendezvous point. (The 'expert' answers were compiled by a team of scientists and engineers at NASA).

Matches	Food Concentrate
50 Ft of Nylon Rope	Parachute silk
2 .45 calibre pistols	One case of dehydrated milk
Stellar Map	2 100 pound tanks of oxygen
Portable heating unit	

NASA Ranking NASA's Reasoning

Box of matches Ranked **9th**
Virtually worthless as there's no oxygen on the moon to sustain combustion.

Food concentrate Ranked **3th**
Efficient means of supplying energy requirements.

50 feet of nylon rope Ranked **4th**
Useful in scaling cliffs and tying injured together.

Parachute silk Ranked **5th**
Protection from the sun's rays.

Portable Heating Unit Ranked **8th**
Not needed unless on the dark side.

Two .45 caliber pistols Ranked **6th**
Possible means of self-propulsion.

One case of dehydrated milk Ranked **7th**
Bulkier duplication of food concentrate.

Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen Ranked **1st**
Most pressing survival need

Stellar map Ranked **2rd**
Primary means of navigation

http://insight.typepad.co.uk/moon_landing.pdf

Activity Four Help the Character

Aim: to encourage problem solving in decision making.

Materials: TV or laptop

- Select a clip from a t.v. programme or film that involves a character presented with a decision.
- Try to choose a clip that is unfamiliar to the young people so they don't already know the ending.
- Show the clip, drawing the young people's attention to the decision at hand.
- Pause the clip just after the decision is presented.
- Ask the young people to brainstorm the possible decisions that could be made by the character.
- Initiate a discussion about the best decision for the situation along with the reasoning behind it.
- Continue with the clip to see how the character resolved the issue.
- Discuss the consequences faced by the character, whether positive or negative.

Source: www.ehow.com