

Health Skill:

Decision-Making



Background Information

The health skill, *Decision-Making*, focuses on the fact that people make decisions everyday. These decisions can be everyday decisions, impulsive decisions, quick decisions, or thoughtful decisions. Identifying the level of importance for each decision allows for an intentional process to be utilized when needed. Taking the time to make thoughtful decisions, especially regarding one's health, helps maintain positive health behaviors and change unhealthy behaviors. It is important for students to understand that the use of this skill allows them to sort through problems, brainstorm options, analyze the outcomes, follow-through, and reflect on the choices they make. When applied to health, the steps in this health skill model gives students the ability to make decisions individually, or collaboratively, to improve their quality of life. The health skill also allows students to make decisions outside of high-risk and high-stake contexts, increasing the likelihood of making healthy choices when facing potentially unhealthy situations. Mastery of *Decision-Making* empowers students to work through difficult situations by keeping the impact of the decision on their health in mind. Mastering *Decision-Making* prepares students for the other health skills, such as *Goal-Setting*, *Self-Management*, and *Advocacy for Self & Others*.

Notes on Grade Level Progression

Activities, vocabulary, and language throughout the grade levels are vertically aligned and build upon one another.

If students require scaffolding, refer to previous grade levels for additional ideas for activities and instruction that address gaps in student skills. For enrichment activities, look at higher grade levels in order to provide additional practice opportunities or for ideas on how to deepen understanding.

PreK-2

- Identifying decisions related to health
- Knowing when to get help
- Choosing between two options
- Learning from decisions

3-5

- Identifying options
- Predicting outcomes
- Reflecting on decisions

6-8

- Defining different types of decisions (everyday, impulsive, thoughtful)
- Analyzing collaborative and individual decisions
- Predicting and evaluating outcomes
- Using strategies to help follow-through on decisions
- Identifying potential obstacles to health decision-making

9-12

- Using more complex prioritization strategies (pro/con lists, values rating)
- Using collaborative decision-making strategies

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD (NHES) 5:

Students will demonstrate the ability to use *decision-making* skills to enhance health.

National Health Education Standard Rationale: Decision-making skills are needed to identify, implement, and sustain health-enhancing behaviors. This standard includes the essential steps that are needed to make healthy decisions as prescribed in the performance indicators. When applied to health issues, the decision-making process enables individuals to collaborate with others to improve their quality of life.

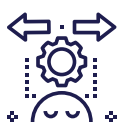


Grades 3-5 Framework

In grades 3-5, students begin *Decision-Making* by identifying the moments in their life when thoughtful decisions are needed. First, prompt students to think about decisions in general and then transition to identifying decisions related to their health. Students should also determine which decisions require help and which are made on their own. In Step 3, students practice making healthy decisions and communicating their decisions to others, increasing the likelihood they will be able to follow through on decisions in difficult situations. Finally, students reflect on their decisions, connecting to personal health and their future.

Mastery of *Decision-Making* for grades 3-5 means students are able to identify health-related decisions, brainstorm options and outcomes, make healthy decisions, and reflect on how those decisions impact their health and futures.

The Steps:



Step 1: Identify Decision



Step Overview: The main goal of this step is to develop awareness for when decisions need to be made. Understanding when decisions are necessary helps an individual recognize when they should use a decision-making process. Students need to learn to recognize when a decision relates to their health as well as the difference between thoughtful and quick decisions.

Sub Skill(s):

- Define thoughtful decisions
- Identify health-related decisions



Step 2: Brainstorm Options & Outcomes

Step Overview: In Step 2, students use strategies that aid in decision-making: listing options, identifying if help is needed, and predicting outcomes. Part of this step is prompting students to think through whether or not options are healthy and safe in order to prioritize choices that are health-enhancing.

Sub Skill(s):

- List options for decisions
- Identify when help is needed for a health-related decision
- Predict outcomes of each option



Step 3: Make a Decision

Step Overview: Once a person has listed options and predicted outcomes, it is important to make the decision and follow-through. It can sometimes be easy to get stuck in Step 2 because it is hypothetical. However, it is important that a decision is actually made. Step 3 provides students opportunities to practice making a decision and communicating that decision to others.

Learning Objective(s):

- Make a health-related decision
- Communicate decision to others



Step 4: Look Back & Learn

Step Overview: Learning to reflect takes practice and intention. After a decision is made, it is important to learn from the outcomes, both positive and negative. Building time for students to reflect is crucial in developing metacognition, which supports other health skills, such as *Goal-Setting*, *Self-Management*, and *Advocacy for Self & Others*. This step allows students to take time to connect this decision to future decisions. Teachers should provide several opportunities to practice making decisions and working through the reflection process.

Reflection Question(s):

- How did the decision make you feel?
- What options did you think about at first?
- Why did you choose the option you did?
- What might happen next after that decision?
- How did asking for help make your decision healthier?
- Would you make that decision again? Why or why not?
- What do you want to remember next time you have to make the same decision?



Teaching Tips

- Teach *Decision-Making* for each health topic covered. Prompt students to identify decisions they will need to make related to that health topic. For example, when studying the impacts of bullying, have students use the steps to decide what to do if they witness bullying.
- Implicitly teach the decision-making processing by modeling decisions you make and structuring learning activities to be centered around student choice.
- Provide opportunities for students to role play communicating their decisions to others and asking for support. Communicating decisions increases the likelihood that an individual will follow through.
- Allow students to use decisions they are facing in their life in order to apply the decision-making process to their life.

See *Teaching Progression* for suggested learning activities.