



Teaching Progression:



Step 1: Pause and Think

SUB SKILL(S):

- Define different types of decisions (Everyday, Impulsive, Responsible)
- Identify the decision
- Determine if a situation requires slowing down decision-making
- Determine if a situation requires an individual or collaborative decision

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What types of decisions take very little processing to make? What types of decisions need a more thorough, thoughtful decision-making process? What makes some decisions so much more important than others? When do I need to include others in my decision making process?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.12.2) Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. (5.12.3) Justify when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

decision, process, healthy, unhealthy, thoughtful decisions, everyday decisions, impulsive decisions, individual, collective, collaborative

Step 1: Pause and Think

Sub Skill: Define different types of decisions (Everyday, Impulsive, Responsible)

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that not all decisions are equal in terms of importance. Define for students the different types of decisions. Allow students to interact with these definitions to help them better understand them.

- Everyday Decisions: *Decisions that don't have long-lasting impacts on one's life and health.*
 - Example: I order a pizza with pepperoni instead of mushrooms.
- Impulsive Decisions: *Decisions that are made without thinking through the impacts of the decision. They can have negative consequences, especially in stressful situations.*
 - Example: I'm hanging out with friends and someone offers me a beer. I take it without thinking that I have to drive home later.

Language of Health Literacy:

The decision being made is an example of a _____ decision because _____.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

- Responsible Decisions: *Decisions that are made by going through the decision-making model. These are decisions that are made with intent and forethought, and the individual has considered the impact of alternative decisions for the given situation.*
 - Example: I am hanging out with friends when someone offers me a beer. I pause to think about the impact of drinking now and in the future. I decide to decline the beer because drinking underage is illegal, I need to drive home in an hour, and I don't want to risk getting a ticket and losing my scholarship.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Use additional types of decisions, definitions, or examples to support the needs in your classroom.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Have students identify the three types of decision making by evaluating different relevant scenarios. Read out loud different scenarios of people making decisions. Have students identify if each scenario is demonstrating a person making an everyday, impulsive, or responsible decision. For each scenario, have students move to an area of the room designated to represent each type of decision. After students identify the type of decision made, have students turn and discuss their thought process using the *Language of Health Literacy* provided. Ask students to explain their answers based on the definitions you have provided.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Instruct students to create three columns on a piece of paper, one for everyday decisions, one for impulsive decisions, and one for responsible decisions. Have students identify either past decisions they have made for each category or decisions they anticipate will come up for them in the future. Have students share out examples with peers.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Monitor student examples and engage in conversations with students who identify decisions that feel unsafe and/or unhealthy.
- Do not make students share decisions that they do not feel comfortable sharing with others. Instead, allow them to share decisions that are less personal or identify decisions that a person could make.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

Step 1: Pause and Think | Sub Skill: Identify the Decision



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that when they face a decision, they need to determine precisely what decision needs to be made. Tell students that sometimes there are complex decisions that may require several decisions they can make, while other situations present clear singular decisions. Explain to students that they must be clear on the decision they are making in order to choose the correct decision making strategy.

Language of Health Literacy:

The decision that needs to be made is _____.

I need to decide what to do about _____.

In this situation, some decisions I need to make are _____.

Have students identify the decision/ decisions that need to be made given different scenarios. For each scenario a student is provided, have the student state clearly the decision or decisions the individual needs to make.

- Example Scenarios:
 - You are at a party. You see a person that you don't really know set their drink down and leave. You think you see someone mess with the person's drink. They return and pick up their cup.
 - You are meeting with your counselor. He tells you that you need to have three recommendation letters and two essays to complete your scholarship application by the end of the month.
 - You were accepted to your dream school and two other colleges. Your dream school did not offer you any scholarships, but you did receive financial aid to one of the other schools.
 - You and your friends are planning your prom day activities.
 - You are at a party, and you see the person who is supposed to drive you home drinking. When it is time to leave, your driver tells you that they are fine. They aren't slurring and don't seem drunk, but you saw them take two shots within the last hour.

Step 1: Pause and Think

Sub Skill: Determine If A Situation Requires Slowing Down Decision-Making



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that not every decision will require a thoughtful, responsible decision making process; so the first thing a person needs to do when approaching a decision is to determine the importance of that decision. Explain to students that the following questions can help them quickly determine if the decision is important enough to apply a responsible decision-making strategy.

Language of Health Literacy:

This decision can/cannot have a meaningful impact because _____.

I believe this decision needs a more thoughtful/responsible decision making process because _____.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

Provide students with a handout or post the following questions for students:

- Can this decision have a meaningful impact on me now?
- Can this decision have a meaningful impact on my future?
- Do I feel scared, uncomfortable or unsure?
- Can I get hurt by this decision?
- Does this situation affect my health?
- Does this situation affect my relationships?
- Does this situation connect to my values?

Tell students that if they answer “Yes” to any of the previous questions, they need to pause and think more critically about the decision they are about to make.

Explain to students that people can find it challenging to pause and think because people often build the habit of making impulsive decisions. Define *impulsive* to students. *An impulsive act is when we do something without thinking through the action and its implication on our life.* Tell students that they will learn strategies to build habits to pause and think before acting to make more responsible and thoughtful decisions when needed.

TEACHING NOTES:

- See *Resource Bank* below for an article on brain science, teens and impulsive decision making.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Give students 4-5 decisions a student their age could face. Include both meaningful decisions and less important decisions. Tell students to rank the decisions from most to least important. Next, have students start with the most important decision and answer the questions from Suggested Learning Activity 1 (above) to determine how important each decision could be for the individual. Students can write out their responses in a journal, or talk through their thinking with a partner.

Once students complete the activity, use the following questions to lead the class in a reflective discussion:

- How do the questions provided help a person determine the importance of a decision?
- How can these questions help a teenager slow down their response to a decision?
- What question best helps you know if a decision is more serious, requiring a more thoughtful process?



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Explain to students that the more often you behave a certain way or perform an action, the more that behavior gets physically hardwired into your brain's memory. Tell students that we often call these repeated actions and behavior habits. Explain to students that the more we repeat an action or behavior the easier it is for our brain to recall that habit. Explain that people must actively work to retrain their brains to build new habits, including slowing down the decision-making process. Tell students that today they will learn specific strategies to start building the habit of pausing before making decisions and taking action.

Give students a list of options to support them in pausing before making a decision. Have students play a game with a small group (4-5). While playing the game, have students use strategies provided to slow down their decision-making process.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)

When students complete the game, lead the class in a reflective discussion:

- What strategies did you use to slow down your decision making?
- How could this be helpful in your actual life?
- Why can it be challenging for people to pause before making decisions?
- Which strategy did you find most helpful for you to pause?

TEACHING NOTES:

- See *Resource Bank* below for an article explaining the creation of habits in the human mind.
- See *Resource Bank* below for suggested games.
- Example strategies to stop and pause: count backwards from 10, take three deep breaths, recognize your gut response and ask yourself, "Is this the best response?". Take a break from the situation and do something else.

Step 1: Pause and Think

Sub Skill: Determine If A Situation Requires An Individual Or Collaborative Decision



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Tell students that once they determine the importance of a decision they need to decide if they can make the decision on their own or if they must include others in the decision making process. Explain to students that when making a decision collaboratively they are not asking for another person's opinion, they are including others in the decision because the impact of the decision affects others. Define *collaboration* for students. *Collaboration is the action of working jointly with others to create an outcome.*

Tell students that to determine if they need to work in collaboration to make a decision, they can use the following questions:

- Will this decision affect another person?
- Do I need another person to take action for me to make this decision?
- Do I need to work with another person to accomplish this decision?

Explain to students that if they answer *yes* to any of these questions, they will need to work alongside other people in order to make the decision.



See *Stage 4: Collaboration of Interpersonal Communication* for more detailed guidance on collaboration strategies.

Language of Health Literacy:

This decision can be handled by the individual because _____.

This decision should be handled collaboratively because _____.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Pause and Think (Cont.)



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Place 4-5 pieces of poster paper around the room. On each poster, pose the following prompts:

- A decision you need to make everyday...
- A decision you need to make this week...
- A decision you need to make to graduate...
- A decision you need to make to earn an "A" in this class...
- A decision you need to make to be healthy...

First, have students rotate around the posters to write examples. Give students 3-5 minutes to complete their examples. Next, have students review their peers' responses. Tell students to ask the three questions to determine if the decision can be made individually or collaboratively. While reviewing responses have students indicate which decisions can be made individually versus collaboratively using a symbol next to peer responses. After students analyze peer responses, have students give examples of individual versus collaborative decision making.