

MODULE 4C:

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

DECISION MAKING

GOALS: This module is designed to make participants aware of the process of decision making, which takes place from moment to moment each day. They will learn helpful strategies in improving their ability to make better decisions. Participants will gain knowledge about how to prevent repeating past mistakes.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- increase decision-making awareness
- learn to use decision-making strategies
- evaluate decisions and examine outcomes
- reward themselves and learn from mistakes

MATERIALS: Handouts: Preparing for a Decision, After the Decision Has Been Made, and Decision Making Strategies, and Decision Exercise

PREPARING FOR A DECISION

The difference between you and someone who seems to succeed most of the time may just have a lot to do with preparation. People who habitually make bad decisions usually lack sufficient information, and make decisions based upon emotions or they may not be thinking clearly as a result of drug/alcohol use/abuse. Other causes may have to do with making spur of the moment decisions. Lastly, some people feel by not making a decision, they are prolonging the inevitable, not knowing that things not addressed can often get worse.

THINGS TO DO

1. Obtain as much information about the issue as you can.
2. Analyze the available information—learn as much as you can
3. Decide if the risk is too high
4. Determine what the opportunities would be and their value
5. Seek counsel if needed. Discuss your ideas with someone who can be objective.

AFTER THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE

Once you have followed the steps of preparation and you have made a carefully thought out decision, you must learn to live with the consequences of that decision. If there are things you can do to change it and you so desire, follow the steps of decision-making and decide how to proceed. Making good decisions up front brings good outcomes and the good outcomes are experienced as rewarding. The more you make sound decisions the more pleased you will be with the outcomes.

When we make hasty and bad decisions the outcome tends to be less than desirable. However, when life throws us a curve ball and we make a bad decision, we may have to live with it. It is to our advantage, if we learn to accept the things that we cannot change. While we try to learn from our poor decisions, sometimes it takes us longer to change. We must be patient and remember, we are after all, only human!

DECISION MAKING STRATEGIES

Things to consider when making that next big decision:

1. Decide whether or not you need to make a decision at this time.
2. Rule out illegal, dangerous, or unethical options that can lead to trouble.
3. Consider the advantages and the disadvantages of your decision.
4. Determine how your decision will affect others
5. Consider the advantages and the disadvantages of your decision.
6. View more than one solution to the dilemma, you may have overlooked some things.
7. Compare the costs and potential gains as a result of your decision.
8. Know that once a decision has been made there is often little that can be done to change it.
9. Remember, no decision is a decision!
10. Try to make decisions you can live with based upon your views and values.
11. Learn from your decisions: Know what went right and what went wrong, for the next time around.

DECISION EXERCISE

Using the directives for “Decision Making Strategies” and “Things to Do,” partner in small groups to discuss important decisions that you have made in the past. Think about those decisions that had good outcomes and compare with those that had poor outcomes. Discuss in terms of the differences between the two.