

Option A or Option B: The Steps of the Decision Making Process

Michelle Krehbiel, Extension Youth Development Specialist

Goal:

Participants will apply the decision making process to personal or family situations.

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify factors that influence decision making.
- Identify the steps of the decision making process.
- Apply the decision making process when making decisions.

Leader Resources:

Brockman, M.S., & Russell, S.T. (2009). *Decision-making/reasoning skills*. Building Partnerships for Youth: National 4-H Council and the University of Arizona

Walker, K. (2001a). *Decision Making*, K-State Research and Extension, Manhattan, KS

Walker, K. (2001b). *Goal Setting*. K-State Research and Extension, Manhattan, KS

Walker, K., Torres, Nayda, Turner, J. (2006). *Make up Your Mind—Improving Your Decision Making Skills*. University of Florida IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL

Before the Meeting:

Read the leader and participant guides, and review the leader resources.

At the Meeting:

1. *Introduce yourself and the lesson topic.*
Ask participants to think about the decisions they have made today. Then, have them introduce themselves and share one of those decisions. After introductions, pass around a bowl of treats. Items in the dish may include candy, fresh fruit, or office supplies like highlighters or pencils. Instruct participants to take one item. Give them only about 15 to 30 seconds to make their decision. After everyone has an item, ask participants to share how they made their decision. Why did they select that particular item? What factors influenced their decision? What was easy or difficult about making the decision? Would they make the same decision again?
2. *Pass out the participant guide for Option A or B: The Steps of the Decision Making Process.*
Share the definition of decision making with the group. Then, discuss factors influencing decision making. If participants have a hard time thinking of answers, have them reflect on what they selected from the bowl of treats. Participant answers may be goals, health, personal preference, needs or wants, or what a friend took.

Review “Factors Influencing Decision Making” in the participant guide. Discuss how factors such as values, goals, religion, media, peers, and family influence how you make decisions. Often, goals are one of the main factors influencing decision making. Review the definition of short-term and long-term goals, then provide examples of each type of goal. If you have time you can have participants write down one short-term and one long-term goal.

After discussing goals, discuss how personal values influence decision making. Review the definition of values provided in the participant guide. Have participants think about the opening activity when they selected an item from the bowl. Ask participants to share the values that guided their decision making. Possible answers could be health, needed something (financially conservative or practical), or generosity (they selected an item for someone else). Expand the discussion to have participants think about and share other values that commonly impact their decision making.

3. *Review the “Steps of the Decision Making Process.”*
Ask participants for one example to apply to the decision making process. Go through the process as a large group. You can go through the process either orally or on a piece of flip-chart paper. If you have additional time and think it would be beneficial, have all the participants select a decision they will be making and practice using the decision making process worksheet. After participants apply the decision making process to their personal situation, have them share their experience of using the process. Discuss the following questions:
 - What they did the like about the process?
 - What was challenging?
 - How were the steps of the process helpful?
4. *Apply the decision making process to daily life.*
Have participants share how they plan to use the decision making process in their daily life. Review the section, “Helping Others Make a Decision.” Additional discussion may include how to help family members, such as children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews, or other extended family, use the decision making process. Have participants give their own examples or share their experiences using the decision making process as a family.