

Module 7: Making Better Choices

Everyday people are forced to make choices. This module emphasizes that adolescents are responsible for the choices they make and the choices they do not make. In addition, this module seeks to increase the understanding that there are consequences that accompany each choice made. Adolescents will learn how to better help themselves and help others make choices with the most favorable consequences.

- **Cohesion Building Activity: Human Knot**
- Task Objectives: To illustrate how what we do affects other people and the importance of being considerate of others when we are attempting to deal with the challenges we face.
- Materials: none
- Directions: Divide into groups of 6-8 students plus a facilitator. Students get in a circle and then reach across and take the hands of two different people standing on the other side of the circle. Tell them that they cannot hold hands with the person next to them (when everyone has grabbed hands you have a human knot). The challenge is to untangle the knot without letting go of each others' hands. Remind participants to take their time and to make sure no one gets their arm twisted in a way that hurts. When the knot is untangled, the facilitator asks:

“How did it feel to be in the human knot?”

“What did you do to untangle the human knot?”

“How did you make sure no one got hurt?”

“What is an example in real life when everyone depends on each other to do their part?”

“In real life most of what we experience involves people affecting each others' lives. When we make decisions for ourselves we have to think about how those decisions affect others. Last session, when we did the obstacle course, we talked about who you turn to for social support. Today we will think of the ideas you have for making good choices and how you can not only make good choices for yourself, but can be a positive influence on others.”

CENTRAL ACTIVITY: “What Would You Have Done?”

- Task Objectives: To consider the choices one has when faced with a difficult situation, to determine what the pros and cons are of each choice by considering the possible consequences, to select the choice that seems to have the greatest benefit (and least harm) for the individual.
- Materials: poster board containing “ICED,” scripts, audio tapes, or video tapes of situations being faced by teens that require choices, tape player, flip chart, markers

- Directions: Put up Poster that contains ICED:

- I** Identify the problem. (e.g., disagreeing with a friend)
- C** Create constructive alternatives. (e.g., 1. never talk to friend again, 2. yell at friend, 3. talk about problem with friend)
- E** Evaluate the alternatives. (e.g., 1. lose the friendship, more free time; 2. disagreement gets worse, you win disagreement, but friend's feeling may be hurt (or vice versa); 3. you and your friend gain a better understanding of each other – may lead to a better friendship, may not).
- D** Decide on the best alternative to do. (e.g., alternative 3 – has best chance of saving and possibly strengthening friendship)

- Discuss ICED and tell participants **“We will use ICED to think about what people should do when they face a difficult choice. ICED is useful for thinking about what one’s alternatives are and how to select the best one.**
 - **Identify the problem: spell out what the problem is and talk about why it is a problem.**
 - **Create a list of possible ways that a person could handle the problem .**
 - **Evaluate how constructive each alternative is (how much will the alternative help versus harm the person; how much will the alternative help versus harm other people in the person’s life?)**
 - **Decide among the alternatives which one will bring the most help and least harm.”**
- (in the large group) Play the first audio-taped situation in which a teen is faced with a difficult choice. After the participants hear the situation use iced to address what to do. Have the group do the I, C, and E of ICED:
 - Identify and discuss the problem – *write this on the flip chart*
 - Create a list of alternatives that the teen has – *write these on a flip chart*
 - Evaluate each alternative by discussing the pros and cons of each choice based on the consequences that will or might result.
- Tell students they are going to break into their small groups to decide as a group which option is best. (i.e., the “D” in ICED). They will have 3 minutes to come up with a short role play to demonstrate their choice. Have students break into their small groups with the one facilitator. When 3 minutes are up, have each group demonstrate their solution choice – briefly process what they chose and why.
 - Have students listen to the outcome of the situation (i.e., the choice the teen made). Briefly get their reactions to the choice.
- Play the next audio-taped situation and repeat the process described above.

Outside Experience:

Notice this week how you make good choices about school, work, staying out of trouble, making decisions, etc.

Retrospective Pre/Post Evaluation (see attached)

MODULE 7: MAKING BETTER CHOICES

County _____ **School** _____ **Code** _____
 (completed by facilitator)

Grade in school _____ **Age** _____ **Circle one: male female**

Race/Ethnicity: **Black/African American** **White/Caucasian** **Hispanic/Latino**
 Native American **Asian American** **Other** _____

Please indicate how much you enjoyed the activities.

Not A little Some A lot
 At All

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I enjoyed The Human Knot activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I enjoyed the What Would You Have Done activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Please indicate what you knew before and after participating in this session.

	Before this session				After this session			
	Not At All	A little	Some	A lot	Not At All	A little	Some	A lot
I knew the ways that the choices I make for me affect others.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew how to work together with other people when we face a challenge.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew how to consider alternatives for dealing with problems I face.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew how to select the best choice for dealing with problems I face.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew how to be successful in making positive choices for myself.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

I Identify the Problem.

- Spell out **what the problem is** and talk about why it is a problem.

C Create Alternatives.

- List the **possible ways** that a person could handle the problem.

E Evaluate the Alternatives.

- How much will the alternative **help versus harm** the person or other people in the person's life?

D Decide on the Best Alternative to Do.

- Which alternative will bring the **most help and least harm**?

Making Better Choices (situation suggestions)*

1. Jeff and his friends are at the mall. Some guys from another high school that Jeff and his friends don't like are there. Some of Jeff's friends want to get into it with these other guys. One of the guys from the other high school is dating Jeff's ex-girlfriend – Jeff doesn't really like that, but he's not sure whether he wants to get into a fight. What are Jeff's options and what should he do?
2. Tiffany and Brandon have been dating for four months. Brandon really likes Tiffany, but he is not sure about having sex with her. Brandon is 13 and still a virgin; Tiffany is 14 and has had sex with two of her boyfriends. Although Brandon feels love for Tiffany, he is not sure that having sex with her is the right thing for him. His friends already assume he and Tiffany are having sex, and lately Tiffany has been asking Brandon when he is going to make his move. Brandon does not want to lose Tiffany. What are Tiffany's options and what should she do?
3. Tasha has been feeling depressed lately. Nothing seems to be going right in her life. She is always fighting with her mom, her boyfriend is treating her bad and she thinks he is going to break up with her, she doesn't have any close girlfriends to talk to, and her grades at school have been slipping. Tasha is starting to think that killing herself might be the answer. What are Tasha's options and what should she do?
4. Marcella has been smoking a little weed with her friends lately and likes getting high. Her parents have no idea what she is doing, it's fun, and so far everything is going fine with school and in her social life. This weekend she and some friends are going to a party where there will be plenty of weed and, she has heard there will be crack there too. She is trying to decide if she will try some. Just trying it once is no big deal – right? What are Marcella's options and what should she do?
5. Moesha's friends try to talk Moesha into going with them to get a tattoo. Moesha's friends say it will be cool; everyone in the group can get a tattoo. Moesha is considering it, but is concerned about her parents' reaction and whether she really wants a tattoo. She does like the idea of doing something that connects her with her friends.

*Example Scripts follow on next page

1. Situation 1 (Tattoo): Two friends meet up on a Saturday afternoon. One of the friends wants to get a tattoo and tries to talk the other friend into getting one so they can both get their tattoos for half price.

Friend 1: How's it going? Not much happening on this boring Saturday afternoon.

Friend 2: Wanna do something we've talked about doing?

Friend 1: What?

Friend 2: There's a half price sale at Frank's Tattoo Parlor downtown. If you bring a friend and both of you get a tattoo, then it costs each of you half price.

Friend 1: Oh. I don't know. I've heard getting a tattoo hurts and it is rather permanent. I think they're cool and all, but I don't know if I want to get one.

Friend 2: Come on! You know how much I've been wanting that tattoo I showed you and you know I can't afford it at full price. But I could get it today if you go with me cuz I do have enough for half price.

Friend 1: Yeah, but my mom would kill me if I got one and I'm just not sure.....

Friend 2: Hey, how long do we go back? We've been friends a long time. Think of all the crazy stuff we did. Getting these tattoos together would be awesome. Isn't this what best friends do?

Friend 1: I don't know I'll have to think about it.

Friend 2: OK, but don't take too long. The half price special ends at 4 p.m. today.

END OF SCENE

Situation 2 (Rivals) (IF MAIN ACTOR IS FEMALE) Two groups of friends, from two different high schools are at the mall. Jackie sees a girl from the other high school, Samantha, who is now dating her ex-boyfriend, Allan. Jackie really is angry at Samantha because she lied to Allan about Jackie and that is why Allan broke up with her. Some of Jackie's friends want to get into it with these other kids. Jackie would like to teach Samantha a lesson, but she's not sure whether s/he wants to get into a fight. What are Jackie's options and what should she do?

One of Jackie's friends:

Hey Jackie isn't that Samantha over there, the girl who stole Allan away from you.

Jackie:

Yeah that's her. I can't stand that girl.

One of Jackie's friends:

Well, you know, Samantha and those other girls look rather puny. I think we could take them....easily.

Jackie:

I bet we could.

One of Jackie's Friends:

Did you see that?! Did you see that look Samantha just gave you?

Jackie:

[seething] I really would like to teach her a lesson. I get so angry when I think about all the lies she told Allan about me. I really do hate her!

One of Jackie's friends:

Okay then...let's do something about it.

Jackie:

[looks unsure]

END OF SCENE – move to ICED

Situation 2 (Rivals) (IF MAIN ACTOR IS MALE) Two groups of friends, from two different high schools are at the mall. Jack sees a kid from the other high school, Sam, who is now dating his ex-girlfriend, Alicia. Jack really is angry at Sam because he lied to Alicia about Jack and that is why Alicia broke up with him. Some of Jack's friends want to get into it with these other kids. Jack would like to teach Sam a lesson, but he's not sure whether he wants to get into a fight. What are Jack's options and what should he do?

One of Jack's friends: Hey Jack isn't that Sam over there, the jerk who stole Alicia away from you.

Jack: Yeah that's him. I can't stand that moron.

One of Jack's friends: Well, you know, Sam and those other guys look rather puny. I think we could take them....easily.

Jack: I bet we could.

One of Jack's Friends: Did you see that?! Did you see that look Sam just gave you?

Jack: [seething] I really would like to teach him a lesson. I get so angry when I think about all the lies he told Alicia about me. I really do hate him!

One of Jack's friends: Okay then...let's do something about it.

Jack: [looks unsure; considering what to do]

END OF SCENE – Move to ICED