

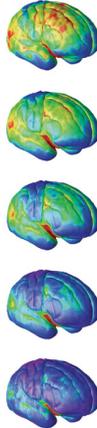


# Abstract Reasoning Definitions & Discussion Questions

## Definitions

**Abstract (Conceptual) Reasoning:** The ability to form judgments or conclusions based upon conceptual or hypothetical thinking. It is the:

- opposite of concrete (black and white) thinking
- opposite of 'all-or-nothing thinking'
- sometimes known as 'thinking in the gray'
- ability to see the 'big picture'
- ability to see the relationships between ideas
- ability to quickly use reason to solve new problems without prior knowledge, otherwise known as 'thinking on your feet'



**Higher Level Skills**, including Abstract (Conceptual) Reasoning skills, grow as the Frontal Lobe develops. These skills give youth the ability to solve problems in more complex ways by using theory, metaphor, hypotheses, and generalization. They offer the ability to quickly learn new information and skills to develop new strategies and solve new problems.

Research has linked abstract thinking to a greater sense of power and control over one's environment. Youth who use higher level thinking strategies will strengthen their ability to resist risky behaviors. They can develop a deeper understanding of how high-risk behavior may affect themselves and impact their family members.

## Abstract Reasoning Test

Look at the series of shapes below. Can you spot the pattern that is evolving? What shape on the second row belongs in the last box?



## Reflections

- Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest) on your abstract reasoning skills? What does your rating mean about how you think?
- How do you feel when faced with solving a new problem? How much time do you need to process new information before making a decision?
- Do you look for patterns or rules, then apply them to problem-solving? What personal rules and values do you use to make decisions about high-risk behavior?

## Application

### Decision Scenarios

Apply your abstract (conceptual) reasoning skills to these problem scenarios.

- A. You walk into a party and a few of your friends are smoking. You are surprised because you have heard some of them talk about their rule never to try drugs. What do you do? What do you say? How do you feel about your friends? Will your relationships change? Why?
- B. You are in an intimate, committed relationship. You have decided that you have sexual boundaries, but your partner wants to cross them. How do you handle this situation? Do you assert your boundaries? Why?
- C. What is your rule or value about cheating in school? What other situations do you apply that rule to? Why?
- D. Do you use your peer group to define your identity? What patterns of behavior, values and beliefs do you see in your peer group? Does it represent your authentic self?
- E. What is your theory about how addictive substances effect the mind, body, and spirit? Do you apply this theory to addictive behaviors? Why or why not?