

About Problem Solving and Decision Making

Level 2

Staff Activity Guide



What's Included:

The purpose of this guide is to support teachers in empowering students to make positive choices even when faced with high-risk situations. In this guide you will find: a Student Video Viewing Guide, Student Activity Guide, and a Brain Quiz with an Answer Guide. Each of these resources can be used independently or in conjunction with one another as time allows. For your planning purposes, please find the estimated time needed for each activity.

Viewing the Video:

Without Student Video Viewing Guide - (4 minutes)
With Student Video Viewing Guide - (5-7 minutes)

Student Activities:

Activity #1 Write About It - (10 minutes)
Activity #2 Group Activity - (20 minutes)
Activity #3 Extended Learning - (20 minutes)

Brain Quiz:

(5-10 minutes)

Student Video Viewing Guide Strategies:



Before the video (3-5 minutes)

- Have students "popcorn out" (share without raising hand) to get the wheels turning:
 - Why is problem solving an important skill?
- Ask students to "pair and share" with a classmate:
 - What's a decision that you had to make recently?
 - What made it an easy or difficult decision to make?

During the video (3-5 minutes)

- Pause the video at times for Checks for Understanding (CFU). You can call out a few students to answer, and/or have them pair and share. Students can complete the brain quiz either during or after the video.



For more information and resources on this topic, please visit [BrainAbouts.Org](https://www.brainabouts.org).

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Brain Quiz Answer Key: (5-10 minutes)

1. All of the following can be barriers to problem solving EXCEPT: (Answer b. accurately identifying the problem)
2. The more we strategize to make good decisions, the more we build long strings of neurons in our brain for this process. This concept is representative of the _____ Principle? (Answer: a. Use it or lose it)
3. All of the following are steps in a good problem-solving strategy EXCEPT: (Answer: c. ignore the problem)
4. True or False: We make decisions every day. Decisions can be simple or complex.
(Answer: True)
5. Which of the following can help with good decision making?
(Answer: d. weighing the pros and cons of each option)



Student Activity Options:

Activity #1 Write About It (10 minutes)

- a. Materials needed: journal or notebook paper and writing utensil.
- b. Directions: what's a big decision in your future? What factors will you consider when making the decision?
- c. Criteria for success: students can identify an important decision that they will make (ie: college, career, life partner etc) and what factors are important to them about the decision.

Activity #2 Group Activity (20 minutes)

- a. Materials needed: scratch paper and writing utensil for skit planning.
- b. Directions: in groups of 3-5 students, create a skit about a teen that has a problem. In the skit, demonstrate the teen's use of a problem-solving strategy to work through the problem.
- c. Criteria for Success: Students adequately use the problem solving strategy to evaluate a problem.

Activity #3 Extended Learning Activity (20 minutes)

- a. Materials needed: journal or notebook paper, print out or display of seven steps, and writing utensil.
- b. Directions: there are several Decision-Making Models. One model includes seven steps:
 - 1) Identify the Decision
 - 2) Gather relevant information
 - 3) Identify the options
 - 4) Weigh the evidence (pros and cons of each option)
 - 5) Choose among options
 - 6) Take action
 - 7) Review your DecisionUse this model to evaluate a decision, either real or fictional. This activity can be done in groups or individually.
- c. Criteria for success: student is able to come up with one decision they may need to make in the future and what that decision would look like/ sound like at each of the 7 steps.

