

Decision Making Cases Learning Experiences 25

[Decision Making & Personal Problem Solving Module](#)

To the Teacher:

The purpose of this learning experience is for students to become competent in applying the D.E.C.I.D.E. Decision Making Process for Making Tough Choices, Solving Personal Problems, and Setting Goals in hypothetical situations before applying it to a personal decision or problem. It is suggested that you also use this process to develop a case or cases that are relevant and developmentally appropriate for your students.

Procedure/Directions

1. Explain the importance of being able to make decisions, solve personal problems, and set and strive to reach goals. See the Decision Making & Problem-Solving Reading and the Developing and Successfully Meeting Goals Skill Card ([Decision Making & Personal Problem Solving Module](#)).
2. Determine which cases (Teasing & Bullying and/or the Gap Year) below you will use. Or develop one that is more relevant and developmentally appropriate for your students.
3. Distribute copies of the D.E.C.I.D.E. Decision Making Process for Making Tough Choices, Solving Personal Problems, & Setting Goals ([Decision Making & Personal Problem Solving Module](#)) to each student.
4. Review the D.E.C.I.D.E. model with them.
5. Explain and/or distribute a copy of the case.
6. Working alone or in small groups, students use the model to solve problems.
7. If they are working in small groups, it is important that each student complete their copy of the model for the groups' agreed-upon answers. To ensure everyone in the group is involved and hold everyone accountable, you could randomly collect one copy from each group to grade.

Processing the Learning Experience:

When they are done, ask volunteers to share their or their group's answers to the following questions.

Process questions include:

1. What is the problem, decision, or dilemma?
2. What is the person feeling about this problem, and why are they feeling this way?
3. What are they thinking, including their attitudes, beliefs, interpretations, and assumptions about the problem, and why are they thinking this way?
4. What do they think about their ability to solve it successfully?
5. What barriers, including attitudes, beliefs, interpretations, and assumptions, could hold them back from solving this problem and/or prevent them from successfully solving it?
6. What are all the alternative choices you brainstormed?
7. What are your top 3 solutions?
8. What are the person's short and long-term goals, values, and rules?
9. What choice did you make, and why did you choose that as the best solution?
10. Did your choice meet all of the criteria or have no effect? If not, which criteria were not met? How important is it that these criteria were not met?
11. What steps, listed in sequential order, must the person take to implement their plan and successfully meet their goals?
12. What was it like to use this process? Can you see using it yourself? Why or why not?

Assessment, Evaluation, & Grading:

See the [Assessment & Grading Module](#) for different ways for students to do self-assessments and for you to evaluate the completeness and quality of their work, their conceptual understanding of concepts and skills, and their level of self-awareness and self-insight. Additional methods of student self-assessment of the extent to which they met their goals, the effort they put into meeting them, and the progress they made in meeting their goals are included.

Suggested Follow-Up Learning Experiences

Following the completion of 1-2 hypothetical cases and students understand how to apply the D.E.C.DE. process, have them select, and then make a decision/solve a personal problem using the D.E.C.I.D.E. Model. See [A Decision I Need To Make Project](#) ([SES Projects Module](#)).

Teasing & Bullying Case

A member of your team is being teased and possibly even bullied in school. You once saw someone purposely bump into them and make some comment about their gender and sexuality. During lunch, even though you don't sit with them, you notice that people, including members of your team, talk about them behind their backs or make rude comments under their breath when they walk by. Some team members seem to exclude them and comment about not wanting to dress near them in the locker room.

You live in the same neighborhood as this person and have known them since elementary school when you played on youth teams with them. Although not a close friend, you are friendly with them, are in several classes together, and are teammates. You think they may identify as LGBTQ+ but are not sure. You have noticed that they have not seemed like themselves over the last couple of weeks, have not been playing as well, and have been very listless at practice. Walking to practice one day, you catch up with them and mention that they have seemed depressed for the last several weeks and wonder what is happening. They reply that you can do nothing about it, and they quickly change the subject.

You are worried about them and angry that this is happening to them. Part of you thinks you should do something but don't know what to do. Another part of you thinks you shouldn't get involved since they told you there is nothing you can do. And you are worried that if you say something to your teammates, they may turn on you, tease you, or at least keep their distance from you. On the other hand, it is difficult for you to watch them get treated this way, and you are worried that they may be depressed and that if you don't do something, it could get worse. Your school has an anti-bullying policy, and you think your coach would not tolerate this behavior among teammates, although you wonder how the coach has not noticed what is happening. Your parents have always taught you that it is important to stick up for others, especially when they are vulnerable or unable to protect themselves. You value this as well and believe in the importance of social justice. Your father recently reported a colleague at work who was sexually harassing a colleague, and that person was eventually fired. Your father said things were difficult with some colleagues at work after the person was fired, but he was glad he did the right thing and would do it again if he had to. In addition, you have an uncle who identifies as LGBTQ+ and is someone you admire and think is the best person you know. You wonder what he and your parents would feel about you if you did nothing and whether you could live with yourself. You are feeling very confused about what, if anything, to do.

You know you need to decide what to do, even if that decision is to do nothing.

Gap Year Case

It is your senior year, and you have been accepted into college. Although it was your third choice, it is a very good school, and your parents are proud of you. Both have told you they would never have been accepted into such a prestigious university. However, you are feeling disappointed and confused and very stressed because a deadline is approaching to notify the university that you are attending and a non-refundable deposit is due.

Part of your disappointment is that you want to study photography, which is something you have been passionate about for years, and the college that accepted you doesn't have as good a photography program as your first choice. In addition, although your parents have always told you to follow your dreams, they aren't happy with your choice to pursue photography as a career. They say there aren't many jobs in photography and that you should pick a well-paying career with many opportunities. They keep reminding you that you can still do photography as a hobby.

Your mother, a nurse, keeps trying to convince you to pursue nursing. She says she knows you better than anyone and that you would like nursing and be very good at it. On the one hand, you greatly admire your mother's work and find her stories about work interesting. You have worked as a transporter in her hospital during the summers and vacations, and you like your interaction with the patients. Your mother makes good points about nurses being paid well, having many different careers in nursing, and many nurses working part-time. You do like the atmosphere in the hospital and the team approach to taking care of patients. However, you have no direct patient care experience other than transporting patients. You don't know what that is like, whether you would find it as meaningful and satisfying as your mom or even like it. Part of your problem is that you are worried about how you would be perceived as a "male nurse." Your mother keeps telling you that there is no such thing as a "male nurse"; there are only nurses. She says that no one uses the term "female nurse," and why should you care what others think? You have always valued being your own person and, for the most part, don't care what others think of you.

Although you have briefly discussed it with your parents, you have considered taking a gap year. This would give you more time to figure out what you want to do, have more time to work on your photography portfolio, and possibly reapply to your first choice. You could also get a job as a nursing assistant and save some money. Part of the downside of taking a gap year is that all your friends are going off to college, and no one will be around. They will all be having this shared experience, and you won't. In addition, you were excited about the prospect of being on your own.

You are feeling very confused and anxious about what to do. Your parents are worried that you may not go to college if you take a gap year. Part of you thinks that maybe you should go to college and figure it out while you are there.

You need to decide what to do.