

**Session 6**  
**“Decision-Making – Choices” – 1**

**Goals**

- Students will be able to demonstrate a positive decision-making process.
- Students will practice decision-making skills, interact and brainstorm with each other, prioritize ideas to resolve them and practice building consensus.
- To make students aware that decision-making consists of choices and consequences which impact their lives and have lasting effects.

**Materials**

“Dear Abby” Issue - Index Cards  
Activity 1, Pt. 1 & 2  
Activity 2  
Activity 3

**Procedure**

Greet the students. Wait for the students to be seated and quiet. Ask one of the students to recap the lesson on Goals. Introduce the topic on Decision-making and choices for today.

**Script**

All your life you have had to make choices, but now that you are getting older decisions may be more difficult to make and may also have a greater impact on your life. Many decisions are an opportunity to shape your future and bring you closer to accomplishing your goals. In other words, choices should be made in an effort to bring you closer to the goals you have set for yourself. Your choices in life should reflect your values.

Decision-making is hard even for adults. Many people look to psychics, palm readers, the stars and famous people to advise them about their life. It is important to start good decision making habits in adolescence. Dr. Phil has coined the phrase, “How is that working for you?” If the choices you have made in the past are not bringing you the life you want then you should change what you are doing.

**Session 6**  
Decision-Making and Choices – 2

**Activity 1 instructions: “Dear Abby”**

Break the students up into pairs. Allow each pair to choose an index card with a pressing teen issue on it. The index cards should have one of the following topics on it: love, drugs & alcohol, abuse, violence, family drama, fear, suicide, self-image, eating disorders and death & dying. Each pair should work together to come up with a letter to Abby asking for advice about their specific issue. [You may need to explain the concept of an advice column.] The pairs can write about a situation that they are really going through or make up a situation. Give good details to Abby about the problem and then ask for advice. The students’ completed letters to Abby should then be given to a mentor. The mentors will redistribute the letters to the class. Each pair should answer a letter different from the one they wrote. The students will prepare a thoughtful written response to the issue. All of the issues and responses from each class could be compiled and given back to the students.

Ask if any pair would like to share their decision-making process. How did they decide what advice should be given? What process was used to come up with your answer?

**Activity 2 instructions: “The Road Not Taken”**

Read the poem as a class. Discuss what Mr. Frost meant by the poem. Allow the students to think about a time they came to a crossroad in their lives. How did they choose which way to go? Can they remember a time when they regretted their decision? Encourage the students to share some of their experiences. What would they do differently or similarly the next time?

**Activity 3 instructions: The Advisors**

Young people are faced with many choices. Listed in the handout are just a few questions middle school students face each day. Sometimes in order to make a good decision you need to get good advice from a trustworthy and knowledgeable source. Circle the source you would use to answer the questions below? You can circle more than one source, if necessary.

## Session 6

### Decision-Making and Choices – 3

#### Activity 4 instructions: – Quote For Discussion

Read the quote. Talk about what you think the author was trying to say?

*“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands  
in moments of comfort and convenience, but  
where he stands at times of  
challenge and controversy.”*

*Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968)  
American Civil Rights Leader*

#### Activity 5: VA Hero

**Elliott Yamin** (born Efraym Elliott Yamin<sup>1</sup> on July 20, 1978) is an American singer who is best known for being the third place finalist on the fifth season of *American Idol*. Elliott Yamin was born in Los Angeles, California to an Israeli Jewish father, Shaul Yamin (of Iraqi heritage), a part-time house painter and part-time layabout, and a Jewish American mother, Claudette Yamin, Goldberg, who herself was a former professional singer. He began singing at the age of five and had no formal training. Yamin is 90% deaf in his right ear, which he mentioned in the third round of the semi-finals. When he was eleven years old, he moved to Richmond, Virginia and attended Tuckahoe Middle School. His parents got divorced when he was fourteen years old. At the age of sixteen, Yamin was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and has to wear an insulin pump, like another *American Idol* performer, Kevin Covais. He attended Douglas S. Freeman High School in the West End Richmond neighborhood until he left in his sophomore year. He went to work at Foot Locker and with the help of his employer, he eventually received his GED. He later worked with a jazz band, DJed for a radio station from 2am till 6am under the name "E-Dub", and worked as a counter clerk at Westbury Pharmacy, a job he left to audition for *American Idol*.

#### Activity 6: Life Skill

During discussions, respect other students comments, opinions, and ideas. When possible, make statements like, “I agree with John, and I also feel that...” or “I disagree with Sara. She made a good point, but I feel that...” or “I think Victor made an excellent observation, and it made me realize...”