Responsible Decision-Making

Time Required: 48 minutes

Objectives (Students Will...):
- Identify and develop the necessary attitudes, behaviors and skills to succeed in school, college and life.

GOAL: Students will learn about a decision-making method and explore responsible decision making.

Materials:
1. ABCDE Chart (Written on white board)
2. Responsible Decision-Making Guidelines (Handout)
3. Index cards (One per student)

Procedures and Discussion:

Gathering: Pair-Share

1. Ask students, “Imagine that your rich aunt has just died and left you TWO MILLION DOLLARS! But, you have to give away one million dollars. How would you decide what to do?” (Emphasize that you’re asking students to consider how they would decide, not what they would decide.)

2. Pair students up and ask them to share and discuss their answers. Ask for a few volunteers to share with the whole group.

NOTE: This is a suggested gathering connected to the activity. You may want to substitute a gathering you do routinely in your advisory that is unconnected to the activity.

Activity/Topic: Responsible Decision Making (Part One of Two)

1. Explain to students that the purpose of today’s session is to learn about a decision-making method and explore responsible decision making.

2. Have students brainstorm a list of decisions that they have made today. List these on the board. Point out that we are always making decisions about what we do and say.

3. Ask students: “How do you make decisions? Is there a process you use to make decisions such as whether or not to do homework or what to do with your friends this weekend?”

4. Explain to students that you will introduce them to a process called ABCDE decision making. Emphasize that anytime we make a decision, we go through several steps. Sometimes we do this so quickly, we aren’t even aware of it. Draw students’ attention to the ABCDE Chart on the board or chart paper:

   A - Assess the situation and ask, “What’s my problem?”
   B - Brainstorm possible solutions.
   C - Choose a solution according to the Decision-Making Guidelines.
   D - Do it — act on your decision.
   E - Evaluate the decision once you have finished. (Evaluate = to judge or analyze)
5. Lead a discussion about the decision-making process:
   - How does this process compare to what you do when you make decisions?
   - What might be helpful about brainstorming possible solutions?
   - What is the point in evaluating a decision once it’s done?

6. Explain that decisions need to be evaluated according to some criteria or guidelines before they can be called “responsible.”

7. Distribute index cards. Ask students: “What is a decision that you have made recently? What five words come to mind when you think of ‘responsible decisions’?”

8. Put students into triads and have them share and discuss their words, asking each student to select three words to share and explain to the entire class. Put these words on the board, noting any repetitions or patterns.

9. Distribute the Personal Decision-Making Guidelines and read the list together.

10. Ask students how this list compares to the list that students brainstormed.

11. Invite students to identify two of the questions that they have used or would use to help them make a responsible decision in a tough situation and share these in their groups.

Debriefing:
   - What did you like/dislike about today’s session?
   - Which of the criteria for making a responsible decision have you used?
   - Which of the criteria might be helpful to you when making future decisions?
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING GUIDELINES

Guidelines
Ask yourself...

1. Is this legal or against the law?
2. Is this acceptable here or against the rules?
3. Is it moral? Is it against my beliefs and values or the teachings of my religion? Would someone I really respect do this?
4. Does it help me be a better person and create a positive future for myself or is it harmful to me?
5. Does it respect the needs of others affected by the decision or is it harmful to them?
6. Will I feel good about it afterward or will I feel sorry afterward?
7. Is it safe or dangerous?
8. How would I feel if someone did this to me?