

## Unit 11: Lesson 5

# Tough Choices...

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL COROLLARY:** A person must make his or her own decisions after considering advice received.

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Students will be able to identify three actions to take when faced with a decision. For example, a young couple trying to decide when to start a family might get advice from friends, gather information, and then weigh pros and cons to make their decision.

### **SOCIAL BEHAVIORS**

This lesson shows students that successful people:

- APPROACH TASKS SYSTEMATICALLY
- SOLVE PROBLEMS
- are active—not passive
- can identify causes of their feelings
- obtain and use information
- can negotiate
- identify and analyze their own problems

### **SOCIAL VOCABULARY**

- confused

### **OTHER VOCABULARY**

- fortune
- supporting

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLANS

### INTRODUCTION

- Introduce vocabulary.

### GROUP USE OF STUDENT WORKBOOK

(p. 128 in SOFT SKILLS)

- Have students read the cartoon, "Tough Choices."
- Discuss the cartoon, using some or all of the following questions:
  - ▶ What was the problem Marty and Pam had? (Deciding when to have children)
  - ▶ When they talked to Marty's parents, what were they told? (That they were really young, they just started their jobs, and they were just now getting on their feet)
  - ▶ What were Marty and Pam told when they visited their friends, Ben and Jill? (Ben and Jill really loved their baby, but they missed going out and having extra money.)
  - ▶ Pam and Marty were confused. They made a list of the reasons they should have a baby now and the reasons they should wait.
  - ▶ What was on their "should have a baby list"? (They like children)
  - ▶ What was on their "should wait list"? (The cost of supporting children)
  - ▶ What did Pam and Marty do when they realized that they didn't know how much babies cost? (They did research

and got the information they needed. Then they considered that information in making their decision.)

- ▶ Why is it important for people to discuss feelings when they have to make a joint decision? (So that both will understand the other's views; so that misunderstandings will be minimized.)
- If appropriate, discuss students' opinions about the decision Pam and Marty made.
- Before students complete the final section of the worksheet in which they write or draw a personal problem, list the problem-solving steps on the board:
  1. State the problem.
  2. Get good advice.
  3. List your choices.
  4. Give reasons for and against each choice.
  5. Make your decision.
- Ask students to match frames of the cartoon about Pam and Marty with steps in the problem-solving process and discuss why each step is important.
- Have students complete the personal-decision section at the end of the worksheet.
- Ask students what additional steps they must take to make their decision.

## BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

To encourage students to *approach tasks systematically and to solve problems*:

- Divide the class into groups of three to five.
- Have each group select a student to record ideas of the group (discourage sexist choices for this role).
- Tell groups that they have a friend named Frank, who has the following problem:
  - ▶ Frank is having a very hard time this year in school, his junior year. Another friend has offered Frank a job at a fast-food restaurant at the minimum wage. Frank would love to have some spending money. Frank has asked you to advise him about dropping out of school. How will you help Frank?
- Remind students that the step-by-step problem-solving method is written on the board; tell groups to use this method to help Frank assess his situation.
- Have groups share the lists of pros and cons they identified for Frank's problem, as well as other sources of good advice and alternatives (e.g., staying in school and getting help).
- Ask students to debate their solution to Frank's problem informally.

## REVIEW

- Ask students to identify a systematic method of problem-solving, that is:
  1. State the problem.
  2. Get good advice.
  3. List choices.
  4. Identify reasons for and against each choice.
  5. Decide which choice is best for you.

## HOMework (OPTIONAL)

- Ask students to use the problem-solving method they learned in this lesson to work on a problem of their own.
- or
- Ask students to complete the problem-solving process they started at the bottom of the second page of this lesson's worksheet (i.e., identify other choices, pros and cons for each, and the best choice).