

# Making SMART Choices

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

*Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

## NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

**PD.8.DM.1** – Demonstrate the use of a decision-making model and evaluate possible outcomes of decisions adolescents might make.

**PR.8.DM.1** – Apply a decision-making model to various sexual health decisions.

## TARGET GRADE:

Middle School – Lesson 10

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- White board and markers
- “The Making SMART Choices Model” Teacher’s Resource
- “The Making SMART Choices Model” worksheet (one per student)
- “Making SMART Choices Scenarios #1-3” worksheets (one scenario per group of 3 students)
- **Homework:** “Everything’s Different, Nothing’s Changed,” which includes a Student Questionnaire, Parent/Caregiver Questionnaire, and Student Reflection (one per student)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of using a decision-making model to determine whether they want to be in a sexual relationship. [Knowledge, Skill]
2. Demonstrate their understanding of how to apply the SMART decision-making model to real-life situations. [Knowledge, Skill]

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we’ve intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar—using the pronoun “they” instead of “her” or “him,” using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to “someone with a vulva” vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities.

You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Sometimes, just launching into a story can get your students’ attention. Walk to the front of the room and begin the class by saying the following:

**“Let’s say you were in the lunch area here at school and you saw two students who clearly didn’t like each other. They start out giving each other mean looks as they get their food and go to sit down; then one makes a rude comment a little too loudly about the other. That student gets up, walks over to the first student and asks, also loudly, ‘are you talking to ME?’ The first student stands up and says, ‘Sure am. What are you going to do about it?’”**

On the white board write, “What can you do?” Ask the students, **“What are ALL the different things you can POSSIBLY do in this situation? Don’t worry if they sound unrealistic or might not be what YOU would do. Just tell me what all the possible options are here.”**

Record the responses on the white board. Possible responses may include:

- Leave the cafeteria.
- Run and get an adult.

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- Stand between the students and tell them to calm down.
- Jump up and chant, “Fight! Fight! Fight!”
- Join in with the student you agree with and stand next to that person.
- Try to calm everyone down by making a joke, like, “Hey, you’re being so loud, I can’t concentrate on my tater tots over here!”
- Grab your phone and start filming.

**Note to the Teacher:** *Contribute any of the responses listed above if the class does not come up with them and ask whether they feel they should be added to the list.*

Explain to the students, “**Clearly, there are things people need to think about before making a decision. We are now going to talk about a model that can guide us in making difficult decisions. And we’re also going to be talking about how we can use this model to decide about whether to be in a sexual relationship with another person.**” (7 minutes)

**STEP 2:** Distribute “*The Making SMART Choices Model*” worksheet to students. Write each letter of “SMART” and the bolded explanatory phrase on the white board as you read the explanations in the Teacher’s Resource to the students. Answer any questions the students may have about these steps.

Say, “**We’re now going to put the SMART Choices Model into practice. Let’s take the scenario we just talked about. Just to remind you, the scene is this: You are in the lunch area here at school and you see two students who clearly don’t like each other. They start out giving each other mean looks as they get their food and go to sit down; then one makes a rude comment a little too loudly about the other. That student gets up, walks over to the first student and asks, also loudly, ‘are you talking to ME?’ The first student stands up and says, ‘Sure am. What are you going to do about it?’**”

**Let’s go through the model together. First, we need to SLOW DOWN for a minute because this is a big decision to make. Second, you want to MAKE A LIST OF ALL YOUR POSSIBLE OPTIONS—which we did at the beginning of class. Now comes the fun part: ANALYZING YOUR OPTIONS, OR CHOICES.**”

Ask the class to review the list of options on the board and help you to delete the options that are less realistic or are not allowed because you’re in school. Work with the students to get down to one, and circle it on the board.

Say, “**We analyzed our options, and with the one that I circled, we REACHED A DECISION, which is the next letter—or step—in the model. The last step or letter, T, comes after you’ve already made your decision. You need to THINK ABOUT AND EVALUATE whether this was a good decision for you, or whether you feel that this maybe wasn’t the best decision for you, and determine what, if anything, you might want to do differently.**” (15 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Tell the students that they are now going to practice using the model themselves, but this time they’re going to look at a situation that has to do with sex. Break students into groups of three. Provide each triad with one scenario, each of which includes a person who wishes to wait to have sex and is faced with the decision to either wait or have sex.

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**Note to the Teacher:** *More than one triad will have the same scenario. The number of students in the class will determine how many copies of each scenario is necessary.*

Instruct the students to walk through the Making SMART Choices Model as if they were the character in their scenario. They will need to make the decision for the character based on the SMART process. Tell them they will have about 10 minutes in which to do this work. Walk around the room while they are working to see whether there are any questions and to provide guidance. (13 minutes)

**STEP 4:** Ask for a few groups to volunteer their responses. After each group presents their ideas, ask for the rest of the class to give feedback on what they thought was particularly effective and what, if anything, they'd propose changing. (10 minutes)

**STEP 5:** Ask, **“Do you think it’s any easier for people your age to make decisions about sex and sexuality than it was for your parents/caregivers?”** After a few responses, explain that they have a homework assignment where they are going to ask a parent/caregiver about their experiences growing up. Distribute the homework assignment, go through it briefly, and ask them to bring only the Student Reflection (the last page with the three questions on it) back to their next class to hand in. (5 minutes)

### RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Teacher observation during the full-class discussion will be combined with the small group worksheet done to determine whether the Learning Objectives have been met.

### HOMEWORK:

*“Everything’s Different, Nothing’s Changed”* homework sheets that the student and a parent/caregiver are to complete and then discuss together. The student is then to complete the Student Reflection to be handed in during the next class.

## The Making SMART Choices Model

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted with permission from a lesson in Goldfarb, E. and Schroeder, E. (2004), Making SMART Choices about Sex: A Curriculum for Young People. Rochester, NY: Metrix Marketing.*

Whenever we have a decision to make, we need to think before we act if we want to make a SMART decision. But how do we go about doing this? In this model, each letter in the word “SMART” stands for one step toward making smart decisions.

### **S – SLOW DOWN**

You have the right to take as much time as you need to make a good decision that is right for you.

### **M – MAKE A LIST OF YOUR OPTIONS**

Looking at every possible choice will help you know that you’ve really thought everything through.

### **A – ANALYZE YOUR CHOICES**

Be honest with yourself and think about the pros and cons of each option. Make sure to weigh your options because not all will have equal value.

### **R – REACH A DECISION**

Pick the best choice and consider what will help you STICK to your decision.

### **T – THINK AND EVALUATE**

Depending on the choice you make, you may need to check in from time to time and see how things are going.

## The Making SMART Choices Model Teacher's Resource

Whenever we have a decision to make, we need to think before we act if we want to make a SMART decision. But how do we go about doing this? In this model, each letter in the word "SMART" stands for one step toward making smart decisions.

### S – SLOW DOWN

The LEAST effective way to make a decision is in the moment, before thinking about it first! You need to look at all the things that are going on: Who might be involved? Who's definitely not? You have the right to take as much time as you need to make sure you are making a good decision.

### M – MAKE A LIST OF YOUR OPTIONS

Looking at every possible choice you can make—even the silly ones or irresponsible choices— will help you know that you've really thought everything through. Talk about your options with people in your life who you know well and trust. And once you've made up your complete list of options, you're ready for the next step.

### A – ANALYZE YOUR CHOICES

This means thinking about the pros and cons of each option, weighing your options (i.e., comparing them to each other to see which you think is best), and being honest with yourself. If your choice will lead to healthy behaviors, is consistent with your values, and will help you meet your future goals, it's the SMART choice for YOU. Once you've figured this out, you're ready for the next step.

### R – REACH A DECISION

After analyzing all of your choices, pick the one that is the right decision for you. Think about your decision and make sure it feels like a healthy, smart choice for you. Now that you've made a SMART decision, you need to think about what you'll need to do in order to STICK to it. For example, if your decision is about waiting to have sex, who in your life can support you with this decision?

### T – THINK AND EVALUATE

Depending on the choice you make, you may need to check in with yourself from time to time to see how things are going and look at what may need to change in order for you to stick with the decision you've made. Thinking about how you made your decision in the first place—even going through the beginning part of the SMART model again—can help you stay true to what YOU think is best, not what you think your friends, or your partner, or your peers might want you to do.

*From Goldfarb, E. and Schroeder, E. (2004), Making SMART Choices about Sex: A Curriculum for Young People. Rochester, NY: Metrix Marketing.*

***Everything's Different, Nothing's Changed***  
**STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**Homework (Lesson 8-10)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

- Please answer the questions on this sheet using your own personal beliefs and ideas.
- Have your parent/caregiver fill out the other questionnaire.
- When you are both done, share your responses to the questions with each other.
- Note where you and your parent/caregiver agree and disagree. Also, notice what surprises you as you discuss your answers.
- After the interview, complete the Student Reflection page.

**How do you think the pressures to have sex are DIFFERENT today from when your parent(s)/caregiver(s) were your age?**

**In what ways do you think the pressures to have sex are THE SAME for teens today as they were for your parent(s)/caregiver(s) when they were growing up?**

**What are three things that people your age need or want most from your parent(s)/caregiver(s) when it comes to making healthy sexual decisions?**

1.

2.

3.

***Everything's Different, Nothing's Changed***  
**PARENT/CAREGIVER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**3. What is one thing you learned from doing this activity?**

**Instructions:**

- Answer the questions on this sheet using your own personal beliefs and ideas.
- Your child will fill out their sheet with the same questions.
- When you are both done, share your responses to the questions with each other.
- Note where you and your child agree and disagree. Also, notice what surprises you as you discuss your answers with your child.
- Be sure to talk about how it felt to be pressured when you were your child's age.

**When you were young, how did people your age make decisions about sex? Do you think the pressures to have sex are DIFFERENT today from when you were your child's age? Were these pressures different depending upon your gender?**

**In what ways do you think the pressures to have sex are THE SAME for teens today as they were for you when you were growing up?**

**What are three suggestions you could make that you think would help your child make healthy sexual decisions?**

1.

2.

3.

## Making SMART Choices Scenario #1

Your boyfriend or girlfriend invites you and two other couples over on a night when their parents are out. You are all in one main room together and each couple is kissing. At some point you hear someone say, "I think we all need some more privacy," and soon both of the other couples disappear. Your boyfriend or girlfriend looks at you and says, "Now that we're alone, maybe we can finally take things to the next level."

*Adapted with permission from a lesson in Goldfarb, E. and Schroeder, E. (2004), Making SMART Choices about Sex: A Curriculum for Young People. Rochester, NY: Metrix Marketing.*

## Making SMART Choices Scenario #2

You are out with your boyfriend or girlfriend and your conversation moves to the topic of sex. Neither of you has ever had any kind of sex before and this is the first time you are talking about it. Your boyfriend or girlfriend says, "I really want to know what it feels like, don't you? What if we do it just once just to see what it feels like, and then we don't have to do it again if we don't want to?"

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## Making SMART Choices Scenario #3

You and your boyfriend or girlfriend have been together for six months. No one else you know has ever lasted that long in a relationship. You are in love and feel you were meant to be together. You agreed a few months ago that you were both too young to have sex and decided, together, to wait. In a few days there's a Valentine's Day dance at school and you plan to go together. That night, your boyfriend or girlfriend says, "Let's skip the dance. I know a place where we can go and be alone together."

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***Everything's Different, Nothing's Changed***  
**STUDENT REFLECTION**  
**Homework (Lesson 8-10)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**1. What, if anything, surprised you and your parent/caregiver about doing this assignment?**

Me:

My parent/caregiver:

**2. Were there more similarities in what you and your parent/caregiver wrote, or more differences? Provide at least two examples.**