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## LESSON A

### 4 Phases of Practical Reasoning

**FOCUS:** The practical reasoning process provides a framework for making decisions in an independent living situation. The process has 4 phases:

1. Identify the problem
2. Reason
3. Act
4. Evaluate

### ACTIVITIES:

1. Compare the practical reasoning process to driving a car down the road without lights. Use Teacher Information, "The Practical Reasoning Process."
2. Play a game to illustrate doing something or going somewhere "in the dark." For example, pair several sets of students. Tie one of each of their legs together, then give each a slip of paper with different goals (1-retrieve a candy bar from the shelf at the back of the room; 2-get a cookie from the plate on the teacher's desk). Neither knows the goal of the other and the time limit for accomplishing the task is very short. Use Teacher Information, "In the Dark."

[People who want to live on their own successfully need information and direction to achieve their goals].

3. Review phases in the practical reasoning process. Use Teacher Information, "How Do You Decide?" and transparency master, "Reasoning!"
4. Compare practical reasoning and decision making. Use transparency master, "Practical Reasoning and Decision Making."

[The main difference is that practical reasoning systematically incorporates a consideration of personal values as part of the process. Practical reasoning also leaves room to consider effects of one's decision on others when circumstances are examined.]

5. Discuss: "How can teens decide important issues as they prepare to live on their own?"

## The Practical Reasoning Process

You may say to yourself, "I can figure things out fairly quickly. Why go through this whole process of learning about practical reasoning?" The practical reasoning process is like a framework to a home. It is a basic foundation of ideas to work with in critical thinking and problem solving. The framework of a home is where everything else hangs—windows, sheetrock, cabinets, light fixtures, etc.

We have some intuitive feelings about how we would do things. At times, though, we will have conflicting values and even conflicting choices. We even end up making decisions without complete information.

The more we can understand the reasoning process—and consistently apply this process to what we want to have happen—which means to think through important decisions and reflect on possible outcomes and consequences—the more control we have over our lives and the less frustration we experience.

We can compare using this process to driving a car down the road. Avoiding the process would be like driving in the dark without any lights on. And when driving, there is a need for direction. Can you imagine where you might end up by getting on the freeway and picking a car to follow? Without any direction of your own, you often end up following someone else. When we have our own information, we can decide what road we want to travel on, both short and long distances. The reasoning process doesn't give us a value system any more than a car can. Understanding our values and goals, though, will help us use the reasoning process just as understanding what we want when we travel will help us reach our destination. Then at times, there are things that happen that you don't have any control over—a flat tire, an overheated radiator, a traffic jam. By considering your resources and alternatives ahead of time, you can avoid wasting those resources and time. Life, including your independent living experience, provides ample opportunity to deal with situations and people we have no control over. A little advance planning before you drive off will make the trip more enjoyable in the long run.

# "In the Dark"

Cut apart and give each pair of students a #1 and #2:

#1. Retrieve a candy bar from the desk at the back of the room

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#2. Get a cookie from the plate on the teacher's desk

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#1. Retrieve a candy bar from the desk at the back of the room

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#2. Get a cookie from the plate on the teacher's desk

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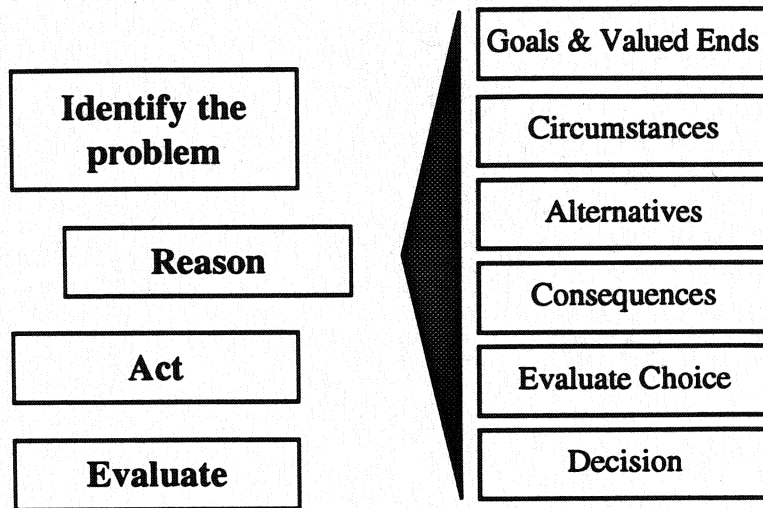
**CORE ISSUE 5**

*How do I decide important issues as I prepare to live on my own?*

**How Do You Decide?**

The practical reasoning process can provide a framework for decisions and choices you will have before you in an independent living situation.

### **The Practical Reasoning Process Includes:**

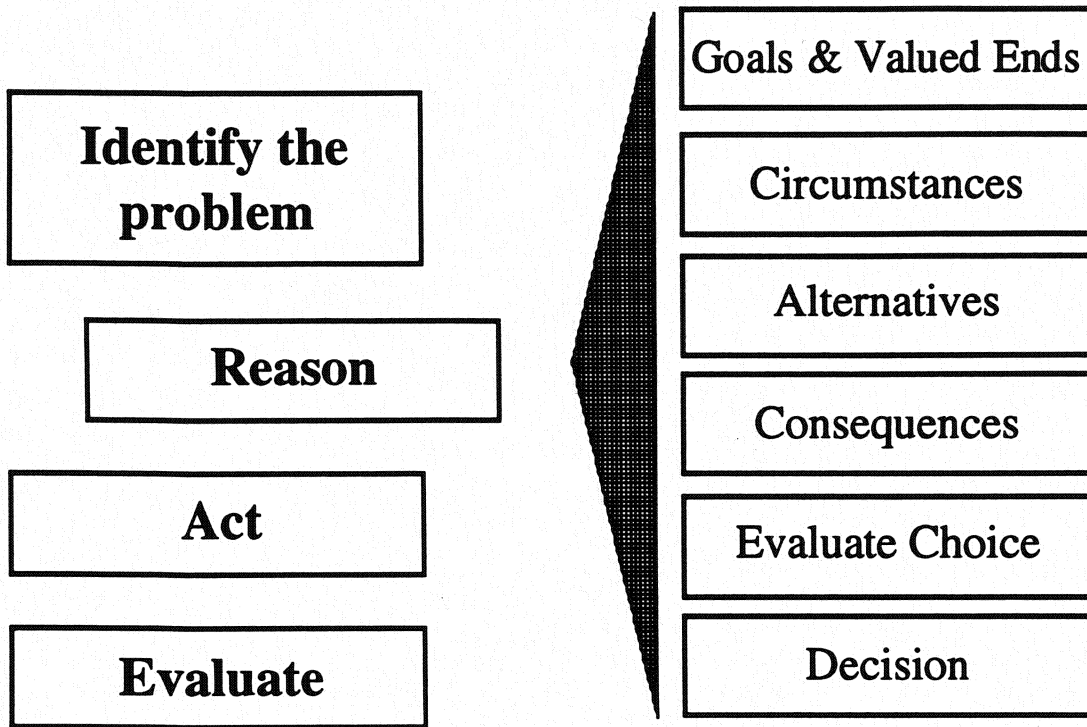


The use of reasoning can help us decide what's best for us to do about practical everyday problems affecting the well-being of ourselves and others. In this course we will:

- develop skill in identifying practical problems,
- learn to reason about them by considering our goals, alternatives, consequences, and solutions,
- take action, and then afterward,
- evaluate what we did or would do differently another time.

# Reasoning!

## The Practical Reasoning Process Includes:



# Practical Reasoning and Decision Making

## PRACTICAL REASONING

1. Identify the problem
2. Reason
  - a. Goals, valued ends
  - b. Circumstances
  - c. Alternatives
  - d. Consequences
  - e. Evaluate choices
  - f. Decide
3. Act
4. Evaluate

## DECISION MAKING

1. Identify the problem
2. List all possible options
3. Consider consequences
4. Make a decision
5. Evaluate