

It's a Gamble

Summary

In this lesson students will recognize the difference between reasonable and unreasonable risk, plan to avoid risk, and identify factors that influence decision making.

Main Core Tie

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 1: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF HEALTHY SELF \(HF\) Standard HI.HF.2:](#)

Materials

Pair of dice

A small treat

A tree branch

- [Poster:](#)

"Taking Risks," "Protecting Yourself Against Risks"

Worksheets: ["Think Before You Act,"](#) ["It's Your Choice"](#)

Intended Learning Outcomes

Recognize the difference between reasonable and unreasonable risk.

Identify potentially situations and develop a plan to avoid or reduce the risk.

Identify factors that influence decision making, e.g., benefits vs. risks.

Instructional Procedures

Lesson at a Glance

Introduce and discuss ideas of choice and consequence.

Play and discuss the "It's Your Choice" dice game.

Use a tree branch to discuss branching consequences of choices.

Students complete the "Think Before You Act" worksheet.

Students discuss ideas on "Protecting Yourself Against Risk" poster.

Students complete the "It's Your Choice" worksheet.

New Vocabulary

unreasonable risk

reasonable risk

risk

Introduction (Setting Focus)

Discuss the concept of personal choice. Even though we may take advice from others regarding choice and consequence, ultimately the individual has the choice in the decision.

Play the game "It's Your Choice."

Students may roll the dice or pass (not roll).

If the player passes he or she will receive an A on the assignment.

If the player chooses to roll the dice, he or she will receive an A if he or she rolls a 3, 5, 7, or 11.

If he or she rolls any other number, an F will be received on the assignment.

Make sure students understand that this activity will count on their grade. You may want the class to repeat "This really counts on my grade" a few times.

Each student in takes a turn with the dice.

Discuss the game using the following prompts;

How many of you that passed received an A? How many of you that passed received an F? How many of you that rolled received an A? How many of you that rolled received an F?

Which choice involved the most risk? What were the risks of passing? What were the risks of rolling?

How do you feel about your choice?

Why did you make the choice you did? What influenced your choice?

How can you relate this experience to other choices and decisions?

Allow the students who rolled an A the first time to roll again--double or nothing. The student may receive an A on this and the next assignment or receive an F on this assignment depending on the outcome of the dice. Relate this to people who take risks and don't have any real problems the first time, so they try it again because they feel immune to the danger. The problem is, misfortune can be just "one roll" away.

Body (Strategies/Activities)

Discuss the following concepts:

Some students may think that making good, safe choices is boring and that taking unreasonable risk is fun and exciting.

What are the rewards and consequences of skipping school, drinking alcohol, or using tobacco?

Making good choices can have its own sweet rewards (give everyone in the class who passed a treat). Discuss the benefits of making good choices.

Although we don't always know all of the consequences of each choice we make (like getting the treat) we can predict the consequences.

Making good choices more likely results in positive outcomes.

Rolling the dice wasn't life-threatening or an earth-shattering decision. However, some choices can have devastating results. Although it doesn't happen every time (just like rolling), taking unreasonable risk is a gamble! There can be a fine line between getting away with it and tragedy.

Share the following story.

A 7th grader once made an impulsive, ill-fated decision. He decided to throw a large rock off an overpass on the cars below that were traveling down the interstate highway. The rock smashed through the front windshield of a car driven by a minister on his way home. The rock struck the minister in the head, leaving him disfigured and permanently blind. Amazingly, the young man came forward and admitted his guilt. He was charged as an adult with attempted murder and vandalism. At his sentencing, wiping away the tears, he told the judge that he couldn't believe that the one bad thing he ever did in his life had hurt so many people. The judge sentenced him to twelve years in prison.

Discuss the story using the following prompts and ideas:

Show the class a tree branch, which depicts various consequences.

Explain that when you make a choice you pick up all the consequences now and in the future that go with that choice.

What consequences could branch from the actions of the 7th grader in the story?

Give examples of other positive and negative choices and the possible consequences.

Discuss the quote, "Even though we are free to choose a course of action, we are not free to choose the consequences of our action." We own the choice and we own the consequence.

How are "choice making" and "risk taking" related?

Discuss how good choices are made to avoid unhealthy risk and consequences. Is the risk reasonable or unreasonable?

Students explain the difference between reasonable and unreasonable risk.

Site examples of unreasonable risk that should be avoided and reasonable risk that young people may want to take. Students answer question number 1 on the "Think Before You Act" worksheet.

Discuss the benefits of reasonable risk.

Discuss some ways to deal with the pressure from others to take unreasonable risks.

Discuss the ideas on the "Protecting Yourself Against Risk" poster.

As a class discussion or in student groups, complete the "It's Your Choice" worksheet. Discuss the answers as a class.

Discuss how even reasonable risk may involve some danger. Fortunately, we can all take steps when taking a risk that will protect us and others from harm.

Discuss how did knights protected themselves?

Discuss how a person can protect him or herself from harm when taking a risk.

Students answer question number 2 on the "Think Before You Act" worksheet.

Closure (Wrap-Up and Extension)

Reinforce that we can't control the consequences of our choices, but we are in control of the choices we make. Peers and friends may try to influence our decisions, but ultimately the decision is ours. It's our choice. Choosing to establish healthy boundaries and limits can play a major role in determining our health, happiness, and success.

Students complete number 3 on the "Think Before You Act" worksheet.

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