# When Should A Person...

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

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

**TARGET GRADE:** Grade 7 and 8

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Decision Making Model infographic

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Identify at least two factors that are important in deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors
2. Describe a decision making model related to whether or when to engage in sexual behaviors

## LESSON RATIONALE:

At no point does a sexual health educator assume that their students are sexually active and this is evident in the delivery of the curriculum as a fact-based source based on if a person should choose to have sex. Yet, students inevitably will question when is a "good" time for a person to have sex for the first time. This lesson explores what a person should consider prior to making such a big decision while rooting their process of making that decision is based on the internal and external factors that influence each person's decision making process. This lesson provides a safe space for students to identify how these influences could impact a decision making process and then evaluate their influences for future decisions.

## ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Prior to the lesson please prepare the chart paper with the following factors (Healthy Relationship; Protection ex: condoms; Consent; Personal beliefs; Peers/Friends; Family; Media). Write the factor as a heading on each of the pieces of chart paper. Print a decision making model infographic for each student.

## PROCEDURE:

### STEP 1:

"Welcome class, today we are going to address a common question that I get all the time when teaching this topic. So many people want to know what age is the right time to engage in sexual behavior. Asking and wanting to know the 'right' answers to these kinds of questions are normal. People are interested in if they are like their peers or other people their age and this is a way to determine what and when others have decided to do something sexual. As you all know, we are not here to learn about me and my life and instead we are here helping you make the healthiest decisions for yourself. While there is no fact that identifies whether and when a person should engage in sexual behaviors there are factors that are important to consider when making a decision like that. Let's look into these.

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Around the room you will find several posters with factors (Healthy Relationship; Protection ex: condoms; Consent; Personal beliefs; Peers/Friends; Family; Media) to consider when deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors. I am going to place you all in seven small groups and then your groups will visit at least three posters and identify whether each factor is or is not important in making a decision on whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors. Write as many reasons as to why the factor is or is not important as you can and also feel free to place a check mark to other group's reasons as well."

***NOTE TO EDUCATOR:*** *Place the students into seven groups. You can count off to seven or pre-assign the groups using a sorting method such as distributing colored stickers (7 unique colors) or shapes (7 unique shapes) to separate the class into groups. In order to help facilitate the process you can ask each group to identify a note taker prior to starting the activity who is responsible for writing on the posters. While the students are completing the activity feel free to play low music and use the sound of the music to help indicate when groups should rotate.*

Check for clarity with the class and answer any questions that are asked. Place the students into seven groups and then direct each group to stand next to one of the posters. Distribute a different color maker to each group so that no two groups are writing in the same color and then explain to the class that they will have about two minutes at each poster to write down all of the reasons that factor is or is not important in making a decision on whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors.

(15 minutes)

## STEP 2:

After allowing each group an opportunity to visit at least three posters ask the groups to stay at their final poster and ask each group to present that poster to the class. Each presentation should take no more than two minutes. Say something like, **Okay class, now that you have contributed reasons of importance to these factors to consider when deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors I would like each group to share their poster with the class.**

After each poster is shared facilitate a discussion with the class by asking the following questions:

**WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO DO THIS ACTIVITY?**

If students provide a one word answer such as "hard" ask them to provide more details by adding how after their descriptive word (ex: hard…how?)

**HOW?**

**SO WHAT DID YOU LEARN?**

**HOW WILL THIS HELP YOU IN THE FUTURE?**

Say something like, **"Making a choice to engage in a sexual behavior with another person is a big decision and you know what is best for your body so you get to be the person to make that decision. It can be helpful to identify a trusted adult who can listen, support you, and answer any questions you might have. It is also very important to make sure that the person who you are interested in is equally as interested and has provided consent, that you have discussed your sexual history and methods to protect against STDs and unintended pregnancy as well as gotten tested for STDs. Engaging in sexual behaviors with a partner who respects you and wants the experience to be an enjoyable one for both of you is a key component of a healthy relationship. This can be even more evident when you or your partner decides that now is not the best time to engage in any sexual behavior which is also normal.**

**So since you are your own expert for your body let's look at how you can use all the information we just discussed to make a decision."** Distribute the decision making model handout to the students.

(12 minutes)

### STEP 3:

Ask for a student volunteer to read each step of the decision making model and add the content below after each step.

**1: DETERMINE THE IMPORTANCE OF A DECISION**

How would you rate the importance of a decision to engage in a sexual behavior with another person? 1 would be not important at all and 5 would be very important. Ask the students to participate by writing the number that corresponds with how they would rate the decision on a scrap piece of paper. Ask someone who rates the decision as highly important as to why they think it is a very important decision. Say something like, deciding if and when to have sex can be a very important decision because there are a lot of factors to consider and there could be consequences if it is not taken seriously.

**2. USE A PRIORITIZATION STRATEGY**

Say something like, a priority is something or someone that is especially important to you and therefore needs dedicated time and/or attention. Take a second and reflect on something that is a priority in your life". After a moment for reflection say something like, we all have priorities in life and there are priorities we should consider before deciding whether to have sex with someone. For example, if being in a healthy relationship is a priority for someone before having sex, that will help a person make a decision.

**3. MAKE A DECISION**

Say something like, "This is pretty clear and the moment in the decision making when you actually decide on whether or not to do something".

**4. FOLLOW THROUGH**

Say something like, “Can anyone explain what the phrase follow through means?” Look for an answer that is close to completing your decision. Say, “There is an important point to this step when deciding whether or when to have sex and that is a person can ALWAYS change their mind and NOT follow through. If a person says yes and then changes their mind we must always respect their bodily autonomy to know what is best for them and respond accordingly. We also have the right to change our mind at any point”.

**5. REFLECT**

Say, this is the moment when you can look back on the decision you made with the information you had to see how you feel about the decision. Are you happy with the choice that was made? Would you do something differently? How could you change to better meet your needs in the future.

This decision making framework is a framework and might not always fit each situation perfectly but it can be helpful when making a big and serious decision. As always, seek out a trusted adult who can help and support.

(11 minutes)

## STEP 4

Say something like, “Thank you all for being such active participants in today’s class. Making a decision on whether and when to have sex is a big decision and you are the best person to make that decision for your body. Using all the information you have and making a decision based on that information will set you up for success no matter what your decision might be.”

(2 minutes)

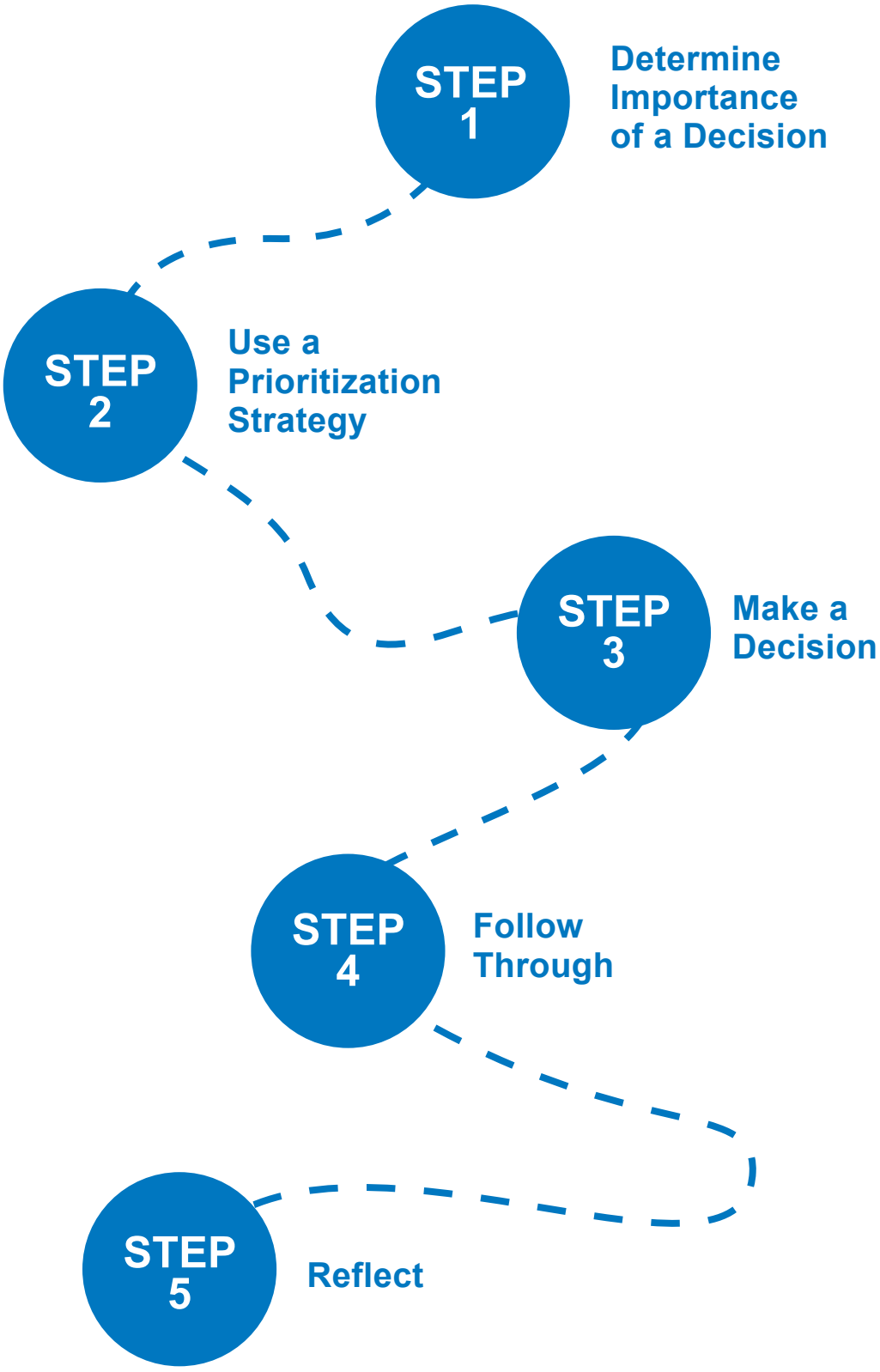
## RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Objective 1 is completed in Steps 1 and 2 and Objective 2 is completed in Steps 3 and 4.

## OPTIONAL HOMEWORK:

Make a decision on a non-sexual situation you have been considering using the decision making framework. For example, asking your family to adopt a new pet, going on an overnight trip with a friend you do not know very well, joining a new club, trying out for a new sport, or you can create your own decision to make. Write out the thoughts to each step.

# Decision Making Model

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