

<b>Exercise name:</b>	Decision making
<b>Theoretical background:</b>	Decision-making theory is not a unified branch of psychology or any other discipline. One of the earliest attempts to formulate an empirical approach was utilitarianism, which advocated weighing the utility of a decision, including the outcomes in terms of good and bad results. Choosing a career might involve estimating the likely benefits against the chances of success. In business a number of decision-making tools have been developed, most notably the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).
<b>Target group:</b>	Students aged 14 - 19
<b>Exercise description:</b>	Students are given a situation and a list of characters and are asked to select which ones they would select for survival, based on information which is gradually revealed about the characters.
<b>Pedagogical aim:</b>	To encourage students to think about the way in which they make decisions and then apply this more considered approach to their own life decisions, including career planning.
<b>Time:</b>	60 minutes
<b>Resources needed:</b>	Teachers need to create the characters and their statements.

## **Decision Making Activity Teacher Notes**

Some preparation by teacher is required.

Resources:

4 envelopes

character pictures (one set per group)

1 set of statements for each character. Statements need to be cut up and all (a) statements placed in envelope 1, all (b) statements placed in envelope 2 etc.

Explain to the class that this interactive exercise will enable them to practise their decision making skills.

They will need to work in small groups and arrive at a group decision.

We all make decisions every day – but some decisions are more important than others.

For example, deciding what to eat for breakfast or where to go at the weekend is not as important as making your option choices or deciding what to do after Year 11.

Divide the class into small groups.

Read out the following information to the class.

"A group of people have been exploring an island in shark infested waters. It is getting dark and they are ready to go home. A storm has smashed the boat they used to reach the island. Luckily they can shelter in a cave.

As they sit there discussing what to do, a rowing boat comes into view – a chance of rescue and a safe return home. Unfortunately, it will only take 3 people. No-one has ever been known to survive a night on the island. Who should go on the boat? Who will be left behind?"

Ask the groups to look at the pictures and select 3 people to rescue from the characters. Groups need to write down how they reached each decision as these will be discussed at the end of the exercise. Teacher records response.

Open envelope 1 which contains all the (a) statements for the characters. Read out the statements and match them to the pictures.

Having considered the statements ask the groups which 3 people they now think should be rescued. Teacher records response.

Open envelope 2 which contains all the (b) statements for the characters. Repeat as above.

Open envelope 3 which contains all the (c) statements and repeat as above.

Open envelope 4 which contains all the (d) statements and ask the groups to make their final decision about who should be rescued.

Discuss and review how each decision was made.

Ask the groups why they changed their decisions at different stages.

The aim is to show students that it is a good idea to gather as much information as possible before reaching a decision.

The activity can also be used to challenge stereotyping.

Source: adapted from a self- awareness activity in STOP GAP – produced by Birmingham and Solihull Connexions.

### **Decision Making Activity**

Remember to briefly describe how you reached each decision.

First decision :

Second decision:

Third decision:

Final decision: