

Making Decisions and Setting Goals



Quick Write

List the decisions you have made since you got up this morning. Place a check next to those that had an influence on your health.



LEARN ABOUT...

- how decisions affect your health and the health of others.
- ways to make healthy, responsible decisions.
- the benefits of setting health goals.

VOCABULARY

- decision making
- values
- evaluate
- goal setting

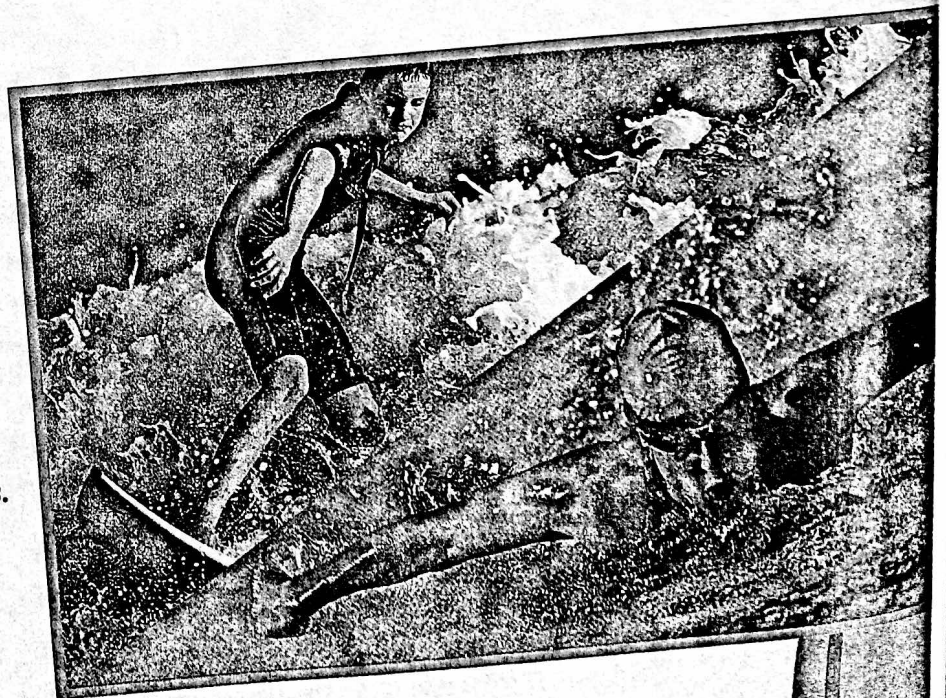
Decisions and Goals

Decision making and goal setting are two important health-related skills. Decision-making skills will help you make the best choices and find healthy solutions to problems. Goal-setting skills will help you take control over your life and give it purpose and direction.

When it comes to health, even a decision that may seem small can have great significance. Daniel, for example, persuaded his older brother to drive him to the video store. Because they were only driving around the corner, Daniel did not bother to fasten his safety belt. The car skidded on ice and Daniel hit his head against the windshield. What Daniel thought was a minor decision has left him with scars for life.

Health-related goals are also important. Goals that help you stay physically active and prevent injury will provide health benefits throughout your life. Moreover, people who set and achieve goals feel better about themselves and about their lives.

Deciding to stay physically active is one decision that will have positive lifelong benefits. *What are some other decisions that will keep you healthy for years to come?*



The Decision-Making Process

Decision making is *the process of making a choice or finding a solution*. It involves a series of six steps you can follow. **Figure 2.1** illustrates these steps.

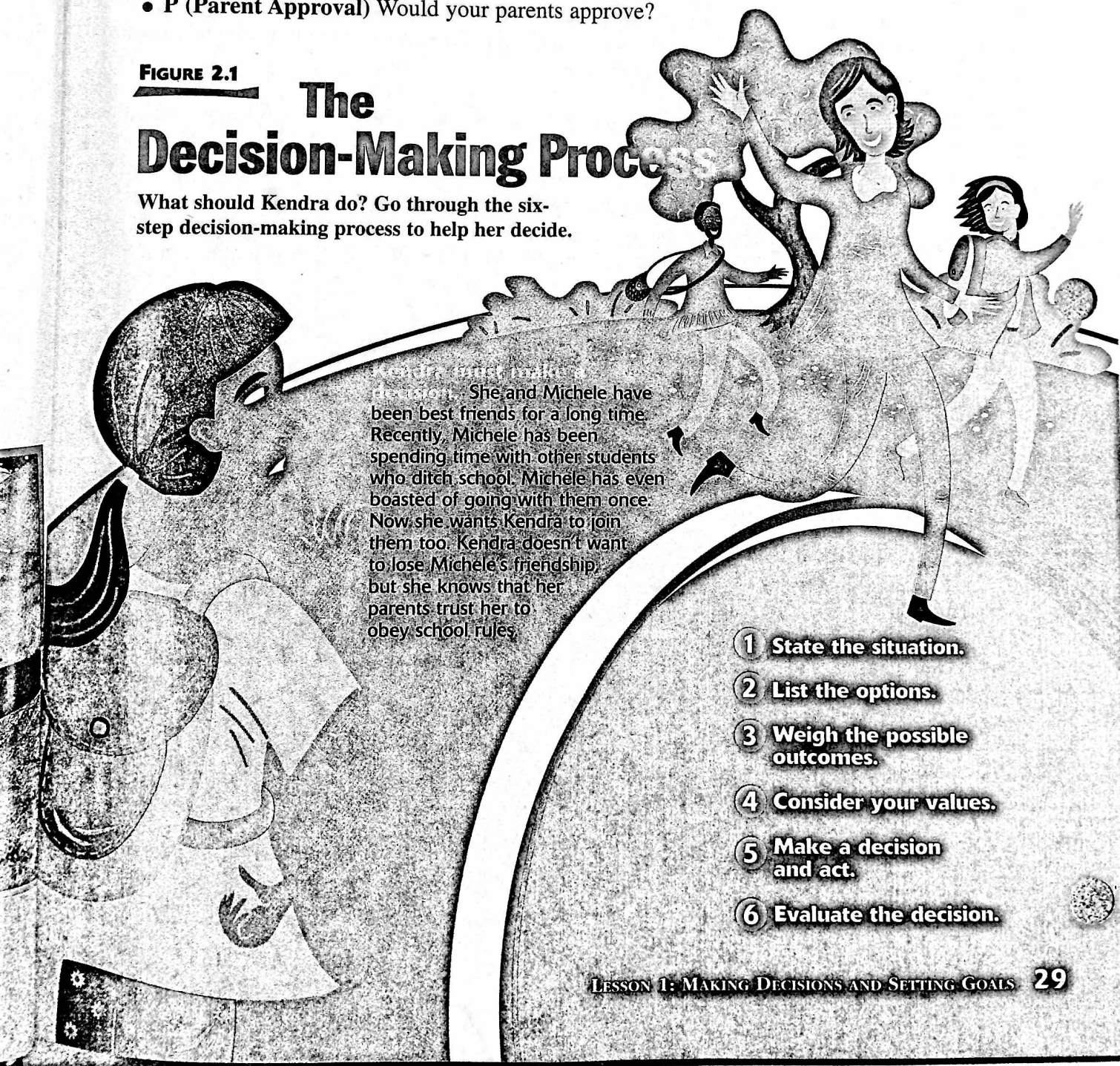
Step 1 is to identify the situation. What choice do you need to make? How much time do you need to make your decision? Steps 2 and 3 are to think through your options and consider the possible outcomes of each option. When evaluating your choices, you may want to follow the H.E.L.P. criteria to keep you focused:

- **H (Healthful)** Will it contribute to your health?
- **E (Ethical)** Does it show respect for yourself and others?
- **L (Legal)** Is someone your age allowed by law to do this?
- **P (Parent Approval)** Would your parents approve?

FIGURE 2.1

The Decision-Making Process

What should Kendra do? Go through the six-step decision-making process to help her decide.



She and Michele have been best friends for a long time. Recently, Michele has been spending time with other students who ditch school. Michele has even boasted of going with them once. Now she wants Kendra to join them too. Kendra doesn't want to lose Michele's friendship, but she knows that her parents trust her to obey school rules.

- 1 State the situation.
- 2 List the options.
- 3 Weigh the possible outcomes.
- 4 Consider your values.
- 5 Make a decision and act.
- 6 Evaluate the decision.



Reading Check

Understand cause and effect. Complete this analogy: Showing respect is to earning trust as showing disrespect is to _____.

In Step 4 you consider your values and the values of society. Values are *the beliefs and ideals that guide the way a person lives*. For example, keeping a positive relationship with your family is probably one of your personal values. You know that if you decide to stay out past your curfew, family members may lose trust in you. By considering your values, and getting home on time, you show respect and earn your family's trust. Respect and trust are also core ethical values, which means they are shared by people around the world.

Evaluating Your Decision

After Step 5—making your decision and taking action—Step 6 will have you evaluate the results. *Evaluate* means *to determine the value of something*. To evaluate your decision, ask yourself the following questions:

- What was the outcome of my decision? Was it what I expected?
- How did my decision make me feel about myself?
- How did my decision affect others?
- How did my decision affect each side of my health triangle?
- What did I learn? Would I make the same decision again?

As with any skill, decision making gets easier with practice. For example, you might think about some problems that you or your family may face. Think through all six steps of the decision-making process to find a healthy solution for each problem. This practice will help you with future decisions.

HEALTH SKILLS ACTIVITY

DECISION MAKING

What to Do? What to Do?

Andy has been swimming since he was five years old. He loves to swim because it's fun, it makes him feel healthy, and it helps him keep physically fit. Now he has a place on the local swim team, and that requires regular practice.

However, Andy has been so busy with his sport that his grades have begun to fall. If they slip too far, he could lose his place on the team, but cheating on homework and tests could also get him kicked off. What should Andy do?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Apply the six steps of the decision-making process to Andy's situation. Compare your outcome to the solutions of your classmates.

1. STATE THE SITUATION.
2. LIST THE OPTIONS.
3. WEIGH THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES.
4. CONSIDER YOUR VALUES.
5. MAKE A DECISION AND ACT.
6. EVALUATE THE DECISION.

GET INSPIRED

Your local newspaper may be a good place to learn about people who set and reach their goals. One community paper carried a photo of a teen presenting a check to a children's hospital. During the past year, the teen had organized bake sales, rummage sales, and car washes. Her goal was to raise \$5,000 to refurbish the children's play area. Look for similar stories in your local paper and discuss the goals involved.

Short-Term Goals

Some short-term goals are just that: goals that you want to achieve in the next few days or weeks. Your short-term goals may, for example, include finishing a homework assignment and writing an e-mail to your grandfather.

Other short-term goals are stepping-stones to long-term goals. Suppose, for example, that your long-term goal is to take part in a local charity 5-K run. Your short-term goals might be to run several times a week, to gradually increase the distances that you run, and to eat more nutritious foods.

Long-Term Goals

Some goals take several weeks, months, or even years to achieve. For example, you might want to go on a rafting trip next summer, or to become a professional baseball player, or to go to the same college that your mother attended. These are long-term goals. They will take time, planning, and dedication. Short-term goals will help you meet these long-term goals.

Building Goal-Setting Skills

Goal setting is a skill that will benefit you in many areas of life. A good way to ensure that you reach the goals you set for yourself is to make a plan. **Figure 2.2** shows the steps one teen used to reach his goal of making the school basketball team. Follow these steps when you set your own long-term goals.

It took many short-term goals along the way for this teen to reach her long-term goal of playing in front of an audience. What are some of your long-term goals?

