

Session 6.1

Introduction to Healthy Futures; Understanding Qualities of a Good Friend and Positive Personal Character Traits

Session Overview:

1. Introduce Healthy Futures.
2. Introduce “The Choices You Make NOW Will Affect You LATER” slogan.
3. Establish and post the Group Rights and Responsibilities.
4. Explain and pass out question cards.
5. Discuss the benefits and challenges of friendship during adolescence.
6. Use the Build A Friend activity to discuss characteristics of a good friend and positive character traits.
7. Distribute and discuss the Mission Possible activity.
8. Describe the three step decision-making process, emphasizing the “Think” step in weighing the consequences and benefits of a particular behavior.
9. Use the Decision-Making Scale to demonstrate how to make decisions about high-risk behavior.
10. Explain and distribute Parent Connection Form Session 6.1: Decision-Making/Friendships.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will understand the ground rules that promote a safe and comfortable learning environment.
- Participants will gain understanding of how choices affect their future.
- Participants will understand that the choices they make can have positive or negative consequences.
- Participants will be invited to actively participate in the class, which will result in positive consequences.

Materials Needed:

- Computer, projector, and speakers
- Jar of Now and Later Candy
- Giant pad of paper, markers
- Group Rights & Responsibilities Cards (6.1.2)
- Build A Friend Poster (6.1.4)
- Stop, Think, Decide Cards (6.1.6)
- Decision-Making Scale Poster (6.1.7)
- Handouts:
 - Mission Possible (Handout 6.1.5)
 - Parent Connection Form Session 6.1: Decision-Making/Friendships
- Question bag
- Question cards

Classroom Planning:

- Participants will understand the ground rules that promote a safe and comfortable learning environment.
- Participants will gain understanding of how choices affect their future.
- Make copies of handouts.

The Standards:

- See Appendix E for a list of state and national standards met in this session.



“The choices you make NOW will affect you LATER”

Educator highlight: Introduce yourself and tell the students a little bit about Healthy Futures and the Nu-CULTURE program. Discuss purpose and goals. Communicate to the students the fact that you care about all of them, that they are all special, and you want to equip them to have the most opportunities in their future. Many things happen during this time in their lives that they will have to respond to; they’ll have choices to make that can have a big impact on their future, etc. It can be difficult and complicated to go through this phase of life, and we want to prepare them for it as much as possible.

Educator states:

Hi, my name is _____ and this is my friend, _____.

We are here to lead the Healthy Futures Nu-CULTURE program with you over the next 8 days. We go to middle schools and speak to students like you about making good choices. During this program we will give you tips and tools so you can make good choices in your everyday life. We know it can be difficult for you at this age and we want to help you prepare for your future.

Every day you have choices to make. You can choose to do your homework and do well in class, or you can choose not to do it (not a wise choice!) and be stressed and risk getting bad grades. The decision to do school work is up to you.

Lots of changes are going to happen to you and you need to be ready for them. There are going to be choices that you’ll be making as teenagers, and we know that the choices you make now will have a big impact on your future. We brought this jar of candy in to help illustrate that.

What kind of candy is this? Yes! Now and Later!

We are going to do a drill together.

When I shout out “the choices you make...” you shout out NOW.

Then I will shout, “will affect you...” you shout out LATER!

Alright you ready? “The choices you make... you shout out - NOW!
will affect you.... you shout out - LATER!

“The Choices you make NOW will affect you LATER.” Can you repeat that after me?”

The Now and Later are reminders for everyone to remember that...

“The choices you make NOW, will affect you LATER”.

We’ll be leaving this jar of candy out every time we’re here. The choices you make now to participate and listen will determine whether or not your class can have them later.

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Educator highlight: Write on the board or post the Group Rights and Responsibilities cards. Begin by explaining why it is important to discuss Group Rights and Responsibilities. Take time to explain each of the points that are written on the board. After this, ask the students if there are any other suggestions that they have to add to the list. Acknowledge and affirm each suggestion. It is important that the students take ownership of this list so that they can take responsibility for their behavior.

Educator states:

Now you know that in sports, in your family, and in school, it is important to play by the rules. It is important to know what everyone's responsibilities are and what their rights are. So we are going to take time now to go through the group rights and responsibilities so that we all know what is expected of us and what we can expect from others. These are important so that we all can have a great time together.

[Hold up Rights and Responsibilities cards and have the students repeat right after you say it.]

You have the right:

1. **To be heard** - No talking while others are talking.
2. **To express your opinion** - To share your own point of view.
3. **To ask any questions** - No question is too stupid or silly.

[Mention the question cards as a place for asking questions. Do not pass them out yet.]

4. **To be respected** - Respect others as you want them to respect you.
5. **To confidentiality and privacy** - Personal information or situations shared here shouldn't be shared outside of this class.

Does anyone have any other rules/responsibilities they want to put up here? You all did a great job! Let's wrap up this part of our lesson by repeating after me everything on our list.

[Pass out question cards and explain their purpose, what to write on them, etc.]

We understand that some of you might feel shy or embarrassed to ask questions out loud, so we came up with a question bag. Each day we will pass out index cards for everyone and at the end of the class you will have the chance to write down a question or comment. If you don't have a question, write down one thing that you learned that day. Then we will go around and you can slip it into the question bag. We'll go over these questions and answer them when we come back. Make sure your question is based on what we are learning and is respectful.

Don't forget our Healthy Futures saying. Let's say it together just like we did earlier...

The choices you make...**NOW** will affect you...**LATER!**



Notes:**Educator states:**

We mentioned earlier that we are here to talk about making good choices. We mentioned that there are choices that we make every day. This is also important to understand as it relates to the friends that we choose. We can't choose our family - mother, father, sisters, or brothers - but we do choose our friends.

Why do we have friends?

[Have students suggest reasons why they have friends and write these suggestions on board or Post-it paper. Add your own answers if students have trouble coming up with their own responses. Possible answers include: to be liked, to be known, to get support, to not be lonely, to share things with, etc.]

Having friends is really great but sometimes friendships can be difficult, too.

What things can be hard about friendship, especially in middle school?

[Give students time to think about this question. Then write responses on board. Possible answers include: friendships are constantly changing, there can be jealousy and gossip, hurt feelings, etc.]



Notes:

Educator highlight: Hang up/display the Build a Friend poster. If possible, have student(s) hold poster while educator leads discussion and attaches friend characteristics (**respectful, trustworthy, kind, helpful, loyal, fun, responsible, honest, good listener, good role model**) to poster. Explain characteristics as you attach them to poster. Use table below.

Educator states:

We are going to do an activity that will help us brainstorm some of the positive characteristics or character traits that go into being a good friend. **Can you think of some of the characteristics of a good friend?** As you come up with these qualities, I will attach them to our poster. If you get all the qualities that we have up here, you will see our picture on the poster come together as whole, complete friend.

Quality	Explanation
Respectful	Doesn't call you names. Doesn't tease or embarrass you.
Fun	Plays with you. Includes you in activities.
Kind	Isn't mean or spiteful. Likes to be with you.
Loyal	Doesn't talk behind your back. Isn't "two-faced".
Helpful	Wants to assist you with your problems. Doesn't turn their back on you when you need them.
Trustworthy	You can confide in them.
Honest	They don't lie to you or mislead you.
Responsible	They don't make excuses. Tries to keep promises.
Good listener	Doesn't do all the talking. Asks how you are doing.
Good role model	Does their best. Abstains from risky behavior.

[Have students repeat each quality.]



Notes:**Educator states:**

We can see from our poster how important it is to have friends with these kinds of qualities. Having friends like this really helps us feel good about ourselves.

But what is also important is how friends can be an influence in our lives. A man named **J.R. Briggs** said that the most important advice he ever got as a young person was **“You show me your friends and I will show you your future.”**

If you choose your friends wisely and they have these positive character traits, that can have a very positive impact on your future. If you don’t choose wisely, you can pick friends that influence you to make poor choices and get involved in activities that could have a very negative effect on your future. Remember...

The choices you make...**NOW** will affect you...**LATER!**



Notes:**Educator states:**

In our last activity we talked about the qualities that we wanted to see in a friend. It's also important to know that if you want to have a friend like that you need to be a friend like that.

In this next activity, our "mission" will be to look at some scenarios and think of ways that someone could be a real friend and help out in that situation.

Educator highlight: Pass out Mission Possible (Handout 6.1.5). Read through the sheets and explain how to fill them out. Have students choose one of the two scenarios and answer the questions. They can use the back of the sheet if necessary. Have two or three students share their responses with the rest of the class.

Congratulations! You have all accomplished your "mission". We want you to remember that not only do **we choose** our friends, we choose what kind of friend **we are going to be**.

One way to be a good friend is by being the kind of friend we would want. As we said earlier, good friends help you make good choices. And that's really important because...

The choices you make...**NOW** will affect you...**LATER!**



Notes:**Educator states:**

As we said earlier, it is really important to choose your friends wisely. Choose to spend time with people who have similar goals/values as you so you're not pressured to do things you don't agree with or that won't help your future. If friends don't respect you, they might try to pressure you. During middle school many young people experience peer pressure because many people want to fit in.

There may be times when people around you may try to persuade you to do something that you are not comfortable with. You need to make a decision about it, whether to do it or not. We want to give you a 3-step process for making good decisions.

[Hold up Stop, Think, Decide cards as you go through the steps.]

These are the steps to follow when faced with a choice:

1. **Stop** - Stop and recognize there is a choice to be made.
2. **Think** - Think about and compare the reasons to do it and the reasons not to do it.
3. **Decide** - Decide what is the best choice based on your comparisons. Choose your path.

So let's go over these steps again. After **STOPPING** to recognize that there is a decision to make, you need to **THINK** about that decision. It is important to think about all of the reasons for doing something as well as all the reasons not to do something, so you can compare them. Last, you need to **DECIDE** and choose your path.



Notes:**Educator states:**

We have an activity to illustrate this. This is our Decision-Making Scale, and we are going to use it to help us make decisions. We are going to pick a topic and then I will read off what is on these cards and you will decide whether it is a reason to do something or not to do it.

Pretend that you're stuck in a situation where you need to stop, think, and decide. We're going to think about and compare the reasons why someone would choose to do a certain activity and why someone would choose not to do it. After we compare the reasons, we're going to weigh our choices and see if there are more reasons to do something or more reasons not to. Then you can **DECIDE** what would be the best decision.

Educator highlight: Hang up/display the Decision-Making Scale poster on the board or ask for volunteers. Share the categories with the students: smoking, lying, drugs/alcohol, cheating, stealing, etc. (Save the SEX category until later in Session 6.6). Read out each card, and have students tell you on which side of the scale to place it.



Notes:**Educator states:**

We can clearly see that the reasons for not doing these things outweigh the reasons to do them.

In each case, choosing not to do something was a decision to avoid a risky behavior. Let's bring it back to STOP, THINK, and DECIDE. If someone had NOT thought through all of the reasons for each of these, they might have made an unhealthy decision. When faced with a choice it is important to STOP, THINK, and DECIDE, because the choices you make NOW will affect you LATER.

Question Cards:

Some days we may not have enough time to go through question cards and answer your questions.

Parent Connection Forms:

We also have Parent Connection Forms that we will give you every day. These are for you to take home to your parents. On these forms your parents will find information about what we talked about each session, which they can use to have conversations with you about what you are learning here. Make sure your parents/guardians are reading these sheets and that they sign them at the bottom. We will give a prize to students that bring their signed connection form back into class.

[Pass out Parent Connection Form Session 6.1: Decision-Making/Friendship, and collect completed question cards.]

