Chapter 3
Decision Making

OBJECTIVES
Participants will:
1. Explain how decisions can affect all four parts of their Circles of Life
2. Demonstrate both good and bad decision-making for specific situations
3. Recognize whether decisions could have long or only short term consequences

OVERVIEW OF ONLINE MATERIAL

The lesson discusses decision making. As youth grow up they face new types of decisions and the impacts of these decisions become greater. Some examples of decisions youth face at this age are: how much effort to put into school, the types of friends they choose, and whether or not to become involved with alcohol, drugs, smoking, and sex. Each decision a person makes can affect their Circle of Life, either by strengthening or weakening it. And, some decisions have long-term or even permanent consequences. Taking risks that result in getting HIV is an example of a permanent effect. Using drugs and alcohol can harm a person’s mind and can cause them to make other decisions that are harmful.

LESSON OVERVIEW

ACTIVITIES
1. WARM UP ACTIVITY (10 min.)
2. REVIEW (5 min.)
3. QUESTION BOX (5-10 min.)
4. SUANNE STORY (15 min.)
5. SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM EFFECTS (15 min.)
6. DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS (15 min.)
MATERIALS NEEDED
1. Copies of the SuAnne story*
2. At least two copies of the list of scenarios cut into individual scenarios *
3. Leader discussion sheet*
4. White board or large poster paper
* Found at the end of the lesson plans

PREPARATION
Activity 1: Identify activities that require youth to use their volition.
Activity 2: Review questions in question box and prepare responses.
Activity 3: Read over the SuAnne Story. Print copies for each youth.
Activity 5: Cut out scenarios so they can be passed out.
CHAPTER 3
LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY 1: WARM UP (5 min.)

Purpose: To reinforce the concept of volition.

Instructions:

**Simon says with a twist.** Play *Simon Says* but the leader must say the words: “Use your Volition to….” If the leader does not say “use your volition” then the group should not do the activity. You can start the activity off by giving one or more examples: “Use your volition to: show that you are happy”. “Use your volition to: say something nice to the person next to you.” At the end, ask “Who can tell the group what Volition means?”

ACTIVITY 2: REVIEW (5 min.)

Remind the group that the last lesson was about growing up and the importance of making good decisions. As youth grow up they will have many decisions to make.

**Ask:** What are some of the decisions that you have to make as you grow up? (if kids don’t mention things like drugs, smoking etc. list those decisions as well).

**Explain:** Some decisions that adolescents make can affect the rest of their lives.

The session today is about making decisions and using your volition to make decisions that you are proud of rather than just going along with what other people are doing.

During the online lesson the words HIV and AIDS were used.

**Ask:** Does anyone know what either of these words means?

**Explain:** HIV is a virus that causes the disease called AIDS. AIDS is a very serious disease. Over time, the HIV virus weakens the body. There is no cure for AIDS.

The next few sessions will talk more about AIDS and how to protect yourself so you don’t ever get AIDS.

ACTIVITY 3: QUESTION BOX (10 min.)

Purpose: Allows youth to ask questions anonymously.

Materials: The question box.
Preparation: Review questions in question box before class and prepare responses.

Instructions:
Before class, check the question box. If there is nothing in it, remind youth that they can add questions.

ACTIVITY 4: SUANNE STORY (10 min.)
Purpose: To discuss decision making and how we can use our volition to overcome difficult situations and how our decisions can affect others.
Materials: Copies of the SuAnne Story
Preparation: Read over the SuAnne Story.

Instructions:
Pass out copies of the SuAnne Story. This is a true story. Have students take turns reading out loud.

Discussion Questions:
• If you were with SuAnne’s team waiting to go on the court, how do you think you would have felt? Why?
• How do you think SuAnne felt? What decision did SuAnne make?
• Do you think it was an easy decision or a hard decision? Why?
• Why do you think she made that decision?
• What were some of the results of that decision?

ACTIVITY 5: LONG & SHORT TERM CONSEQUENCES (15 min.)
Purpose: To show that decisions can have both short term and long term consequences.
Materials: Whiteboard or poser paper to write on.
Preparation: Prepare a table (shown below) to fill in.

Instructions:
Ask: List some decisions you have to make (or think you will face when you become a teenager). Write the decisions that are mentioned by the class. Try to think of both positive and negative examples. Use the examples below if the class does not come up with ideas.

Discuss the short term effects of each decision.

Explain that short term effects are ones that a person gets immediately and long term effects are things that don’t happen until much later.
Discuss how it is easy to think only of the short term effects and not to believe that the long term effects will ever happen to you.

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decisions</th>
<th>Short term effects</th>
<th>Long term effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not doing homework (regularly)</td>
<td>You have more time to do other things</td>
<td>Your grades suffer. May not be able to play sports, or go to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling a lie to get out of being in trouble</td>
<td>You don’t get in trouble for something you did</td>
<td>Telling lies becomes a habit and people don’t trust you. You lose respect for yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>Friends accept you, Feel cool, feel grown up</td>
<td>Becomes a habit you can’t quit, bad breath, hurts your lungs, costs money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Friends accept you, feel grown up, something to do,</td>
<td>Feel bad afterwards, might lead to bad decisions about other things, can’t think clearly, becomes a habit, changes your personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Friends accept you, something to do,</td>
<td>Changes your mind, you become addicted and can’t be without the drugs, $, make bad decisions about other things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Homework</td>
<td>Learn more, get good grades, teachers know you are trying and more willing to help you if you have problems</td>
<td>Learn good study habits, don’t fall behind, can help you be able to go to college or get a better job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not doing drugs/alcohol</td>
<td>Feel healthy, can focus on school and sports, don’t have to hide what you are doing</td>
<td>Learn to enjoy other activities and have fun without drugs/alcohol, better health, fewer problems to deal with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to your parents</td>
<td>May not be what you want to hear/do. Shows respect for your parents. May not make you seem cool to your friends.</td>
<td>You will probably make better decisions and not get in trouble. Better relationship with your parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITY 6: DECISIONS! DECISIONS! DECISIONS! (20 min)**

**Purpose:** To demonstrate that making good decisions requires thinking about the consequences of actions before doing the action.
**Materials:** A list of scenarios for role playing (found at end of Lesson Plan). Alternative: have participants create puppets out of sandwich bags or socks if they are uncomfortable about standing in front of the group to act out the scenarios.

**Preparation:** Read over the list of scenarios and the leader’s discussion sheet.

**Instructions:**
Assign youth to act out the scenarios. Each scenario should be done twice – once, demonstrating bad decisions; and, the second time demonstrating good decisions. Depending on the number of youth, have each group do both positive and negative examples or, use two teams—one for each version.

**Explain:** The role plays show that different parts of the Circle of Life are involved in—or affected by—decisions. Most decisions don’t just involve one part of our Circle of Life—but several, or all, simultaneously. Move around the room while teams are planning their role plays, and help them think through the Circle of Life issues. (The Leader Discussion Guide provides sample Circle of Life discussion points for each of the scenarios.) Let your teams talk among themselves and decide how they will play out the roles. Remind them that there might be more than one “right” or “wrong” way to make a decision.

**Discuss:** After the role plays are over, have everyone discuss what happened in them—comparing the good and bad decision role plays for each scenario. To facilitate the discussion, ask participants questions like:
- What made the decision “good” or “bad?”
- Did the characters show respect for themselves or for others by doing what they did?
- What parts of the Circle of Life played a role in the decision?
- What parts of the Circle of Life might have been affected after the decision was made?
- What are the long-term or short-term effects of the decision(s)?

**Summarize:** Remind youth how important respect is. Respecting themselves and respecting other people are essential for making good decisions. When confronted with difficult decisions, youth should consider the question: “What decision would show the most respect for myself and for other people in this situation?”
THE SUANNE BIG CROW STORY

In the fall of 1988 the Pine Ridge High girl's basketball team, called the Lady Thorpes, went to the town of Lead to play a basketball game. SuAnne Big Crow was a member of the Lady Thorpes team. She was fourteen years old.

The usual plan for the pre-game warm-up was for the visiting team to run onto the court in a line. They would take a lap or two around the floor, shoot some baskets, and then go to their bench at courtside. After that, the home team would come out and do the same thing. Then the game would begin.

Usually the Lady Thorpes lined up for their entry more or less by height. That meant that Doni DeCory, the tallest on the team, went onto the court first. On this particular day in Lead, while the Lady Thorpes were waiting in the hallway near the locker room, they could hear heckling from out on the court. It was getting louder and louder. They could hear the hecklers yelling fake Indian war cries, a woo-woo-woo sound. Another typical kind of yelled remark was "Squaw!" or "Where's the cheese?" (the joke being that if Indians were lining up, it must be to get free commodity cheese from the government).

Doni looked out the door and told her teammates, "I can't handle this." SuAnne quickly offered to go in her place. In fact, SuAnne was so eager to go first that Doni became suspicious. "Don't embarrass us," Doni told her. SuAnne said, "I won't. I won't embarrass you." So Doni gave her the ball, and SuAnne moved to the front of the line.

SuAnne came running onto the court dribbling the basketball, with her teammates running behind her. On the court, the noise was deafeningly loud. SuAnne went right down the middle of the court and then suddenly stopped completely still when she got to the center court. Her teammates were so surprised when she stopped that some of them

(Story continues on the next page)
bumped into each other. Their coach, who was at the end of the line, didn’t even know why they had stopped. Then SuAnne turned to Doni and tossed her the ball. Next, SuAnne stepped into the jump-ball circle at center court, right in front of the Lead fans.

She turned to face them. She unbuttoned her warm-up jacket, took it off, and draped it over her shoulders. Then she began to do the Shawl Dance.

SuAnne knew all the dances of her tribe because she had competed in many powwows as a little girl. The dance she chose that day was a young woman’s dance. It’s graceful and modest and show-offy, all at the same time. "I couldn’t believe it—she was powwowing, like, ‘Get down!’ And then SuAnne just started to sing," Doni remembers. SuAnne began to sing in Lakota, swaying back and forth in the jump-ball circle, doing the Shawl Dance, using her warm-up jacket for a shawl.

The crowd went completely silent. "All that stuff the hecklers were yelling — it was like she reversed it somehow" a teammate says.

(Story continues on the next page)
In the sudden quiet, all anyone could hear was SuAnne’s Lakota song. Then SuAnne stood up, dropped her jacket, took the ball from Doni, and ran a lap around the court dribbling expertly and very fast. The silence in the gym ended. Everyone began to cheer and clap. SuAnne sprinted to the basket, went up into the air, and laid the ball right through the hoop. The fans all stood and cheered loudly. Her actions were a victory.

SuAnne sprinted to the basket and laid the ball right through the hoop.

For many Oglala people, what SuAnne did that day almost immediately took on the stature of myth. Lots of people still describe the event in awe and disbelief. Amazement swept through the younger kids when they heard what had happened. "I was, like, 'What did she just do?'" recalls her cousin Angie Big Crow.

All over the reservation people told and retold the story of SuAnne at the basketball game with Lead. To the many big and small incidences of local racism that the Oglala people have known all their lives, SuAnne’s courage made a strong reply.

(Story continues on the next page)
To all the non-Lakota people in the stands, SuAnne's dance was an invitation for them to dance too. She was in the Lead gym to play, and she invited everyone else to play. The symbol she used to include everyone was the warm-up jacket. Everyone in America has a warm-up jacket. I've got one, probably so do you. So did many of the fans at Lead. By using the warm-up jacket as a shawl in her spontaneous Shawl Dance, she made Lakota relatives of everyone.

"It was funny," Doni says, "but after that game the relationship between the Lead kids and us was tremendous. When we played Lead after that, the games were really good. And we got to know some of the girls on the team. Later, when we went to a tournament and Lead was there, we hung out with the Lead girls and ate pizza with them. We got to know some of their parents, too. What SuAnne did that day made a big impression. It changed the whole situation with us and Lead. We found out there are some really good people in Lead. We never knew that before."

Activity #6

Scenario 1: Somebody left a candy bar lying on a table. The room is empty. Nobody is around. Teresa could steal it if she wanted to. What will she do?

Discussion points: Making this decision could be difficult. Teresa may be really hungry and love sweet things. It may not seem as if she is stealing very much, it’s just a candy bar after all. But, the candy does not belong to her. She knows that she could get into trouble if she gets caught. Is she willing to risk losing the respect and trust that other people have for her?

(sample discussion points about the four parts of the Circle of Life: physical = Teresa is hungry; emotional = she really likes candy and eating it always makes her feel happy; mental = she thinks about how tempted she is to take the candy but she knows that stealing is wrong; spiritual = she knows she probably won’t respect herself if she steals, because her family has taught her the value of honesty and trust.)

Scenario 2: Donna’s and Pete’s friends want them to go to a party. They both have a lot of homework. Also, they know older kids will be there and some of those kids drink alcohol. What will Donna and Pete do?

Discussion points: Making this decision is hard because Donna and Pete like to have fun with their friends. Also, schoolwork can be kind of boring sometimes. But, they know that they need to get their homework done, and they don’t want to be around alcohol. Their parents would be really upset if they found out they were at a party where there was drinking, even if they didn’t drink anything.)
Scenario 3: Jill has a babysitting job every Friday night. She is saving the money so she can go to volleyball camp this summer. A friend invites her to go to the movies on Friday. It’s a movie she’s been waiting to see for months. But what about her job. What will she do?

Discussion points: Making this decision is difficult because Jill is torn between her commitment to the family she babysits for and the excitement of seeing the movie she has been waiting for. She knows that she might lose her babysitting job if she doesn’t honor her responsibility. How can she solve this problem?

Scenario 4: Bill and Joe have been best friends since kindergarten. Today, Joe wants them both to skip school and go to the rodeo. Billy doesn’t want to disappoint Joe. But, he doesn’t like to get in trouble with his parents or his teachers. Plus, they’ve got a math test today. Joe is really putting a lot of pressure on Billy to go with him. What will Billy do?

Discussion points: Billy’s decision is hard because he is torn between going with his best friend to an event he loves, and getting in trouble at home and at school. He knows that school is important, but so is his friendship with Joe.

Scenario 5: Maria really likes Brian. She’s been waiting all year for him to pay attention to her. Today he asked her to come to his house after school. She knows his parents don’t get home from work until late. She’s hoping he just wants to watch TV or hang out talking. But, she’s not sure want his plans are for them to do. He’s two years older and a lot more mature. That sort of scares her. What will she do?

Discussion points: Maria’s sort of at a loss about what decision to make. She’s got a lot of mixed feelings. On the one hand, she’s really happy that Brian is finally noticing her. And she doesn’t want to annoy him by turning down his offer for them to spend some time together. But, on the other hand, she doesn’t like not knowing what he has in mind for their time together. She’s also got strict parents, and doesn’t want to do something that might disappoint them.
DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS
LIST OF SCENARIOS 1-6

SCENARIO 1: (1 person)
Someone left a candy bar lying on a table. The room is empty. Nobody is around. Teresa could steal it if she wants to. What will she do?

SCENARIO 2: (3+ people)
Donna’s and Pete’s friends want them to go to a party. But, they both have a lot of homework, plus they know older kids will be at the party and some of those kids drink alcohol. What will Donna and Pete do?

SCENARIO 3: (2 people)
Jill has a babysitting job every Friday night. She is saving the money so she can go to volleyball game this summer. A friend invites her to go to the movies on Friday. It’s a movie she’s been waiting to see for months. But what about her job? What will she do?
SCENARIO 4: (2 people)

Billy and Joe have been best friends since kindergarten. Today, Joe wants them both to skip school and go to the rodeo. Billy does not want to disappoint Joe. But, he does not like to get in trouble with his parents or his teachers. Also, they have to a math test today. Joe is really putting a lot of pressure on Billy to go with him. What will Billy do?

SCENARIO 5: (2 people)

Maria really likes Brian. She’s been waiting all year for him to pay attention to her. And, today he asked her to come to his house after school. She knows his parents don’t get home from work until late. She is hoping he just wants to watch TV or hang out talking. But, she is not sure what his plans are for them to do.

SCENARIO 6 (2+ people)

Tim wants people to think he’s cool. But, he’s a lot more shy than he pretends to be. He really respects his parents. But, he hates telling his friends how strict his family is about his hanging out. Some of the guys in his class are planning to throw a big party this weekend, They talk about sex all the time, and he knows they will invites some older girls to the party. When Tim is invited to come, he does not want to seem un-cool by saying no. But, he knows he really does not want to go with them. What will he do?