



# Transitions

## Background:

The transitions programme was devised to support vulnerable young people to exercise their right under UNCRC article 12 for the child's right to 'freely' express their 'views freely in all matters affecting the child'. The Big deal programme acknowledge that UNCRC article 12 is a positive step forward for young people to be included as equal and active members of society, however for young people to exercise this right bodes many challenges. Organisations such as: UNICEF, and the international youth federation have highlighted the many obstacles young people face such as: 'inequality, lack of respect, poor education, and lack of representation', as barriers to young people being involved in decision making'. The big deal recognise these challenges and has sought to build upon young peoples education regarding decision making through the transitions programme , whist also highlighting representative bodies they could approach such as the NIYF to express their views to a wider audience .

To discover what areas of decision making needed addressed through the transitions programme, the Big deal ran focus group sessions with two hundred young people to explore their views. The Big deal in their research with young people discovered that out of a sample group of two hundred young people just over 110 did not feel confident to express their views to others, and 98 young people believed they had **'little or no control'** over decisions that affect their lives. On the basis of these statistics the Big deal formed the transitions programme to: inspire and encourage young people to believe in the power of controlling their decision making; equipping them with the tools to understand the issues that affect them, and devise solutions to address them. The transitions programme supports young people to explore what their views are, the matters that affect them and possible solutions for these issues. The transitions programme is to be viewed as a first step in participation, to support young people to be active and positive decision makers within their own lives.

## The Benefits

The advantages of encouraging young people to become actively involved in making decisions can be far reaching. When young people are encouraged to identify possible issues and situations that affect their lives ;then move forward to discover and implement solutions or coping strategies ,it builds their self confidence in relation to the positive impact they can have on their own lives. This programme is a first step in young people's participation in making positive decision making within their own lives. Throughout this course young people will learn transferable skills in decision making , that can form the basis of decision making within group work opportunities .Transitions also encourages young people to reflect on the issues that many young people face, hence providing the groundwork for young people to begin to develop an awareness of wider issues for young people, and perhaps working in a representative capacity for their peers.

1.UNICEF, World YMCA, ,The international award association, International youth federation.(2003)Children and young people : participating in decision making .A call to action.

## Contents

### Vision:

To aid young people to look ahead at choices they will face as they become adults. The programme aims to inspire young people to take control of their own lives, and be more pro-active in their personal decision-making.

### Purpose:

The purpose of the programme is to engage with young people; to work with them to **develop key skills in individual decision-making** and encourage holistic reflection upon choices that affects their lives. The programme aims to teach young people that decision making can be a pro-active and reflective process, to enable young people to make meaningful change within their own lives.

### Who Is It Targeted At?:

Young people aged 14-25. This programme can be used to develop decision making skills for young people choosing career options, leaving school, college or university. The course can also be used with young people identified as having taking part of risk taking behaviours such as alcohol misuse.

### The Programme outline:

If you choose to run the entire programme over two sessions and a residential or eight to ten sessions. You can also choose to use the the:reflection, explore or act modules in insolation , in relation to the young peoples decision making experience .

### Training Areas:

#### Reflection:

- Individual identity
- When, what and why we make decisions

#### Explore:

- Personal history of decision-making
- Models of decision-making
- Barriers to decisions making:
- Decision-making personalities

#### Act

- Actualising our decision-making personalities
- Setting goals and planning decisions over the next year.



## How the Programme should be used

### Some thoughts to consider when using the pack

- This programme is not to be used to judge decisions young people have made
- This programme has been designed to support young people to identify any issues they may face and develop positive decision making capabilities.  
This resource can be used as a first step for young people identifying their needs and expressing their views to others regarding those needs
- All young people have different starting points regarding their decision making ability. You may choose to run the entire programme or elements of the programme that are relevant to your groups needs.
- The programme does not reflect on all the types of decision making models , as this list is exhaustive . The model reflected in this programme was chosen after several models were piloted with groups of young people.
- At the end of each section is a template to aid young people and their organisation monitor their progress.
- The tips sections are there to give some extra thoughts to support the module content .
- Use the acknowledgements and reference section to further support your understanding of the decision making theories used.
- This programme requires ongoing commitment from the youth/support worker for following up and supporting young people to meet the goals they have identified on the programme.
- If you feel the young people have identified a common issue that they would like to have their voices heard by government . Please contact representative bodies for young people such as the Northern Ireland youth forum for further support on having young peoples views .

# Reflect

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This module encourages young people to 'reflect' upon their own identity, personality and how that may affect their decision making.

After they examine their identity, they will be encouraged to examine the four W's of decision-making:

## What, Where, When & Why

### Expected outcomes:

To create an open environment to reflect upon: their identity; what is decision making, and prevalent decisions they have made to date.



## Reflect

### 1. Expression of the individual

**Aim:** To create a safe environment for young people to begin to reflect on how others perceive them, and how they see themselves. The purpose of the activity is to build a foundation for discussions around decision-making.

#### Objectives:

- Help participants to reflect on their own values, beliefs, interests and life experiences.
- Motivate participants to realise they can create change

#### Duration

30mins

#### Resources needed

Blank theatre masks, paint, glue, glitter stickers

#### Activity:

**Explain** to the group that the theatre mask should be divided into two with a marker pen. Show the group the decorating materials for the masks. Ask the group to use the materials, to decorate one side of the mask to represent how they see their personality and their interests. The other side of the mask should represent how others see them (for example parents, friends etc.). Explain that both sides may not be the same as other people may see 'different sides' our personalities.

After they have designed the masks ask the young people to share what their mask says about them.

#### Ask:

What do the colours and designs on the mask represent?

Is there a difference between the two sides of the mask?

Ask do we decide how others see us?

#### Conclusion:

Draw out from the young people the diversity of the group and the vast array of decisions they make for themselves regarding their interests, behaviour and environment.

## Reflect

### 2. Reflection on the process of decision making

**Aim:** To reflect and explore young peoples personal understanding of the process of decision-making.

**Duration:**

40mins

**Objectives:**

- The young people will have created their own group working definitions of what are decisions.
- Developed a visual chart on what, why, when and how we make decisions.

**Resources:**

Paper, blue tack, pens.

**Activity:**

**Table Top Question Time:**

In large letters write on four flipchart pages:

- What are decisions?
- Why do we make them?
- How do we make them?
- When do we make them?

Spread the pages around the room. Give young people post it notes; ask them to write comments on the four questions and then stick them to the appropriate page.

**Feedback:**

Encourage the young people to interpret the questions in their own way. Note the young people's main responses on one flipchart page and encourage them to choose working definitions for decision-making. Try to encourage that decision-making is a process, and that we engage our minds, body and emotions within that process.



## Reflect

### 3. Exploring past choices and decisions

#### Life Map Exercise

**Aim:** To explore young peoples history of decision-making and how we can use the learning for future decision-making.

#### Objectives:

- To have a visual representation of decisions young people have made to date
- To build upon the young peoples confidence to share their thoughts and feelings within the group.

#### Duration:

50mins

#### Resources:

Paper, felt-tips

#### Activity:

Ask the young people to draw a river and think of significant life choices they may have made throughout the course of their life. Use colour to show how significant that decision was in forming their identity today.

Give careful instructions for young people to focus on positive decisions and less positive decisions, rather than on decisions that have had very negative consequences for the young people. Ensure the young people understand they need to be comfortable enough sharing the information on the diagram with the group; hence on a scale of 1-10, with one meaning positive and ten meaning decisions that have held negative consequences, that it would be no higher than a five.

#### In the feedback ask young people:

What do you know now that you wish you knew then?

Will you use this knowledge in future decision making?

**Tip:** Do not stress the rights and wrongs of decision making; it is about highlighting that positive decision making is a thoughtful process

## Module One

**Aims:** Purpose to reflect:

- Upon my identity
- What is decision making ,
- Prevalent decisions I have made to date.

Indicator	Progress (1= no progress/ 5= confident)	What we have done	How do I feel about the exercise I have completed
	1 2 3 4 5		  
	1 2 3 4 5		  
	1 2 3 4 5		  
	1 2 3 4 5		  
	1 2 3 4 5		  

 Unconfident 
  ok 
  Confident



# Explore

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This module 'explores' young people's barriers and decision-making personalities.

This module also presents young people with a model of decision-making that they can debate, adjust and use.

## Expected outcomes:

### The young people will have explored:

- Various decision making personalities and identified their personal decision making personality
- The pros and cons model for personal decision making.
- Body language and decision making
- How we react to making decisions under stress and managing the outcome.

## Defining the barriers to decision making

### Explore

#### 1. Defining the barriers to decision making

##### Part One

##### Activity: Flight/freeze/fight

##### Aim:

To identify possible barriers to decision making and the patterns young people can fall into regarding risk taking behaviours.

**Objectives:** The young people will have a record of the impact of emotions that effect our decisions , but also an understanding that our emotions are apart of the decision making process.

**Duration:** 1hour

##### Resources:

NEELB mind your head publication, flipchart paper, pens, large room, cd player

##### Flipchart

Write on the flipchart, what emotions affect our decision making? Ask the young people to discuss this in small groups and report back.

**Feedback:** Encourage the group to explore how our emotions can affect our decision making in a risky way , for example fear can lead us to ignore an important decision. Also explore how our emotions can support decision making as a process. If we feel good after making a conscious decision, it is then positive to follow positive emotion or instincts. Please see reference in acknowledgements; **The Top 10 Barriers to Decision-Making** by Jennifer Diebel For further information on decisions making barriers.

Tip\*\* Young people may become embarrassed about taking about their emotions. You may want to ask what body language do you display when you are making: a difficult decision, scary decision, positive decision? The young people should be able to make a connection between for example: biting nails when we are anxious about a difficult decision.



## Explore

### 2. Individual decision making personalities

#### Goblin game: Decision making scenarios

**Aim:** to explore the young peoples personalities and confidence in various decision making scenarios. To explore theory of flight/freeze/fight and emotions attached to various decisions. To explore the barriers of time, information available and distraction in decision making.

#### Objectives:

- The young people will have developed an understanding of the responses we have to different types of decisions.
- To be able to recognise their decision making personalities.

#### Resources:

See NEELB publication on the threeF's model on how this model works ,CD player , music ,large room.

#### Activity Instructions.

Explain that the activity is a little like musical statues, but when the music stops or whistle is blown they have to pull a fight, freeze or flight pose (give examples). Before the music starts or whistle is blown you read out a scenario, then when the whistle is blown the young people have to start running about, at the same time trying to think of an answer to the question. When the whistle is blown for the second time they have to freeze in the flight /freeze/fight. This pose represents how they feel about the situation. If they choose;

**Fight:** they have been able to think it through and come up with an answer

**Flight:** they couldn't think of anything i.e. distraction/ noise/too complicated

**Freeze:** They wouldn't be able to think at all. Experienced emotions of fear or feelings of low self esteem

## Scenarios

### Make a decision:

1. I have won £ 20.00 on a scratch card what way would I react? FFF?
2. I won £2000 on a scratch card would I FFF to make my decision?
3. I have an exam in the morning but the party of the year is tonight, do I go to the party? FFF?
4. I have had an argument with my best friend, I stormed off and told them I never want to speak to them again. It's the next day what do you do now? FFF?
5. I have been offered an extra shift in work but I know I have been really tired in school lately. Do I take the shift? FFF?
6. I met my careers counsellor in school today. I have to make a decision about what course I would pick for next year. Would I be able to make the decision?

### Feedback:

Draw out the barriers to decision making. Explore levels of decision making and how they can approach the situations in a more strategic way for example weighing up pros and cons model. Remember the emotional side of making decisions can be a key factor regarding inability to make decisions, discuss how they can make themselves feel more secure i.e. remind themselves when they have made a good decision.



## Explore

### 3. Exploring the pros and cons model of decision making

**Aim:** To encourage the have the young people take a more reflective approach to decision making

**Resources:**

Flipchart ,pens

**Scenarios**

Discuss with the group; why is decision making important? Draw out the importance of consequences long/short term, and how it can affect themselves and others. Explain the model of pros and cons:

- Identify the decision to be made. Explain that often there are a few options to be considered. Make sure each option is clearly identified from the scenario.
- Explain that decision-making is weighing up the positive outcomes from making the decision in relation to each decisions consequences, these are the pros.
- The 'cons' are what negative consequences will come out of making the decision.

**Feedback:** Using the model young people can count if the number of pros outweigh the cons as a method of making a positive decision. However in some circumstances one negative 'con', might carry greater destructive consequences than three pros. So you will also want to ensure that the group understand that pros and cons may not be of equal measure.

Split into small groups and give each of them a scenario to complete. Feel free to change the context of the scenarios to suit the needs of your group

## Decision Making Scenarios

### Scenario 1:

Sarah has a huge exam on Monday that covers more than 1,000 pages of material. She is scheduled to work Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon. Her employer refused to let her take the weekend off to study. She has had very little time to review, her grades have been very low this term. If she scores poorly on this test, she will fail out of nursing school. There is also a big party on Saturday that she really wants to attend.

Based on the scenario, identify the problem that would require a decision.

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Identify solutions: Rate your pros and cons between 1-10  
(1 little consequences/10 heavy consequences)

Pro: 

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Con: 

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Pro: 

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Con: 

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Pro: 

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Con: 

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Identify the outcome you wanted to achieve with the decision you made.

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Place an asterisk (\*) beside the selected alternative (solution) that achieves the desired outcome.



## Decision Making Scenarios

### Scenario 2:

Phillip wants to make a difference in his community, but isn't a part of any youth groups or organizations. Phillip sometimes has big ideas but when he has to speak to strangers he freezes or talks himself out of doing it.

Based on the scenario, identify the problem that would require a decision.

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Identify solutions: Rate your pros and cons between 1-10  
(1 little consequences/10 heavy consequences)

Pro: 

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Con: 

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Pro: 

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Con: 

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Pro: 

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Con: 

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Identify the outcome you wanted to achieve with the decision you made.

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Place an asterisk (\*) beside the selected alternative (solution) that achieves the desired outcome.

## Decision Making Scenarios

### Scenario 3:

Connor is one of the lads and enjoys hanging out with his friends. He is popular at school. He also is good at sports and enjoys keeping fit. His mates are putting him under pressure to take drugs at the weekend, but he really isn't sure.

Based on the scenario, identify the problem that would require a decision.

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Identify solutions: Rate your pros and cons between 1-10  
(1 little consequences/10 heavy consequences)

Pro:

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Con:

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Pro:

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Con:

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Pro:

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Con:

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Identify the outcome you wanted to achieve with the decision you made.

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Place an asterisk (\*) beside the selected alternative (solution) that achieves the desired outcome.



## 4. Exploring my Decision-making personality

**Aim:** to develop awareness of decision making personality styles and their effect on the decision making process.

### Objectives:

- The young people will have identified their decision making personality
- Young people will have an understanding of when you can use various personality styles to positive effect.

**Duration:** 40mins

**Resources:** Paper ,pens

### ABCD Decision game

Preparation: write ABCD on four separate pieces of A2 paper and place around the room.

Explain you will read out the scenarios and responses to the scenarios, which fall under the categories A, B, C or D. The young people decide which response they would choose for each scenario and stand on the corresponding card A, B, C or D. The facilitator then writes down their answers on a flipchart. Have the young people count how many A, B, C, D responses they received to decide which personality type they are. The scenarios used here are an example, encourage the group to design their own scenarios based on their life experiences.

**Feedback:** Facilitate small group discussions around their, personality types and how they feel about their result.

TIP: Look up for further information on decision-making personality Freeskills website. A guide to your decision-making personality

### Personality type answers for leaders

**A's Impulsive**

**B's Intuitive**

**C's Systematic**

**D's Indecisive**

SEE next page for scenarios

### Example scenarios

**1. I find a ten pound note on the street, what do I do next?**

- A. Put it in my pocket, and think nothing more about it
- B. Hand it into the nearest police station; it's my gut feeling it's the right thing to do.
- c. Decide to keep it and think of the many possible things I could use it for at the weekend
- D. Just walk by it, I don't know whether to hand it in /or keep it?

**2. I have just been paid £50.00 from work. I have seen a pair of trainers for £50.00 that look class, but I also owe my sister £20.00. Do you buy the trainers?**

- A. I just buy the trainers. I want them so I get them
- B. I know my sister will fall out with me and needs the £ 20.00 back so I give her the £20.00 and forget about the trainers
- C. I work out that I need £15.00 to go to the cinema with my mates, £5.00 for bus fares, I owe my sister £20.00. I will save the money left over each week until I can buy the trainers.
- D. I really don't know whether to but them or not. What if I decide I don't like them later

## Module Two

- Various decision making personalities and identified their personal decision making personality
- The pros and cons model for personal decision making.
- Body language and decision making
- How we react to making decisions under stress and managing the outcome.



Indicator	Progress (1= no progress/ 5= confident)	What we have done	How do I feel about the exercise I have completed
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		

Unconfident 
 Ok 
 Confident

# Act

The exercises within this module, encourages young people to implement the skills they have learnt within the previous two modules.

## Expected outcomes:

- Young people will be able to utilise the pros and cons model of decision making in relation to their decision making personality.
- The young people will also have developed organisational and planning skills in creating a personalised goal planner.
- The young people will have developed a method to support their peers through the process of meeting their goals.
- The young people will have explored the basics of making decisions in a group setting.



## ACT

### 1. Making Decisions

#### Team Initiative Game:

**Aim:** to utilise the young peoples decision making skills with a group work task

#### Objectives:

- To gauge young peoples understanding of personality styles
- Young people will identify added pressures of making decisions within a group setting.

**Resources:** Place an A1 page on the ground to make a square. (Make the square bigger or smaller according to the number of young people) This size of square is suitable for five to six people.

#### Activity:

Place an A1 page on the ground to make a square. (make the square bigger or smaller according to the number of young people) This size of square is suitable for five to six people

Call out instructions such as:

You can only have: Six feet, 2 fingers and one arm on the square.

They have 2 minutes to work out how to meet the instructions.

They must remain on the square for 20 seconds.

When the group has had a few trial runs....

Split the group into two teams and let them devise the instructions, but they must be able to do it themselves; as they will have to do it if the other group fails.

#### Feedback:

Ask the young people at the end of the activity, which of the four personality styles they used within this activity.

Encourage the group to discuss their awareness of pressure within the activity. How does having a time restraint affect your decision making ? How does making decisions that may affect the group as a whole, make you feel?

## ACT

### 2. Making Decisions

**Aim:**

To begin to use the reflective tools of decision making

**Duration:**

40 mins

**Resources:**

Holiday or car magazines, paper and pens

**Activity:**

Tell the young people they have an imaginary budget for example: £2500 to buy a car or to plan a holiday.

Using the magazine they must choose a car or holiday using the reflective pros and cons template. The young people can do this in pairs or in groups.

**The Template:**

Box one the options: write down each option of the decision they have to make. For example if its to buy a car with 2500.Option one might be a 2001 sports car, option 2 may be buy a 2005 Corsa.

Box two /three: list the positives and negative consequences that could occur from buying the car.

Box four: What will be the main measurement of their success. Is it saving money? Fuel economy and age of the car.

Box five: How much time do they have to complete their decision.

Box six: what is the decision they have chosen, here they will write if they have 'accepted' the option or 'rejected' it.

**Feedback:**

Encourage the young people to examine the following:

Did they use their heart and/or head?

Did they think of the practicalities for example: fuel economy, tax etc

Ask did they find the pros and cons model helpful?



## ACT

**3. Aim:** Building a decision-making action plan.

### Objectives:

- Identified personal decisions
- Completed an individual decision making action plan.

### Duration:

1hr 30mins

### Resources:

Decision making template, flipchart, paper and pens

**Activity:** Flipchart exercise

Discuss with the group, what types of decisions they have to make within the next year. If this activity is too personal ask the group a more general question such as what types of decisions do sixteen year olds make, then have the group narrow down which decisions are most relevant to them.

### Tips:

Directive questions to aid young people identify their issues or areas they wish to change:

- Think of the places you go, services you use?
- What people do you meet?

**These questions will aid the young people visual an average day and the decisions they have to make.**

### Part B

Give the young people an individual copy of their Decision making planner .See instructions from exercise: **Beginning to use the reflective tools of decision making, on how to use the planner.**

### Feedback

Ensure the group has a thorough discussion around the emotional, physical and mental pros and cons of their chosen decisions, to ensure their aims are achievable. See example of completed planner(next page)

## Decision Making Template Example:

My aim/vision/goal: Measures: Timescale:

Aim: to lead a healthier lifestyle

Decisions		Pros	Cons	Measurement/ Motivator	Timescale	My Decision
Do I quit smoking?	I will be look and feel better. Save money	It will feel weird with my friends who smoke. I will have to find a new way to deal with stress.	How much money I have saved a week, will keep in jar as visual reminder. Count how many cigarettes I reduce by week	3 months	To initially reduce my smoking to two a day , then to none at all in three months	
Do I reduce the amount I drink?	I will look and feel better. I won't make bad decisions when I am drunk. I will be happier without hangovers	It's a big part of my social life. I am scared of what my friends will say.	I will save the money I will spend on drink, and treat myself to a shopping spree every month.	3 months	Reduce my drinking to maximum of three drinks on a Saturday night. To start going to a dance class on Friday night instead of drinking.	



## ACT

### 4. Monitoring Progress

**Aim:** For young people to be able to monitor their progress regarding their decisions.

**Objective :**

- To create a day by day calendar with clear objectives for the young people to resolve their identified issue or make complete their decision making process.
- To create a core support group or mechanism whereby the young people can feedback any issues or success they are having regarding their decision-making objectives.

**Duration:**

1hr

**Resources:**

Calendar template, pens

**Activity:**Calendar exercise

The calendar will act as a Diary of their experience of meeting their goals. The young people can use it to ascertain if they need further support from their youth worker.

Have the young people mark on the calendar their different goal target for each week or month to meet their final objective. Also have the young people mark reward days for themselves at various key stages, to celebrate and mark their achievements.

Discuss with the group how they will use the calendar to monitor if they are keeping on track of their goals. Encourage the group to form a support mechanism, for days they are marking as unhappy or demotivated. The group may discuss within this session about whether they will contact each other for motivation or their support worker. See next page as an example of how to complete the template.

See blank calendar template in appendices.

**FEEDBACK: FOLLOW UP**

Have the young people take home their calendar and draw or write down a feeling for each day they make a decision. If the young people are writing negative remarks or unhappy faces, encourage the young people to reflect on the cause and a possible resolution. The young people will need further support to ensure they are referring to their action plans and meeting their goals. This support can come in the form of phone calls, one to one meetings or as a group.

## Module Three

- Exhibited increased understanding of pros and cons model of decision making
- Increased planning and organisational skills
- Development of group decision making skills



Indicator	Progress (1= no progress/ 5= confident)	What we have done	How do I feel about the exercise I have completed
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		
	1 2 3 4 5		

Unconfident 
 Ok 
 Confident





## Acknowledgements / useful reference points.

Mind your head get to know your brain and how to learn, NEELB, Tom McGlinchey, 2003  
ISBN 1852660872

### (1) The Top 10 Barriers to Decision Making

Jennifer Diebel, MA, NCC\*, Psychotherapist

<http://www.nuhabits.com/blogs/entry/Top-10-Barriers-to-Decision-Making>

Some

### Decision-making / reasoning skills

Michael S. Brockman, University of California, Davis

Stephen T. Russell, Ph.D., University of Arizona Internet link:

C:\Documents and Settings\ccn.12\My Documents\Transition to adulthood\Decision-making-Reasoning Factsheet good.htm

### Freeskills website. A guide to your decision making personality

C:\Documents and Settings\ccn.12\My Documents\Transition to adulthood\Decision-Making personality types.htm

**Business balls website:** contains useful templates and information on supporting decision making

<http://www.businessballs.com/problemsolving.htm>

### Briefing Paper 4 (last updated November 2005)

Young people's decision-making in 14-19

Education and training: a review of the

Literature

Susannah Wright

Available to download at [www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk](http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk)

### Toolkit for young people and pregnancy

<http://www.efc.org.uk/Forprofessionals/Decision-makingtoolkit>