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Unit Six

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Ages 9-12

Total Time: 2 Hours

PART 1: Ice Breaker

PART 2: Problem Solving/Decision Making Steps

PART 3: Peer Pressure

PART 4: Follow-Up Activities

ANNEXURE 1: Pass the Question

ANNEXURE 2: Problem Solving/Decision Making

ANNEXURE 3: Peer Pressure

ANNEXURE 4: Role Play Scenarios

ANNEXURE 5: Notes for Reference

ANNEXURE 6: Evaluation

ANNEXURE 7: Team Answer Sheet

ANNEXURE 8: Questions for Game

Part 1: Ice Breaker

Time:

15 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will take part in an activity to energize the group and help them get to know each other better.

Materials:

Option One:

- Annexure 1: Pass the Question (cut into squares)

Option Two:

- Yarn cut into pairs of different lengths

Techniques:

Ice Breaker

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Welcome the participants and tell them that we want everyone to feel energized and ready to learn so we are going to take part in a fun activity to get things started. Lead an ice breaker activity from the options below:

Option One: Pass the Question – Place the questions from Annexure 1 into a basket, bag or bowl. Start by asking one participant to pull a paper from the container and answer the question. (If necessary for the number of participants, ask them to put the question back in the bag and shake it.) Then, ask them to pass the bag to the next person who will pull a paper and answer the question. Continue until all participants have answered a question.

Option Two: Find Your Partner – Distribute the pieces of yarn that have been cut into pairs of different lengths and instruct the group to find the other person with a piece of yarn the same length as theirs. Then, instruct them to share something about themselves with their partner. (Trainer: you may use a question on Annexure 1 if desired.) If time permits, come together as a group and have each pair introduce each other along with the answer to their question.

Part 2: Problem Solving/Decision Making Steps

Time:

45 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will learn and practice the key steps in problem solving and decision making.

Materials:

- Marker Board or Chart Paper and Markers
- Annexure 2: Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xd63g3d8qOs>

Techniques:

- Group Activity

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Note that the children currently solve problems and make decisions on a daily basis without even thinking about it.
2. Ask the group to brainstorm these daily decisions and write them on a marker board or chart paper. (Responses could include what to wear, what to eat, what homework to do, etc.)
3. Explain that some decisions are more complex, more important, or more long-term. Ask them to list examples of these types of decisions. (e.g., how to handle an issue with a friend, what to do when you're struggling in school, thinking about career options, etc.)

4. State that problem solving and decision making skills can be used in everyday situations as well as in more long term and perhaps more important decisions. Good decision making depends on following key steps.
5. Distribute Annexure 2 and ask the group to follow along as you discuss the following problem solving steps.

- ❖ **Describe the problem.** (“This is the problem.”) You need to define the problem clearly, because the way you interpret the problem can lead you to different solutions. For example, if the problem is that your marks in math have been low, is it because you don’t understand the material, or because you haven’t been doing your homework, or because you’ve been sick and are too tired to pay attention in class?
 - Discuss a few more examples with the group to be sure they understand the concept:
 - Problem: You are on a softball team and lately you just haven’t been playing that well. Could it be because you haven’t been sleeping well and have been really tired, or because you have lost confidence in your skills, or is it because you are now on a higher level team with older kids, etc.?
 - Problem: Lately you seem to be losing everything and now you can’t find your special journal. Is it because you haven’t been keeping your things organized and your space is a mess, or because you’ve had too much on your mind, etc.?
- **Brainstorm solutions.** List at least 3 possible solutions; don’t stop at the first thing that comes to mind. Don’t rule out anything at this time.
 - Show the video (link in the Materials section) that illustrates the idea of not stopping at the first solution to a problem
 - When you are looking for potential solutions make sure you have all of the information you need. What information do you already have, and what else do you need to learn? Find out how other people have handled a similar situation, ask respected adults for their opinion, etc. (eg, How can I get extra help in math? Have you or anyone you know done this before?)
 - Lead the group through a discussion of the example of poor marks in math. If the real problem is that you don’t understand the material, you need to identify at least 3 possible ways you could more clearly understand the work. (eg, ask teacher for help, get extra tutoring, ask your friend who is really good at math to explain the material in less complicated terms)
 - Using the other two examples of problems from above (softball team and lost journal), help the group pick out what they feel is the real problem, and then brainstorm at least 3 possible solutions for each.

- **What might happen if?** Weigh the positives and negatives of each solution.
 - Consider what is important to you - know your values and be true to yourself (Remind them of the work they did in Unit 2: Self-Awareness identifying who they are, what is important to them, etc.) Discuss the following examples addressing how their values would impact their decision.
 - You and a friend find a bracelet behind the school. It is beautiful and you would love to keep it. Your friend is telling you to keep it - no one will know you found it. You could either keep it or give it to an adult at school and let them know where you found it.
 - Several of your friends seem to be jealous of the new student at school, and the truth is, you are a bit jealous as well. Your group of friends has been talking about ways to get him in trouble with the teacher. You could join in the plans, or stand up for the new student and tell your friends it's not a good idea.
 - Remember to consider the long term effects and the impact on others.
 - Cross off the options where negatives outweigh the positives
 - If you can't pick one, go back to brainstorming; maybe ask friends or adults for ideas.
 - **Decide on the best idea and do it.** Plan exactly how it will work, what you will do, when, etc.
 - **How did it work?** Give it time to work. If you choose an action and it didn't solve the problem, try another solution or seek help.
 - Take time to consider what brought the problem on and if a similar problem could be avoided in the future.
6. Using Annexure 2, lead the group through the problem solving process using the following scenario(s) as an example (or create your own scenarios). Walk them through each step and make sure they understand the process.
- A boy/girl in your home has been teasing you about how short you are and embarrasses you in front of your friends.
 - Keher always wants to sit next to you at lunch, but then he just won't stop talking, asking questions, and acting silly, and it really bothers you.
 - Your good friend wants you to do their science homework for them because you are so much better at science than they are. You don't feel comfortable with this, but they keep asking. (Trainer: this is a good example of peer pressure and will lead into the next part.)

Part 3: Peer Pressure

Time:

45 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will recognize the influence of positive and negative peer pressure, and will learn ways to stand up to negative pressure.

Materials:

- Marker Board/Chart Paper and Markers
- Balloon and Empty water bottle
- Annexure 3: Peer Pressure
- Annexure 4: Role Play Scenarios (cut into squares)
- Annexure 5: Notes for Reference
- Annexure 6: Evaluation

Techniques:

- Group Discussion
- Role Play

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask the group "What is peer pressure? " Answer should be along the lines of "when friends try to influence how you think or act." People naturally want to be like their friends and fit in, but sometimes we allow our friends to have too much influence over our decisions.

2. Write POSITIVE and NEGATIVE on the marker board or chart paper. Ask the group to define Positive and Negative Peer Pressure (see bullets below) and to list ways peers can influence them positively and negatively.
 - Positive peer pressure is when friends influence you to do good things such as getting involved in activities, trying new things, or helping you reach your goals. They give you that extra push or boost of confidence, or they can be good role models.
 - Negative peer pressure is when your friends persuade you to do something maybe you don't really want to do or it is not in your best interest. It can get you in trouble. Sometimes it's subtle, defining how you should dress, behave, your attitudes, etc. Sometimes they pressure you to behave in a way that makes you uncomfortable.
3. Demonstrate the following lesson on negative peer pressure:
 - Beforehand, blow up the balloon and draw a face on it with a Sharpie marker. After the ink dries, deflate the balloon. Now, insert the balloon into the empty water bottle and pull the opening of the balloon over the mouth of the bottle. The balloon should be hanging inside the bottle.
 - Choose someone to help you with the demonstration—someone who says they can blow up a balloon. Give them the bottle and tell them to blow hard into the balloon so that it will inflate. No matter how hard they blow, the balloon will not inflate inside the bottle. This gives us a picture of what it's like to be influenced by negative peer pressure. Peers are the people around us ... friends and family. And, pressure is when we feel forced to be and act a certain way. Let's say the balloon represents a person and the bottle is peer pressure. No matter how hard he tries, when he allows himself to be surrounded by negative peer pressure—people trying to influence him to act in a certain way—he's not able to grow.
 - Now, remove the balloon from the bottle and let your assistant blow it up. The face on the balloon will appear. When this person freed himself from peer pressure, when he decided it wasn't important to please others who wanted to force him to live and believe a certain way—he was free to grow and thrive

(*Taken from <http://www.churchleaders.com/children/childrens-ministry-how-tos/159792-object-lesson-peer-pressure-in-a-bottle.html>)
4. You may keep the group together, or break into smaller groups for this exercise. Using Annexure 3, ask the children to identify which statements show positive vs. negative peer pressure. If using small groups, bring all together to discuss their responses.
5. Invite them to share examples of pressure they have received from their friends.

6. Discuss these key points in standing up to peer pressure: (Trainer: You may want to write these points on the board, but participants will receive a handout at the end of the session with this information so they do not need to copy it.)
 - Learn to recognize it (verbal and non-verbal)- identify the negative behavior
 - Listen to your gut. If you feel uncomfortable, it means it's not right for you. Know your values. Stop and Think. Ask yourself could this be trouble? Will someone be angry with me? Will I be safe? Evaluate the consequences.
 - Plan for possible pressure situations. Decide ahead of time what you will say/do.
 - Choose good friends who feel the same way you do and share the same values.
 - Learn to say "NO", Practice different ways to say no. Speak firmly and make it clear your mind is made up and you don't want to talk about it anymore.
7. With the group, brainstorm different ways they can say NO to peer pressure (see ideas below) and write on the marker board/chart paper. Add the following points if necessary.
 - Just say "No" and keep on saying it
 - Suggest an alternative, have a better idea
 - Leave the situation
 - Make an excuse "Can't stop now...got to go"
 - Laugh, "You've got to be joking!" Then change the subject or leave.
 - Say, "I'm not doing this because I'm your friend and I don't want to see you get into trouble."
 - Get help from someone you trust.
 - Facilitate a role play activity. Depending on the group, you may want to play one of the roles and have the rest of the group play the other, or you may have two volunteers play the roles while you and the group offer feedback, or divide the group into smaller groups to role play. Distribute peer pressure situations from Annexure 4 and instruct participants to come up with a way to say NO. If they have been in small groups, invite each group to present their role play and allow time for discussion after each.
8. Distribute Annexure 5 and ask the children to keep the handout in their folders for reference.
9. Distribute Annexure 6 and invite the group to complete the evaluation form regarding this Unit.

- Explain that they are to give a score from 1-5 (5 being the highest) for each part of the Unit, as well as a score for the Unit overall.
- Then they should write comments under the happy face for items they liked/learned, and under the sad face for items they didn't like or are confused about.
- Briefly recap what was covered in each part so their memory is fresh when evaluating.
- Instruct them to be as specific as possible in their comments.

10. Gather the completed evaluations and include the responses in your trainer report.

Part 4: Follow-Up Activities

Time:

Depends on Activity

Objective:

Participants will practice material learned through activities they will complete throughout the upcoming weeks.

Materials:

Option One:

- Blank Paper, Crayons, Markers

Option Two:

- Annexure 7: Team Answer Sheet (one for each team)
- Annexure 8: Questions for Game (one copy for trainer)

Option Three:

- Video: Pixar “One Man Band” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=454nNoD6-TI>

Option Four:

- Colored paper, markers, crayons, art supplies
- Annexure 2 for reference

Option Five:

- Annexure 2

Techniques:

- Applying learning to daily life

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Choose one of the options below to be completed before or during the first follow up session. Additional activities will be assigned in the following weeks.

Option One: Peer Pressure - Instruct participants to write a short story and/or draw pictures about someone who did the right thing when friends wanted him/her to do the opposite. When everyone is finished, invite each to share their story with the group.

Sample Discussion Questions for the Trainer: What situation did you write/draw about? How did the people in the story try to pressure the main character? How did the person in the story stand up to the pressure?

Option Two: Team Game – Make this fun – tell the group that they will be taking part in a group competition. Distribute Annexure 7 and divide the group into teams of 3-4. Tell them that you will be reading questions (Annexure 8) and the teams need to discuss the correct answer among themselves, then write the correct response on the handout. At the end of the game, read the correct answers and have the teams score their sheets; teams get a point for correct answers. Review the information covered and discuss any confusion about answers. (Trainer: You may decide how you want to handle the gathering of team scores and possible prizes.)

Option Three: One Man Band – Before playing the video “One Man Band” (link under the Materials section), explain to the children that they should be watching for problems that the characters face and possible solutions they try. Then play the video through completely so the group can see the whole story. After viewing it, facilitate discussion around problems faced by the girl and the musicians, the solutions they attempt, and the final result. You may want to use the worksheet in Annexure 2 to get the group thinking about problem solving in steps. Feel free to replay the video, stopping at key points.

Option Four: Problem Solving Poster - Invite the children to use their creativity to design a poster that identifies the steps in problem solving and decision making. (Refer to Annexure 2 for the steps.) They may want to include themes, arrows, different colored squares, pictures, etc. to diagram the steps. Review the steps as they are creating the posters. The children may work in small groups or individually. Allow time for them to show their poster to the group. If you wish to take it a step further, follow the steps on a few posters to solve fictional or real issues.

Option Five: Applying Problem Solving Steps to Personal Situations - In the follow up session, invite each child to use Annexure 2 to help them sort out an issue they are currently facing. Allow them to keep the issue confidential if they wish; just help them through the process of identifying the problem and looking at the pros and cons of several possible solutions. Discuss what resources they have to help them with their issues, and who they could go to if they want to talk about personal concerns.

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Unit Six Annexures

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Ages 9-12

ANNEXURE 1: Pass the Question

ANNEXURE 2: Problem Solving and Decision Making

ANNEXURE 3: Peer Pressure

ANNEXURE 4: Role Play Scenarios

ANNEXURE 5: Notes for Reference

ANNEXURE 6: Evaluation

ANNEXURE 7: Team Answer Sheet

ANNEXURE 8: Game Questions

Annexure 1: Pass the Question

<p>If you could go anywhere today, where would you go and why?</p>	<p>Who do you look up to most and why?</p>	<p>What is your favorite subject in school?</p>
<p>What do you want to do when you grow up?</p>	<p>Where is your favorite place to be and why?</p>	<p>What sport do you enjoy doing the most?</p>
<p>What is one word to describe you?</p>	<p>Who is your hero among famous athletes, singers, actors, etc.?</p>	<p>What animal would you be if you could be one, and why?</p>
<p>What is your favorite month of the year and why?</p>	<p>What color best describes your personality and why?</p>	<p>What is your favorite ice cream flavor?</p>

Annexure 2: Problem Solving and Decision Making

This is the problem _____

Brainstorm Solutions

Do I have all of the information?

What do I already know? _____
What do I need to know? _____

What might happen if...

Solution: **-Positives-** **-Negatives-**
Need at least three

Decide on the best idea and do it

How, what, when? _____

Did it work?

Problem: _____

Possible Solutions	Pros	Cons

My Solution _____

Did it Work?

Yes – Great!

No – Choose another solution, or

Who can you ask for help?

Annexure 3: Peer Pressure

Decide if the following statements show positive or negative peer pressure. Write your response on the line.

_____ “You should join the singing club with me. You have such a pretty voice – they would love to have you.”

_____ “Come on, you don’t need to work on that homework right now...let’s play football.”

_____ “Have you finished your reading assignment yet? You know it needs to be done by tomorrow...I finished already so I can help you.”

_____ “Let’s try this new hair style on you - it would look great!”

_____ “Hey, she’s not looking...quick, grab a biscuit from that plate.”

_____ “You don’t really like that song, do you? It’s so bad.”

_____ “Will you come over and introduce yourself to the new student with me? The others just keep pointing at her and laughing.”

_____ “Don’t be so afraid – we won’t get caught.”

Annexure 4: Role Play Scenarios

<p>“Come on, you don’t need to work on that homework right now...let’s play football.”</p>	<p>“Hey, she’s not looking...quick, grab a biscuit from that plate.”</p>
<p>”Don’t be so afraid to share your answers – we won’t get caught.”</p>	<p>“I don’t like that new girl, do you? Let’s find a way to get her in trouble.”</p>
<p>“Let’s get Priya to eat our vegetables for us. I know house mother told us to eat them but they taste really bad, right?”</p>	<p>“Are you still brushing your teeth every morning? Why do you waste your time on that? Nobody cares about that.”</p>

Annexure 5: Notes for Reference

Steps in Problem Solving and Decision Making

- ❖ **Describe the problem.** The more specific you can be in defining the problem, the better chance you have of coming to a solution that works.
- ❖ **Brainstorm solutions.** List at least 3 possible solutions; don't stop at the first thing that comes to mind. Don't rule out anything at this time.
- ❖ **What might happen if?** Weigh the positives and negatives of each solution. Remember to consider the long term effects and the impact on others.
- ❖ **Decide on the best idea and do it.** Plan exactly how it will work, how you will do it, when, etc.
- ❖ **How did it work?** Give it time to work. If you choose an action and it didn't solve the problem, try another solution or seek help.



Peer Pressure

Positive peer pressure is when friends influence you to do good things

Negative peer pressure is when your friends persuade you to do something maybe you don't really want to do or it is not in your best interest

- Learn to recognize it (verbal and non-verbal)- identify the negative behavior
- Listen to your gut. If you feel uncomfortable, it means it's not right for you. Know your values. Stop and Think. Ask yourself could this be trouble? Will someone be angry with me? Will I be safe? Evaluate the consequences.
- Plan for possible pressure situations. Decide ahead of time what you will say/do.
- Choose good friends who feel the same way you do and share the same values.
- Learn to say "NO." Practice different ways to say no. Speak firmly and make it clear your mind is made up and you don't want to talk about it anymore.
 - Just say "No" and keep on saying it
 - Suggest an alternative, have a better idea
 - Leave the situation
 - Make an excuse "Can't stop now...got to go"
 - Laugh, "You've got to be joking!" Then change the subject or leave.
 - Say, "I'm not doing this because I'm your friend and I don't want to see you get into trouble."
 - Get help from someone you trust.

Annexure 6: Evaluation

Unit # 6 Problem Solving and Decision Making	Score (Circle a number, 5 is the Best)	 What I Liked/Learned	 What I Didn't Like or Things I'm Confused About
Part 1 Icebreaker	1 2 3 4 5	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Part 2 Problem Solving/Decision Making Steps	1 2 3 4 5	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Part 3 Peer Pressure	1 2 3 4 5	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Overall Score		1 2 3 4 5	

Annexure 7: Team Answer Sheet

Team _____

Score (Number of Correct Answers) _____

1. Circle one: True False

2. _____

3. Circle one: True False

4. Circle one: True False

5. _____

6. _____

7. Circle one: Positive Negative

8. Circle one: Positive Negative

9. Circle one: True False

10. Circle one: True False

Bonus Question: Yes No

Annexure 8: Game Questions and Answers

1. Children usually only have to make decisions around once a month.
(False)
2. What is the first step in problem solving? (Describe the problem)
3. You should brainstorm at least 3 possible solutions to a problem.
(True)
4. When looking at positives and negatives of possible solutions, it is important that you consider your values – what is important to you.
(True)
5. What should you do if your solutions doesn't solve the problem?
(Brainstorm again, choose another solution, ask an adult for help)
6. What is peer pressure? (When friends try to influence how you think or act.)
7. “You should join the singing club with me. You have such a pretty voice – they would love to have you” is an example of **positive** or **negative** peer pressure?
8. “Have you finished your reading assignment yet? You know it needs to be done by tomorrow...I finished already so I can help you” is an example of **positive** or **negative** peer pressure?
9. Peer pressure is only verbal, not non-verbal. (False)
10. It is a good idea to plan ahead what you will say or do if you are entering a possible negative pressure situation. (True)

BONUS QUESTION: Did the pig in the video finally get the cookies?