



**Making Decisions (🌈 A Cognitive Health Story)  
(5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 10-11 yrs.)  
Physical Activity: Risky Business**



**STORY CONNECTION – SLIDE 8 (Approx time: 25-30 min)**

You need to help your brain make good decisions because this is a time when your brain may want you to engage in risky behaviors. Now, you may be asking yourself what are risky behaviors? Risky behaviors are behaviors that you do that have the potential to have something bad or negative happen. You are essentially gambling that you can do something – but you do not know whether the outcome will be good or bad. Usually, the bad outcome will cause someone harm or to get in trouble.

**Materials needed:**

- Paper
- Pencils
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Construction Paper
- Tape
- Risky Behaviors Examples and Scenarios (included below)
- Consequences quotes (included below)

**Preparation needed:**

- Write “Yes,” “No,” and “Unsure” on three different pieces of construction paper and hang them in three different parts of the room.
- Print out Risky Behaviors Examples and Scenarios (1 copy)
- Copy the quotes on chart paper or whiteboard.

**Instructions:**

1. In this activity, student(s) will define risky behaviors, engage in a physical activity where they decide if they think a behavior is risky or not, and reflect on the consequences that can accompany risky behaviors.

**Part I: Brainstorming**

2. To begin the activity, pass out paper and pencils and have student(s) write down anything that comes to mind when they hear the words “risky behaviors.” Give them 2-3 minutes to jot down their ideas.
3. As a group discuss the ideas they had and write them on chart paper or the whiteboard. When leading the discussion, make sure to cover the following points:
  - Every day we are faced with some risks. Ask student(s) to share some of these risks. They might say getting in a car accident, getting struck by lightning or being caught in severe weather, having

an account hacked, carbon monoxide poisoning, breathing polluted air, catching an illness from someone, getting a sports injury, etc.

- Risky behaviors are different. These are actions that can harm themselves or others and they are usually controllable. While the risks mentioned above are not in their control, most risky behaviors can be controlled, and the risky behaviors can be prevented.
  - When they understand the potential danger or risk involved in a decision they make, hopefully they can make a better decision.
4. Next, have student(s) write down anything that comes to mind when they hear the word “consequences.” Give them 2-3 minutes to jot down their ideas.
  5. As a group discuss the ideas they had and write them on chart paper or the whiteboard. When leading the discussion, make sure to cover the following points:
    - A consequence is a result or effect of an action or condition. Synonyms include outcome, ramification, and repercussion to name a few.
    - Point out that consequences can be long term or short term. For example, a short-term consequence of smoking might be bad breath, yellow teeth, and smelling like an ashtray. A long-term consequence of smoking might be emphysema, COPD, or cancer.
    - Ask these questions:
      - Can you choose your behaviors? Why or why not?
      - Can you choose your consequences? Why or why not?
      - Are all consequences negative or bad? Why or why not?

### Part II: Physical Activity

6. Explain to student(s), now that they are thinking about risky behaviors and consequences, they will participate in a physical activity. They will hear an example or a scenario being read aloud, they must think about the question that was asked, and determine what they believe to be the best answer, “Yes,” “No,” or “Unsure.”  
*\*\*Note: If you feel your student(s) need an example, feel free to create your own or walk them through the first scenario together.\*\**
7. Point out the “Yes,” “No,” and “Unsure” construction paper signs hanging in three different parts of the room.
8. Using the Risky Behaviors Examples and Scenarios, the facilitator will read an example or a scenario. Based on their answer to the question, they will move to yes, no, or unsure.
9. Ask student(s) if they have any questions or need any clarification. Clear up any misunderstandings.
10. After all student(s) have moved to their answer, follow this procedure for each scenario:
  - a. Ask someone to explain why they moved where they did. Why do they think that behavior is or is not risky?
  - b. Move to the center of the room/neutral zone.
  - c. Start again with the next scenario.
  - d. Complete till all scenarios have been discussed.

### Part III: Quote Reflection

11. Finally, have student(s) reflect on the activity by responding to a quote about consequences.
12. Post both quotes and do the following:
  - Have student(s) choose one of the quotes to copy at the top of their paper.
  - Tell them to explain what they think it means or what it means to them.
  - Explain if they agree or disagree with the quote.
  - Explain why they agree or disagree.
  - Share if time permits and if student(s) are comfortable doing so.
13. In closing, remind student(s) that as their brains are still developing, it is vital that they help their brains help them make good decisions. Risky behaviors often involve danger, trouble, and negative consequences. By thinking things through and weighing the positive and negative consequences of a behavior, they will be better equipped to avoid risky behavior. This will keep their brain happy, healthy, and SPECTacular!

# Risky Behaviors Examples and Scenarios

**Could all these behaviors cause harm to you - stealing, lying to a parent, smoking, and ignoring traffic signals?**

Yes. All of these are unhealthy and risky choices and may cause harm to you.

**Is it a good idea to go and speak to a bully by yourself?**

No. It is always best that you have an adult, a couple of friends, or peers with you, when you want to talk to someone about their negative behavior.

**Is having less worry and negative stress in your life one of the positive outcomes of avoiding certain types of Risky Behavior?**

Yes. Avoiding unhealthy risky behavior helps you with your relationships with others, your school studies, and the health of your body and mind.

**Your new friend wants you to steal some sunglasses from the store to prove you are not “chicken.” Is this an example of “peer pressure” and risky behavior?**

Yes. Anytime other people ask you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable stop and think about your actions. Decide if they are healthy or unhealthy risks that you are taking. Also think about the consequences attached to the behavior.

**When you go to a new friend’s house is it important to give your parents the phone number and address?**

Yes. This way your parents can help ensure you are safe, and they will be able to easily reach you to help you get home if necessary. It is even better if the friend’s parents can meet your parents first before hanging out at the friends' house.

**If you decide to skip school, there are many possible negative consequences to your actions. Would skipping school be considered risky behavior?**

Yes. You may feel that in the short term you have taken an acceptable risk, however missing school could lead to you missing important chances to learn, failing important tests, and it could also get you into a lot of trouble with school and your parents.

# Risky Behaviors Examples and Scenarios

**You really want a new video game, but you just do not have quite enough money. You see your mom's purse sitting on the chair and she is busy cooking dinner. You just need \$20, and you will pay her back when you get your birthday money. She will not even know it is gone. Is this risky behavior even though it involves your mom?**

Yes. Stealing is stealing regardless of who you are taking something from. This might also cause her to lose trust in you and that is hard to build back. The consequences are not worth the videogame.

**You really want to be in the school play, but you are shy and have never done anything like that before. After talking to your best friend and your parents, you decide to try out and get a part! Is this risky behavior?**

Yes! Taking risks does not always have to have negative consequences. The important thing is to think things through and weigh the positives and negatives. Trying new things that are healthy that make you happy are good for you!

Quote #1

“We are free to choose our paths, but we can't choose the consequences that come with them.”

Sean Covey *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*

Quote #2

“You have freedom of choice, not freedom of consequence.”

Nick Saban, Alabama Head Coach

Activity Ideas Credit:

<https://www.cusd80.com/cms/lib6/AZ01001175/Centricity/Domain/2183/Lesson%205%20Health%20Risks%20and%20Your%20Behaviors.ppt>