

Decision-making - 5 steps to make the right choices for you

Making decisions – especially big decisions – can be hard.

It can be even tougher if there are real risks and consequences involved. Not every decision you make will be a good one, and a 'bad' decision is really just a learning point in your life. Even so, knowing the best way to go about making a decision is a big step in the right direction – after all, if your decision doesn't work out as planned, you at least know you really thought about what you were doing.

1. Get informed

Before you make any decision you need to know the facts. There are plenty of ways to seek out information: online, speaking with people you trust or you feel know a fair bit about the topic, the library, helplines.

2. Weigh up your options

With any decision you will have a few options to choose from. Think about each of your options and weigh up the pros and cons related to selecting each one. Are there risks? Are they worth it?

3. Consider your values

Everyone has different values and there aren't necessarily right or wrong values, they're just what make you 'you'. When making a big decision it often helps to assess whether your choice sits well with your core values, and if it doesn't, maybe you need to rethink why you're leaning towards that decision.

4. Give yourself time

If the decision isn't urgent, sit on it, think about it and see how you feel about it. Sometimes sleeping on a big decision can make things a lot more clear – and sometimes if you can't sleep with the decision you plan to make, it may be the wrong one for you.

5. Create a plan of attack and take action

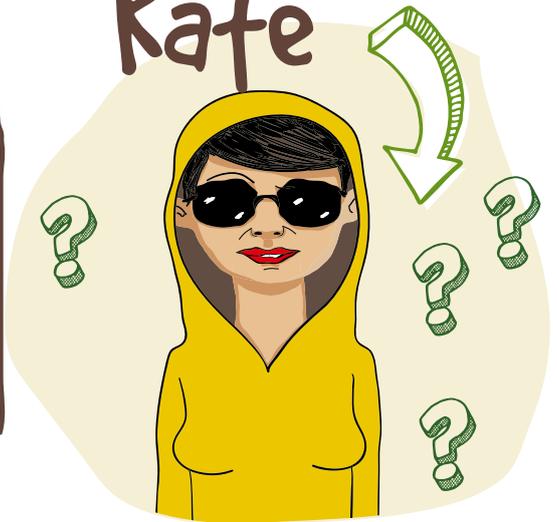
This one is easy – think about what you need to do, and do it. Keep in mind your decision may affect other people, so you should consider how to keep effects on others to a minimum.

Evaluate

Think about whether you made the right decision or not. If not, can you learn from this for next time?

Decision-making in action

Kate



Here's an example of how the decision-making process might work.

It seems like Kate's friends have all tried weed and are using a bit more regularly lately. They all keep saying she should give it a go. She doesn't know much about it, but they seem to like it and she's tempted. Here's how she makes her decision:

1. Get informed

Kate wants to find out more about weed and what it does. She decides to look online for some answers and checks out some of NCPIC's Marijuana Facts so she knows what she's getting into.



2. Weigh up your options

Kate reads some of NCPIC's factsheets on both the long-term and short-term effects of weed. She thinks the possibility of weed affecting her mental health is a negative as her uncle has schizophrenia, and also definitely a negative is the chance she might green out and embarrass herself. On the other hand, Kate's really curious to try weed and she doesn't want to feel left out or boring. Kate needs to decide whether the risks outweigh the benefits.

3. Consider your values

One of Kate's key values is really looking after her body and health. She thinks using weed might not fit with this value as it can have some negative effects on your health.



4. Give yourself time

Kate's supposed to go to a party tomorrow night but she knows there will be weed there and she'll probably be offered some. Although she wants to go to the party, Kate doesn't feel like she's ready to decide whether she's going to try weed. Instead, she thinks she might skip the party to give herself more time to make the decision without the pressure of her friends.



5. Create a plan of attack and take action



Kate has decided not to try weed as she thinks the risks outweigh the benefits, and it just doesn't quite feel right for her. But she's worried that her friends that smoke weed might get annoyed with her. She decides next time she's offered weed by a friend she's going to tell them it's just not her thing and she's trying to stay healthy as she's in a swimming squad – they're good mates, so they'll understand.

Evaluate

Kate goes to a few parties with her friends and gets pressured to try weed and thinks she might regret the decision. After a while though, one of her friends becomes really distant and doesn't really socialise anymore – some people say it's because she got really into weed. Kate can see weed might have affected her friend's health and thinks her decision was the right one for her.