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TRUANCY AWARENESS & COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE EDUCATION COURSE WORKBOOK:

Evidence of My Commitment to Truancy Prevention and Effective Decision Making

NAME: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Check all of the circles indicating your understanding of the material: ✓

HOW TO TAKE THIS CLASS

- **Fill in your name and print out the proof of enrollment on the next slide**
- **Print out the workbook** or save it to your desktop
- Go through the Power point presentation for each section and complete the assignments in the workbook.
- **Answer the final exam questions** after the sections.
- When you are finished with the last section of this course **you will receive:**
 - a **personalized Certificate of Completion**
 - a **report of your accomplishment detailing the time it took you to complete the slides and the quiz and the total hours of the course** (automatically generated)
 - and a copy of each sent to your email.

IMPORTANT!!!

- ***THE JUDGE AND COURT OFFICIALS WILL WANT PROOF OF YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS COURSE.***
- ***Print out the work book and complete the assessments and exercises to show the Judge/Court Officials/School Officials***

THE TRUANCY AWARENESS & COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE EDUCATION COURSE WORKBOOK

- The **Truancy Awareness & Compulsory Attendance Education Course Workbook** is evidence of your commitment to staying in school for a brighter future.
- This workbook contains all information from the course including the course material and all assessments and activities designed to help you apply the principles of this course into your life experience.
- This course will give you valuable insight into the ***dynamics of compulsory school attendance and truancy avoidance. This course details the strategy of the US***

government to keep kids in school and make the school districts responsible to help American Children have the opportunity to live the American dream.

- This course will teach you powerful techniques to recognize and change thought patterns—which control emotions—which catapult behaviors. This process will help put you in control of your own thoughts, emotions, and actions enhancing your decision-making abilities and giving you tools to free yourself from a cycle of dysfunction—while propelling you into a cycle of health and well-being.
- **NOTE: The workbook is part of this course and must be completed and taken to court as evidence of your commitment to Truancy Prevention and Effective Decision Making and Change for the Better.**

THE GOALS OF THIS COURSE:

- To educate you about the laws regarding truancy and how the US government has implemented a strategy to encourage school districts to take responsibility for the attendance of their students.
- To help you understand how education creates opportunities and advantages for YOUR future as well as the future of all American families.
- To give you educational assessments and activities to help you heal and modify your behavior with the intention of benefiting your future life experience and increase your health and well-being.
- To inform and educate you to help you accept the responsibility of your own behavior as well as the responsibility to create your own happiness.
- To emphasize your control over your own state of health and well-being through positive thoughts and how this effects emotional states.
- To teach you how your thoughts affects your decision-making abilities and how to change your thought process to create better things in your life that ENHANCE your wellbeing.
- To promote a peaceful family life that includes a focus on health and wellbeing for yourself, your partner, your family and/or extended family.
- ***You and only you possess the power that creates your life and directs your destiny.***
- ***Through proven techniques, learn to think positively to change the direction of your thoughts and emotions and make wise decisions that benefit your wellbeing, keep you on the right path, and help you gain complete control of your destiny.***

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

- 1) Print any letters needed: letter to the judge, letter to the probation officer, letter of class format
- 2) Print your PROOF OF ENROLLMENT
- 3) Print and complete your WORKBOOK
- 4) Take our free 1 hour VICTIMS IMPACT PANEL course or our free 1 hour BIP/DV VICTIMS IMPACT PANEL COURSE
- 5) Print out your CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION signed by our in-house health psychologist
- 6) Print out your course COMPLETION REPORT
- 7) Print out LETTER OF APOLOGY to guide you in preparing your own personal letter

- **IMPORTANT!!! THE JUDGE/COURT OFFICIALS/SCHOOL OFFICIALS WILL WANT TO SEE PROOF OF YOUR EFFORTS!!!**
- **IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU TAKE ALL THE TOOLS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COURSE WITH YOU TO AS PROOF OF YOUR EFFORTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT**

SECTION 1- INTRODUCTION TO TRUANCY AWARENESS & COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE EDUCATION

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

- **Compulsory attendance**
- **Good attendance is important for many reasons.** Your child receives the maximum benefit of education by being in school every day, and numerous studies show a strong link between academic performance and consistent attendance. Because attendance is so critical for the quality of your child's education, All States have a Compulsory Attendance Laws.
- **State law requires schoolchildren to attend school each day** that instruction is provided. **The law applies to children between the ages of 6 and 18.** If you voluntarily enroll your child in prekindergarten or kindergarten before age 6, school attendance laws apply to your child, too.
- **All States have Compulsory Attendance Laws—which means you have a legal obligation to go to school**

EXCEPTIONS TO COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

There are some exceptions:

- Children who are enrolled in a private or parochial school
- Children who are home-schooled
- Students who are 17 years old and enrolled in a GED (high school equivalency) program
- Students who are 17 years old and have received a high school diploma or GED certificate
- Most other American students of public schools must comply with the Compulsory Attendance Law.
- **All States have Compulsory Attendance Laws—which means you have a legal obligation to go to school**

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Although perfect attendance is the goal, it's not always possible. School districts are required to excuse a student's absence to:

- Observe a religious holy day
- Attend a required court appearance
- Serve as an election clerk
- Appear at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student's application for U.S. citizenship
- Take part in a U.S. naturalization oath ceremony
- Sound "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in Texas for a deceased veteran (grades 6-12 are eligible)
- Attend a healthcare appointment (student must return to school on the same day of appointment)
- Visit college campuses (juniors and seniors)
- **Perfect attendance is the goal—but you can miss school with an excused absence handwritten note.**

EACH SCHOOL HAS ITS OWN CRITERIA REGARDING EXCUSED ABSENCES

Your school has its own criteria for determining what else is considered an excused absence. Generally, an absence may qualify as excused in cases of:

- Personal illness
- Death of an immediate family member
- Medical treatment
- School-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activities
- Activity required by a probation office or Human Services caseworker
- Visiting a parent who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from a combat zone or combat support posting

IMPORTANT! THERE ARE PENALTIES FOR TOO MANY UNEXCUSED ABSENCES!

- **Both the child and parent are held responsible for unexcused absences.**
- Yes, even if your child is 16 years old and skips class without you knowing, the parent is considered responsible!
- After too many unexcused absences, the school must notify the parent. A compulsory attendance notification will be sent to the parent if a student has unexcused absences on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period or three days or parts of days without an excuse during a four-week period.
- Notice it says "parts of days". That means that leaving school early, or arriving after the first bell has rung, even if the child attended for some of the day, can count as an absence.
- **Parents can find themselves in trouble with the law if their child has too many unexcused absences!**

THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LETTER

- **The Compulsory Attendance Letter**

- This letter is sent to the parent to give the parent notice that the student has accumulated too many unexcused absences (and should not have any future absences) and gives the parent a chance to make corrections to the child's attendance record.
- If corrections are not made, a court warning will notify the parent of the potential to be filed on in a justice or municipal court (or refer the student to juvenile court).
- **Parents may be criminally charged, or fined, if their child has another unexcused absence or if their child has too many unexcused absences!**

THE 90% RULE

- **90 Percent Rule**
- In addition to the Compulsory Attendance Law, there is the 90 Percent Rule, which states that students must attend class for 90 percent of the time it is offered to receive credit for the class.
- If the student doesn't meet this requirement, an attendance hearing committee may grant the student credit, depending on the circumstances.
- The Student Handbook at your school explains what your school's guidelines are on absences, tardiness, and making up missed school work.
- **Becoming familiar with the school's policies will help parents and kids manage attendance and avoid missing too many days of school.**
- **The 90% Rule: Students must attend class for 90% of the time.**

WHY DOES THE STATE CARE IF I GO TO SCHOOL?

- The United States prides itself on the quality of life that American citizens enjoy.
- *“Educational success promotes workforce opportunity and development and builds a strong economic future for our country.”*
- The goal of the United States is that every child:
 - **be proficient or advanced in core subjects such as math, reading, history, social studies, government, etc.**
 - **be graduates from high school**
 - **achieve equitable outcomes regardless of background or condition (have a good quality of life)**
- **Americans believe that school attendance / graduation offers all American citizens the opportunity to live the American dream**

THE UNITED STATES WANTS ME TO GO TO SCHOOL?

- **The quality of life in America is better than most countries.**
- **The United States is committed to improving education by improving school attendance rates.**
- Law makers, government officials and education professional believe that in order for students to realize the opportunities and benefits from school, students have to **not only be in attendance**, but they must also be meaningfully connected to the school and experiencing success.

- To achieve this, there must be a collaborative effort across agencies, both at the state level and locally, to work with students and families to address the source issues that result in truant behavior.
- **There are many countries that do not care if their children go to school**

WHAT IS THE “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND” POLICY?

- The U.S. implemented a policy called: “**No Child Left Behind**” and made each State accountable for the education of their school age children and young adults.
- This policy places increased emphasis on student achievement and attendance and makes it more important than ever for states to improve efforts to reduce truancy in American schools.
- **That means that the law makers, government officials and education professionals believe that going to school will give YOU better opportunities for a better future.**
- *When Americans are graduating high school, working and having a good life, I know I’m doing a good job as President*

THE US TRUANCY INTERVENTION STRATEGY

- *The United States’ development of a truancy intervention strategy has been driven by recommendations made by the Task Force to facilitate a consistent statewide response to truancy and absenteeism and for the development of a continuum of prevention and intervention strategies that involve collaboration among schools, law enforcement agencies, social services providers, as well as faith-based and youth-serving agencies.*

WHAT IS AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY?

- **WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?**
- This means that the U.S. has implemented a task force to respond to truancy and absenteeism—and when YOU do not go to school—they have in place a prevention program to encourage you to go to school.
- This prevention program not only encourages YOU to go to school, but it encourages YOUR parents, school officials and social workers to take an active role in YOUR school attendance to make sure YOU go to school.
- **That just tells you how much they believe that going to school and graduating high school will help YOU have a better and brighter future.**

IF YOU WERE PRESIDENT OF THE US, HOW WOULD YOU MAKE KIDS GO TO SCHOOL?

- **American Truancy Intervention Strategy-** *The laws pertaining to pupil attendance and truancy offers recommendations to encourage the adoption of proven truancy reduction efforts and provides recommendations using national experience and best practices that have proven successful in reducing truancy.*

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

- **So, the intervention strategy started with the “no child left behind” initiative.**
- Government officials put pressure on each State to encourage the education of its population.
- The States then got together and came up with the best methods to help the school system keep YOU in school.
- And everyone believes that the compulsory attendance laws will help keep YOU in school.
- **All of this effort is made because Americans really like their way of life and they want all American citizens to have the same opportunities—even if they have to make laws to accomplish a better future for YOU**

THE US GOVERNMENT PUTS PRESSURE ON SCHOOL OFFICIALS

- *There should be a common understanding among school personnel that the initial responsibility to address truancy rests with teachers, principals and guidance counselors.*
- *School districts are advised to develop creative and innovative approaches to ensure that children are active participants in their education.*
- *Every effort should be made to keep youth in school and reduce the school district’s referrals to the courts, child welfare or juvenile justice systems in order to effectively intervene and eliminate truant behavior. Children are truant for many reasons and schools should seek to understand and address those issues.*

WHY DO SCHOOL OFFICIALS CARE SO MUCH IF ONE PERSON HAS TOO MANY ABSENCES?

- **School officials care so much if YOU do not go to school because the United States government is encouraging each school (including your school) to make every effort to make sure YOU attend school 90% of the time and graduate high school.**
- The U.S. government has placed most of the responsibility to address students having too many absences on teachers, principals and guidance counselors.
- The school’s job is to do their best to address truancy issues before they refer the issue to the legal system.
- So, it’s the school’s primary responsibility to find out why students are missing school and try to fix the problem so their students stay in school and graduate high school.

THE US GOVERNMENT MAKES THE SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE

- **AMERICAN TRUANCY INTERVENTION STRATEGY**
- *The school district is responsible for monitoring and maintaining records of the attendance of students. All absences should be treated as unlawful until the school district receives a written excuse explaining the reason(s) for an absence. Parents/guardians and students should submit the written explanation within three calendar days of the absence and should be informed that if they fail to provide a written excuse within three days of the absence, the absence would be permanently counted as unlawful. The United States*

Government recommends that schools immediately inform parents in writing upon each incident of unlawful absence.

THE BOTTOM LINE REGARDING ABSENCES

- School officials are asking students, parents and extended family for their support in helping schools meet the U.S. government's expectations regarding truancy.
- So, a lot of people are very interested in keeping YOU in school.
- The result of ALL OF THIS EFFORT is that having too many absences a really BIG deal.
- That is why everyone is so concerned that YOU have had too many absences and that is why you are taking this class.
- The next section of this course is going to be fun and hopefully help you make better decisions to increase your health and well-being (and okay, yes, encourage you to go to school too).

SECTION 2- WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

WHY IS DECISION MAKING SO IMPORTANT?

Your Life and Your Destiny Are Designed by You through Your **Thoughts, Emotions and Decisions**

- Every decision that you make points you in a certain direction in life.
- Bad decisions are circular, they keep getting you into trouble
- Start making good decisions and take control of the direction of your life.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

Critical thinking is when you apply criticism to a decision that you are trying to make.

- Practice criticizing your own decision; play devil's advocate
- Do I have all of the information, or am I missing something?
- Does my decision make sense? Are there any conflicts?
- What about alternative decisions?
- Is this decision best for me and those around me?

THE YOUNG BRAIN ON DECISIONS

- Most adults can look back on their young adult years and admit that they made some bad decisions when they were younger.
- So, why do teenagers occasionally behave irrationally, impulsive and even dangerously? And why is it that when confronted, teens often admit that they didn't even consider the consequences of their actions?
- Current research gives us some clues to this impulsive behavior.

- **Some studies now point to evidence that the brain is not fully developed until over 26 years of age!**

THE FRONTAL CORTEX AND DECISION MAKING

- A region of the brain known as the amygdala which controls instincts and emotions like fear, aggression, happiness and rage develops early on...
- However, the frontal cortex, which controls reasoning and decision making isn't fully developed until the late 20's.
- Interestingly, **when the brains of adolescents are scanned during decision making and critical thinking, they are mostly using the amygdala**, compared to most adults who are actively using the frontal cortex
- The frontal cortex—which controls reasoning and decision making—isn't fully developed until over age 26
- *The amygdala—which controls instincts and emotions like fear and aggression, happiness and anger—develops early on...*
- **Juveniles and Young adults use mostly the amygdala during decision making...**

THE AMYGDALA AND DECISION MAKING

Young people are FULLY CAPABLE of making good decisions. In fact, often they are MORE capable than some adults in making good decisions

- Excellent decision can be made by young people when they are based on “feel good emotions”
- However, bad decisions can be made when they are based on “feel bad emotions”
- Making decisions based on the way you feel is a highly effective method of good decision making **provided that you FEEL GOOD** about the decision you are making
- When young people (or adults for that matter) feel bad, their decision making naturally suffers

MOST DECISIONS ARE BASED ON FEELINGS

- These brain differences don't mean that young people can't make good decisions or tell the difference between right and wrong.
- It also doesn't mean that young people shouldn't be held responsible for their actions.
- It does mean that young people base most of their decisions on their feelings and emotions.
- Furthermore, feelings and emotions can be a highly effective method of good decision making.

WHY DO SOME ADULTS MAKE BAD DECISIONS?

- *All good decisions consider the well-being of self and others.*
- **Young people** who make bad decisions may get involved in crime, abuse drugs, get pregnant, drop out of school, or generally find themselves in trouble.
- However, **older adults also** make bad decisions as a result of not developing good decision making and critical thinking skills.
- *Brain development doesn't really have much to do with the ability to make good decisions.*

ANYONE CAN HAVE TROUBLE MAKING DECISIONS BECAUSE...

- *Brain development doesn't really have much to do with the ability to make good decisions.*
- However, **understanding how your brain functions when you make decisions can help you improve your decision-making skills.**
- So, understanding that young people are using their amygdala during the majority of their decision-making processes can help you realize that young people mostly make decisions based on their emotions or the way they feel...
- *When young people (and adults) feel good and consider the wellbeing of self and others, they make good decisions.*
- **Young people mostly make decisions based on the way they feel—and they CAN and DO make good decisions.**

GOOD DECISION MAKING IS A LEARNED SKILL!

- While emotions cannot be controlled (they just happen and you feel them). The way you act out your emotions—your behavior—can be controlled.
- **Behavior, including critical thinking and decision making, is a learned skill and behavior is a choice.**
- Young adults (and older adults!) have to consciously practice critical thinking and decision making skills to get good at it!
- **Critical thinking and decision making are learned skills.**
- **This means that older and younger adults can learn to be better decision makers!**

DECISION MAKING ABILITY ASSESSMENT

The decision assessment determines your ability or potential to make effective decisions.

Mark each statement as Y (yes) or N (no) and count the number of yes responses when completed		
Y or N		
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes I wonder why I made a certain decision in the past
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes I regret some of the decisions I have made in the past
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes I think about decisions I should have made instead
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	At times, I have changed my mind from a bad decision to a good decision
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	At times, I have changed my mind from a good decision to a bad decision which I later regretted.
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can clearly see some of the mistakes I have made in my decision making
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel like making good decision can be easy instead of hard
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have confidence in my ability to make good decisions—if I really wanted to
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can easily spot a bad decision when someone else is about to make it
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have given family and friends good decision making advise in the past
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have talked family or friends into making bad decisions in the past, which I later regretted.

12		Deep down inside I know that making better decisions can help me in my life
13		Deep down inside I feel that I need to improve my decision making

DECISION MAKING ABILITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS:

- A high score indicates a potential for excellence in decision making and critical thinking skills (7-13 points)
- A lower score indicates a need for critical thinking training to reach excellence in decision making (1-6 points)

RESEARCH IN EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

- The bottom line is that everyone makes decision mistakes once in a while. The key to having excellent decision making skills is recognizing those mistakes and using them as opportunities to learn and improve.
- People with a strong sense of their decision-making errors are more likely to improve and become better at critical thinking and decision making.
- Understanding that mistakes are OPPORTUNITIES for personal growth can build self-esteem and self-efficacy (self-empowerment).
- Developing decision making skills starts with viewing life as containing the opportunities for change necessary for personal growth and wellbeing.

FINAL EXAM REVIEW

- Your life and your destiny are designed by you through your decisions
- Critical thinking involves criticizing a decision you are about to make
- Young people make decisions using mostly their amygdala which is responsible for emotions
- Behavior, including critical thinking and decision making is a learned skill that anyone can learn
- The truth is that brain development doesn't have much to do with making good decisions

THOUGHTS, DECISION MAKING, DIRECTION AND DESTINY

- Your thoughts direct your decisions (hundreds of them every day) and determine your direction in life and ultimately decide your destiny.
- Good decisions that take into consideration your happiness as well as the happiness of those around you, keep your life in a direction that nurtures your health and well-being.
- **In other words, your life and your destiny are designed by YOU through YOUR thoughts and decisions.**
- Good decisions lead to a cycle of health and well-being.
- Start making good decisions and your life will take a similarly good direction, because...
- YOUR DECISIONS DECIDE YOUR DESTINY...

- **YOUR Decisions Determine YOUR Destiny: *Good decisions point you in a positive direction (toward a positive destiny)***

SECTION 3- UNDERSTANDING DECISION MAKING

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND DECISION MAKING

- The Locus of Control is a term that indicates whether people tend to;
 - See themselves as having the power to control the events in their lives (**internal locus**)
 - or*
 - They locate the power to control events in their lives outside of themselves (**external locus**) in other people and in other forces.
- Having an internal locus of control will empower you to make better decisions.

LOCUS OF CONTROL EXAMPLES

- *I control my life (internal locus of control)*
- *Other forces control my life (external locus of control)*
- **Where do you place the source of control in your life? Do you see yourself as having control, or do you believe that outside forces are in control?**

WHERE IS YOUR LOCUS OF CONTROL?

- **To answer this question, consider the locus of control of the following statements:**

Staying out of trouble is a matter of making good decisions; luck has little to do with it.

- **Internal or External Locus of Control?**

If you are lucky, you will stay out of trouble; if not then too bad.

- **Internal or External Locus of Control?**

If you keep a low profile and try to follow the rules, you'll stay out of trouble.

- **Internal or External Locus of Control?**

Getting into trouble is a matter of being in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

- **Internal or External Locus of Control?**

LOCUS OF CONTROL ASSESSMENT

Choose the statement you agree with circle the amount next to the statement (1 or 0) then add up each statement that you agree with that has 1 credit and keep a tally of it as you go along. Next, add up your tally.		
1	1	Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
	0	People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make
2	0	One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people are involved enough in politics
	1	There will always be wars, no matter how hard we try to prevent them.
3	0	In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
	1	Unfortunately, an individual's worth is often not recognized no matter how hard he tries.
4	0	The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
	1	Most students don't realize how much their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
5	1	Without the right breaks, you cannot be an effective leader.
	0	Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
6	1	No matter how hard you try, some people just don't like you.
	0	People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
7	1	I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
	0	I prefer to decide on a definite course of action rather than just trusting fate.
8	0	For a well-prepared student, there is rarely, if ever, such a thing as an unfair test.
	1	Many times, exam questions are so unrelated to the course work that studying is useless.
9	0	Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
	1	Getting a good job depends mainly on being at the right place at the right time.
10	0	The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
	1	The world is run by a few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
11	0	When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work
	1	It doesn't always help to plan ahead, because many things are just a matter of luck
12	0	In my case, getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck
	1	Many times, it's just as well to decide what to do by flipping a coin.
13	0	What happens to me is my own doing.
	1	Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
=		= TOTAL POINTS EARNED _____

LOCUS OF CONTROL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- **RESULTS:** Scores range from 0 - 13. A high score indicates an external locus of control (7-13 points) A low score indicates an internal locus of control (1-6 points)

LOCUS OF CONTROL RESEARCH

- Good decision making and control have a definite connection. You are more likely to make bad decisions when you feel you have no control over your situation.
- People with a high EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL have a greater tendency to feel they are not in control and will therefore be more likely to make bad decisions, and more likely to have others controlling their destiny.
- People with a high INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL are happier, healthier, and more successful in life.
- People with a mostly external locus of control are less happy, more anxious, less healthy, and less successful in life
- IT IS VERY DESIRABLE TO HAVE AN INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL!

CONTROL YOUR OWN DESTINY

- If you do not exercise control and make good decisions to direct your destiny, someone else will do it for you!
- Good decisions empower you and put you in control of your own destiny.

MINDFULNESS AND DECISION MAKING

- We make bad decisions that cause us problems when we fail to practice mindfulness.
- What is Mindfulness?
- Mindfulness simply means “thinking things through” when we are faced with any decision.
- Sound simple, right? Think of the hundreds and thousands of decisions you make every day. How often do you think every decision through and consider all possible consequences?
- Think of mindfulness when going through a maze. How much harder would it be if you did not think it through?
- **Being MINDFUL can improve your critical thinking and decision making skills and keep you out of trouble.**

MINDFULNESS VERSUS UN-MINDFULNESS

- Practicing mindfulness takes a proactive effort.
- Think about it. How often have you done something and then thought, “I shouldn’t have done that,” or even, “why did I do that?”
- We make hundreds of decisions each day, and it takes effort to be mindful of each and every decision.
- The first step is recognizing your when you practice mindfulness versus when you don’t.
- Think of a time you made a good decision. Did you think about it before you made it? Or, are you now thinking about how lucky you were that it was a good decision?

- Remember the last time you made a GOOD decision? Did you think about it before you made it or was it luck?
- What about the last BAD decision you made? Did you think about it, or did you just do it?

3 UN-MINDFUL DECISION MAKING PRACTICES

- **Unconscious Decision Making** happens when we make decisions without even realizing that we are making decisions.
- **Impulsivity** is when we make split second decisions without considering the consequences
- **“It won’t happen to me” Syndrome** occurs when young adults feel invincible—leading them to make risky, irresponsible, on the spot decisions.
- Think of occasions in which you made un-mindful decisions...

3 un-mindful decision making practices:

- making decisions without thinking about it;
- making significant split second decisions;
- making risky, on the spot decisions because “it won’t happen to me”

HOW MINDFUL ARE YOUR DECISION MAKING SKILLS?

This activity helps you build awareness of your mindfulness during decision making. While answering the questions, think about how you can enhance your decision-making skills.					
Rate each statement:	Good	Very Good	OK	Needs work	Not so good
1. My ability to think through my decisions is...					
2. My ability to explain myself and be understood is...					
3. My ability to make good decisions is...					
4. My ability to resolve conflicts at work, school and home is...					
5. My ability to detect my emotional state is...					
6. My ability to detect a bad decision is...					
7. My ability to manage bad decisions under peer pressure is...					
8. My ability to recognize a good decision is...					
9. My ability to think through consequences of a decision is...					
10. My ability to put highly charged decisions on hold is...					

THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS AND DECISIONS

- Thoughts, emotions and decisions have an interesting relationship when it comes to critical thinking and effective decision making.
- THOUGHTS=EMOTIONS=DECISIONS
- Your thoughts set the mood. They are the foundation of your emotions, your behavior and your decisions.
- It is a simple truth. If your thoughts are mostly positive, you are more likely to have positive emotions most of the time and your decisions will be more likely to reflect those positive emotions.
- Now think about this: What if your thoughts are mostly negative?
- **If your thoughts are mostly negative, then your emotions will be mostly negative and your decisions will reflect negativity.**

7 COMMON UNHEALTHY THINKING PATTERNS TO AVOID

- **All-or-None Thinking-** Looking at a situation as either black or white; thinking that there are only two possible outcomes to a situation. Example: "If I am not a complete success in life, then I am a total failure. "
- **Catastrophizing-** Expecting the worse to happen without considering other alternative outcomes that are more likely to happen. Example: "I know that I will be so anxious that I will bomb this test and fail the course. "
- **Labeling-** Defining yourself or others in a rigid way that doesn't allow for more favorable evaluations. Example: "I am a total loser. Everyone is against me"
- **Discounting the Positive-** Looking past and ignoring positive experiences; viewing positive experiences or outcomes as simply being due to chance. Example: "I a break out of luck, not because anyone wants to give me a chance."
- **Mind Reading-** Thinking that you know what others are thinking. Example: "I just know that my therapist thinks I am a waste of his time. "
- **Internalization-** Evaluating other people's behavior as being the result of something you did. Example: "She didn't say hi to me because I must have done something to upset her. "
- **Emotional Reasoning-** Believing something is true because it feels that way. Example: "I must have failed that test because I feel so bad about my performance."

7 HEALTHY THINKING PATTERNS TO ADOPT

- **Be realistic in your thinking.** Instead of "I always mess things up" THINK: "I didn't get it right this time".
- **Avoid words that are absolutes** – Always, Never, Should, Must ("I always mess things up" or "I must be perfect all the time")
- **React to what is real not imagined.** React to the situation at hand, not the worst situation that you can imagine.

- **Don't guess or mind read** what others are thinking or feeling about you—when in doubt, ask. Check it out.
- **Consider the whole.** Instead of focusing on a single negative detail about yourself or others try to balance your view with the positive. “My circumstances have been better in the past”
- **Just because you feel something, doesn't make it true.** If you feel stupid or guilty, it isn't necessarily true. Feelings and thoughts can be wrong.
- **7. Own responsibility for your own happiness** and let others own responsibility for their own happiness. Treat others with respect and care but avoid assuming responsibility for anyone else's happiness. Also, ensure that YOU are treated with respect and care and do not make someone else responsibility for your happiness.
- **If you are in a situation or circumstance that is causing you stress or distress, LEAVE IMMEDIATELY and PERMANENTLY.**

THOUGHTS ARE SIMPLE AND COMPLEX

- Some might think: “Oh, so change my thoughts to positive and my life will be better? Sound too simple to be true.”
- Well, changing thoughts from negative to positive can be painfully hard or blissfully simple—but the process is complex for sure!
- In fact, changing thoughts to positive is so simple a child can easily do it easily and it can be so difficult that an educated professional adult may find it impossible.
- The key is persistence. Keep practicing positive thinking and it will soon become the dominant force in your mind.
- The fact of the matter is that positive thoughts will lead to an increased sense of well-being and a happier life.

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

- For some, getting control over their thoughts and emotions may seem like an impossible task.
- However, YOU have more power and control over your thoughts and emotions than you think.
- Your internal dialogue (your inner voice) has a powerful effect on your ability to control your emotions and your behavior.
- Practice maintaining a positive inner dialogue. When a negative thought comes in simply say, “NEXT” and move on to a positive thought.
- Tell yourself, “I have made good decisions before, and I can do it again! I can and will control my behavior.”
- It may feel silly at first, but this is an extremely powerful technique.

QUESTION YOUR THINKING

- Ask yourself the following questions about your thoughts:

- *What evidence do I have for this thought? What evidence do I have against this thought?*
- *Are there times when this thought hasn't been true?*
- *Do I have this kind of thought when I am feeling OK as opposed to feeling sad, angry, or anxious?*
- *What would I tell someone else who was having this kind of thought?*
- *Is it possible that I am having this thought just out of habit? What might be an alternative explanation?*
- Asking yourself these types of questions can help break the habit of unhealthy thinking improving your mood.
- If you have an unhealthy thought, simply view the thought as just a thought and nothing else. It is just a habit and not an indication of truth.
-

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT NEGATIVE THOUGHTS?

3 BASIC TRUTHS TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE THINKING

- **BELIEVE your life is exactly as it should be-** From the time you were born, you began growing and learning. You grow and learn from all experiences in your life starting from birth until now. Therefore, your life is perfect as it is in order for YOU to grow and learn. I know this may be a hard pill to swallow, but it is true.
- **PRACTICE Non-Judgment-** When we judge things as good, bad, right or wrong, we exert a lot of energy and create a lot of stress. Imagine for a moment that you stopped judging the little, unimportant things that you or other people do as good or bad, right or wrong. Can you see how much less stress you would experience?
- **RELEASE yourself from the burden of expectations-** When you have an expectation there is always the risk that you will be let down. When you stop expecting things and stop trying to foresee results you eliminate the risk of being let down, reducing anger.

SECTION 4- EMOTIONS, STRESS & DECISION MAKING

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

- **Can emotions be controlled?**
- Emotions (like anger, jealousy, fear, etc.) just come into your mind without your permission and you feel them. It just happens.
- **Okay, this is where it gets complicated.**
- The truth is that **the behavior you choose to deal with your emotions will either make the emotion stronger or weaker.**

- If you choose to react to your angry emotions by throwing temper tantrums, your anger will keep getting stronger and it will be more and more difficult to control.
- If you choose to react in a calm manner (**it might be very difficult at first**), your anger will grow weaker and it will be easier to control in the long run.
- **Emotions (like anger, jealousy, fear, etc.) just come into your mind without your permission.**
- **Emotions are reinforced by behavior and it's your behavior that you get to choose.**

EMOTIONAL DECISION MAKING

- Your emotional state when making decisions has an effect on your decision-making ability.
- When making decisions, actively practice being aware of how you feel.
- How does the decision you are about to make, feel?
- **Be aware if you are highly emotional when you are about to make a decision—do you feel nervous, excited, exhilarated, apprehensive, fearful, angry, resentful?**
- **If possible, put the decision off until you are more calm.**
- Trust your instincts, if it doesn't feel right, don't do it.
- **Highly emotional states can cloud your decision making. Wait until you are calm to decide.**

THE SECRET ABOUT EMOTIONS

- There is a fascinating connection between emotions and behavior in the human brain.
- Any emotion that you consistently act upon will become stronger.
- So, acting on the emotion of anger by yelling, throwing things, or getting physical is like a workout for the emotion of anger.
- And what happens when you work out? You get stronger!
- **It's the same with anger; if you exercise your anger, it will get stronger.**
- **And if you DO NOT exercise your anger and stay calm, your anger will grow weaker.**
- When your anger grows weaker, you take control!

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DECISION MAKING & STRESS

- **There is a definite relationship between stress and effective decision making.** While a little stress may be beneficial, stress overload can cause distress.
- When you are stressed or angry, the feeling may include being overwhelmed, feeling disrespected, helpless, fearful and so on.
- It is very important to look at the feelings behind the stress to better understand why you are having this reaction.

- Once this insight is gained, then steps may be taken to relax and feel much better.
- Take time for enjoyable activities, exercise, play sports with friends; go for a hike and connect with nature.
- If your stress is causing depression, seek professional help; your well-being is very important!

HOW STRESS AFFECTS DECISION MAKING

- **Current scientific research supports the idea that poor decision making skills is a response to stress** and that whether you realize it or not, your emotions guide your decision-making processes.
- In other words, the way you feel has a significant impact on the decisions you make. When you feel good, you tend to make better decisions, when you feel bad, your decision making suffers.
- The result of poor decision making due to stress is a “double edged sword,” meaning: your bad decisions produce much more stress, which produces more bad decision making leading to more stress and so on...
- The simple fact of the matter is that when you make decisions under stress or in a highly emotional state, you are more likely to make a bad decision.
- Finding healthy ways to relieve stress will improve your decision-making abilities and end the vicious cycle improving your health and well-being.

STRESS MYTHS

- *MYTH: A stressor, or stressful event will always precipitate stress.* **FACT: Stress symptoms can occur at the mere thought of a past or future stressful situation.**
- *MYTH: People who are not competitive and have no time urgency, are not successful in life and have more stress.* **FACT: People who are competitive and always feel rushed are likely to have more stress regardless of their success.**
- *MYTH: Drinking coffee or tea reduces stress.* **FACT: Coffee and tea are stimulants and increase stress.**
- *MYTH: Smoking relaxes the body and relieves stress.* **FACT: Nicotine has a high affinity for oxygen; smoking robs the body of oxygen and increases stress on the organs.**
- *MYTH: Exercise robs the body of energy, causing stress.* **FACT: Exercise is a highly effective method to relieve stress and increases the production of natural stress relieving chemicals such as endorphins.**
- *MYTH: Acquired behaviors for stress cannot be changed.* **FACT: Behaviors can and should be changed to reduce stress, starting with relaxation and exercise.**
-

STRESS ASSESSMENT

This activity helps you build awareness of your stress coping skills. While you answer the questions, think about how to build your coping skills using patience & practice.					
RATE EACH STATEMENT	Very Good	Good	OK	Needs Work	Not So Good
1. My ability to relax when I want to is...					
2. My ability to explain myself and be understood is...					
3. My ability to keep my anger under control is...					
4. My ability to resolve conflicts at work and home is...					
5. My ability to manage my time well is...					
6. My ability to exercise regularly is...					
7. My ability to cope with anxiety over future events is...					
8. My ability to cope with my anxiety over past events is...					
9. My ability to practice healthy eating behaviors is...					
10. My ability to set goals and accomplish them is...					

A NOTE REGARDING STRESS:

- **Practice stress relieving activities** (exercise, comical movies, engaging in a hobby) then take this assessment again in one month!
- Taking active measures to relieve my stress will increase my health and well-being.

CAN THOUGHTS CAUSE STRESS?

- **Believe it or not, your own thoughts are a huge part of your experience of stress. Think about it... your thoughts form your opinions, they affect your decisions, they affect your relationships and they affect the way you view the world and they certainly affect the way you see yourself and others.**
- How we evaluate and think about ourselves, other people, and events can have a major impact on our mood. For example, let's say you commonly have the thought, "I am always in trouble." Whenever this thought pops into your head, you will immediately feel down because you focus on the evidence to support this thought. The reverse is also true. If you are in trouble, you are likely to have more thoughts that are down (which reinforces your mood).
- We all have negative thoughts from time to time (especially when we are experiencing stress!) Negative thinking is a vicious cycle. For example, an unpleasant event occurs, we think about it and feel down. We feel down and think about more unpleasantness and so on and so on...

- It is important to understand (and accept) that your thoughts create your reality—your negative thoughts **DO HAVE AN EFFECT ON YOU** regardless of whether or not there is evidence to support your thoughts and regardless of whom your negative thoughts are directed.
- If you are having negative thoughts about yourself, **YOU** are affected. If you are having negative thoughts about another person **YOU** are affected.
- **YOUR THOUGHTS CREATE YOUR REALITY**
- **BECAUSE YOUR THOUGHTS ARE YOUR REALITY.**
- **Feel better by practicing positive thinking and avoiding negative, faulty thinking at all costs!**

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON YOU

- *I can't stress enough the importance of managing your **stress!***

The effects of ACUTE stress on the body includes:

- A RISE IN BLOOD PRESSURE
- AN INCREASE IN HEART RATE
- AN INCREASE IN ANXIETY
- AN INCREASE IN INTESTINAL MOTILITY
- AN INCREASE IN BASIL METABOLIC RATE

The effects of CHRONIC stress on the body includes:

- HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE)
- CORONARY HEART DISEASE
- STROKE
- ANXIETY DISORDER
- PEPTIC ULCERS

- *Manage your stress and **YOU WILL BE HEALTHIER***

HOW IMPORTANT IS STRESS RELIEF?

- Relieving your stress is extremely important. While it is beneficial to practice stress relief techniques as described in the picture, **it is also important to recognize the origin of your stress.**
- Your thoughts and internal dialogue have a great effect on your stress level. Your thoughts directly affect your emotions and feelings, which affect your viewpoint, which affects your decisions, which affects your behavior.

- Stress always begins internally and it is always your responsibility to manage your stress. Are you in a situation or circumstance that is evoking stress and feelings of anger? Then you have a choice to make; **get OUT of that situation or circumstance as soon as possible.**
- **Staying in a situation that is causing you stress and evoking angry feelings, will only lead to more stress and more angry emotions. YOU ALWAYS HAVE CHOICES.** Make the best choice for your own wellbeing. Just as others are not responsible for your behavior, you are not responsible for anyone else's behavior including their thoughts and feelings

THE MIND BODY CONNECTION

THINK ABOUT THIS: As you read or think about negative words and statements do you FEEL anything?

- Have you ever re-lived a negative experience in your mind—meaning have you ever sat and thought about a negative experience? I guarantee that your body reacted to your thoughts.
- Your body and mind react very strongly to negative thoughts.
- As a matter of fact, your body and mind react to ALL OF YOUR THOUGHTS—whether or not you realize it.
- While your body and mind do react to negative thoughts, the good news is that your body and mind also react very powerfully to positive thoughts as well.
- Studies show that you can improve your health and well-being by doing something as simple as trying to think positive thoughts as much as possible!

POSITIVE THINKING AND BEHAVIOR

- **Your thoughts are powerful, in fact your thoughts create your life! And it is your thoughts that guide and direct your life creating your destiny. It works like this:**
- *Your thoughts affect your feelings, which affects your emotional state, which affects your focus, which affects your viewpoint, which affects your judgment, which affects your decisions, which affects your behavior which affects your direction in life which ultimately affects your destiny!*
- There is **NO** escaping this truth, your life revolves around **YOUR THOUGHTS**. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to your thoughts and how they might be influencing your life. Often times, thoughts simply occur out of habit (that is, because we have had similar thoughts in the past), and not because they are actually reflecting any truth.
- For example, in regard to the thought, "I always get in trouble," it is highly unlikely that you are always getting in trouble. Getting in trouble does not last forever and, even if you experience multiple episodes of getting in trouble, there will be times when you are not in trouble. The key is expanding and extending those periods of not getting in trouble as much as possible. And you **CAN** do this by changing your thoughts.

- Even though a thought may *feel* true, in reality, it may not be. Believing that it is, however, can negatively impact your behavior, putting you at risk for more of the same trouble or worse. **Therefore, it is important to learn how to identify unhealthy thought patterns and behaviors and address them before they affect your decisions.**

SECTION 5- PRESSURE, EMOTIONS & DECISION MAKING SCENARIOS-----

PRESSURE, EMOTIONS & DECISION MAKING

- Not only are young people making decisions based mostly on their emotions, but they are in the middle of the most emotional time of their lives!
- **There is nothing wrong with emotions, EMOTIONS ARE NEVER WRONG.**
- **What is right or wrong, though, is THE WAY YOU ACT OUT YOUR EMOTIONS.**
- If your emotional behavior is out of control, you could be making some very bad decisions.
- So, making good decisions begins with controlling your emotional behavior.

MAKING DECISIONS IN A PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT

- I envy people that say, “I loved high school, it was awesome!”
- Personally, I did not like high school and it was anything but awesome.
- High school was an emotional rollercoaster for me, I felt so pressured to fit it and “do the right thing”—whatever that was!?
- **Peer pressure can cause teens to make decisions based on their feelings and desires to “fit in” or to “belong to this or that group” or be “unique and individual” or “keep a low profile”**
- And who doesn’t want to fit in? We all do! Yes, even adults want to fit in.
- **Young adults are usually making decisions while under a tremendous amount of pressure.**

MAKING DECISIONS UNDER PEER PRESSURE

- Most everyone has had to deal with peer pressure at one time or another.
- The fact of the matter is that misery loves company, so often people will encourage others to engage in unhealthy activities so they will not be “the only one doing it.”
- There are methods to deal with peer pressure to help you make better, autonomous (self-controlled or directed) decisions.

Here are 10 ways to deal with peer pressure:

1. Direct the questioning or interrogation back to the person pressuring you. **Why do you ask? Why do you keep asking me?**
2. Question the person's integrity or intentions. **What's your problem? Why are you so desperate for me to do that?**
3. Flat out say, **"No and please don't ask me again."**
4. Treat the request like a Joke. "Yeah, right. Who would be stupid enough to do that? Let's go play on the freeway instead."
5. Say no, and apply peer pressure of your own. "Come on! I thought you were smarter than that."
6. Use humor. "No thanks, I'm allergic to smoke; it gives me cancer."
7. Walk away, and just leave. "I'm outta here, later!"
8. Defend yourself. "No way, my IQ is higher than that!"
9. Use your parents as an excuse. "My parents would send me away to military school for that!"
10. Have a plan B. "I've gotta run, I have to babysit my little sister."

SCENARIOS**SCENARIO 1: JONNY'S DILEMMA**

Jonny is hanging with his friends in the theater parking lot after watching a movie when Joe pull out a bottle of liquor. He takes a drink, holds it out and tells Jonny, "Your turn."

Jonny should:

- A. Take a drink and quickly pass the bottle.
- B. Grab the bottle and smash it to the ground
- C. Start a fist fight with Joe.
- D. Refuse the drink, and hang with his friends sober.
- E. None of the Above

SOLUTION:

Jonny has a lot of options available to him. If he drinks, litters glass or fights or even stays, he risks getting caught, getting fined or jailed, having to go to court, having a record and spending a lot of time and money over a bad decision. Yes, even hanging with these guys can get him into trouble.

The best option for Jonny is to walk away. Even if he refuses the drink, just being in the mix of this drama could result in the same headache.

He should also avoid these guys and start hanging with "drama free" friends.

SCENARIO 2: JANNA'S ESCAPE

Janna is shopping with her friends and notices that Ashley is stealing makeup. Janna suddenly feels very uncomfortable and a little nervous. Suddenly, Ashley asks Janna to leave the store with her to wait outside for the others.

Janna should:

- A. Leave with Ashley and wait outside.
- B. Push Ashley down and yell: "Thief!"
- C. Tell Ashley no and stay with the other girls.
- D. Make an excuse and leave without Ashley or the other girls.
- E. None of the Above

SOLUTION:

Janna has a lot of options available to her. If she leaves with Ashley, fights with her or even stays, she risks getting involved in a lot of ugly drama including potential association problems (security, police, arrests, court, a waste of time and money) over a bad decision. Yes, she too, could even find herself in trouble.

Even being with Ashley or the other girls could get her into trouble. If Ashley is stealing, how does she know that the other girls aren't stealing too?

The best option for Janna is to walk away. Even if she refuses to leave with Ashley, just being in the mix of this drama could result in the same headache.

Janna's feelings of nervousness are gut instincts that she should pay attention to. Always follow your instincts. If it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

SCENARIO 3: RAUL'S DILEMMA

Raul is eating in the school cafeteria when this guy, Matt starts throwing chips at him from across the table. Raul warns Matt several times to stop. Matt continues being a jerk throwing chips.

Raul should:

- A. Start throwing chips back at Matt.
- B. Start a fist fight with Matt
- C. Do nothing and take it.
- D. Stand up and leave the table and speak to Matt later.
- E. None of the Above

SOLUTION:

This is a tough one, but it is actually a real event that happened at a real school. The guy that it happened to actually stood up walked over to the jerk throwing chips and slugged him. The school cop saw him and charged him with battery. The kid ended up going to court, having to take court ordered classes and basically wasting a lot of time and money in the court system.

The jerk throwing chips got off scot free. Is it fair? Probably not. But is fighting and getting in trouble worth all of the hassle? Definitely not. Everyone has better things to do than to throw away time and money in court.

The best option for Raul is to walk away. He can speak to the guy later if he wants to. But he should definitely avoid this “drama queen in the future.

SCENARIO 4: DAMION’S CHOICE

Damion is at a park with Billy and Tom. Billy takes out a joint and starts smoking marijuana. He passes it to Tom and he smokes some of it too and then turns to Damion and asks, “here, aren’t you going to have some?”

Damion should:

- A. Take a hit
- B. Take only one hit and refuse to smoke more
- C. Refuse the offer and hang out sober
- D. Make up an excuse and leave
- E. None of the Above

SOLUTION:

Damion is in an awkward position with his friends. He needs to be asking himself if this is worth all of the trouble it could cause. Let’s face it, the law comes down pretty hard on you for cannabis violations, especially in states where it’s illegal. Getting caught would cost a small fortune in attorney’s fees, court costs, court classes and other fines; not to mention a bad record that will haunt Damion for a long time. It’s just not worth the risk.

Yes, even hanging with these guys can get him into a lot trouble.

Damion’s best option is to make an excuse and get out of there—fast. Even if he refuses to smoke, just being around these guys could legally mess him up.

He should also avoid these guys and start hanging with “drama free” friends.

SCENARIO 5: MERCEDES’ RIGHTS

Mercedes is with her best friends, Jessica and Susan after school when Susan takes out a pack of cigarettes and lights up. Mercedes feels very uncomfortable. Mercedes and Jessica give each other a surprised look. Susan takes a long drag and hands the cigarette to Jessica, “here, have some Jessica.” Jessica hesitates and looks at Mercedes.

What should Mercedes do?

- A. Let Jessica smoke; it's her lungs.
- B. Put her arm over Jessica's arm and make an excuse to leave.
- C. Confront Susan and ask her why she wants them to smoke
- D. Tell Susan to stop pushing lung cancer on her friends
- E. None of the above.

SOLUTION:

Mercedes knew by Jessica's surprised look that Jessica felt uncomfortable about the situation too. Mercedes would be doing the right thing by standing up for herself and Jessica and telling Susan, "Keep your cancer stick to yourself."

Plus, they are all too young to smoke and they could all get into trouble. Yes, it is illegal to smoke if you are not old enough and you can get a ticket and find yourself in the middle of the court system, facing fines and tobacco awareness classes. It really isn't worth it.

Mercedes' best option is to confront Susan, or simply tell Jessica, "Let's go."

Mercedes should also talk to Jessica about finding a new friend, preferably a non-smoker.

DON'T LET ANYONE COAX YOU INTO A BAD HABIT

EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING IS A JOURNEY:

- Effective Decision Making is only possible to the extent that an individual accepts responsibility for his or her behavior and is ready and willing to make a change.
- Effective Decision Making doesn't happen over night.
- EVERY DAY IS A NEW DAY. EVERY DAY OF YOUR LIFE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO START FRESH AND CONTINUE YOUR GOAL OF FEELING GOOD AND EXPERIENCING WELLBEING.
- Every success is just that, a success! Any setbacks are just opportunities to learn and keep trying!
- Making effective decisions based on well-being and positive thinking is a journey that may take time, but it will ultimately benefit your overall happiness and wellbeing as well as the happiness and wellbeing of those around you.

FINAL DECISION MAKING ASSESSMENT

Respond to the following questions honestly and provide feedback as to the management of your own anger.

1. How do I know when I'm making a bad decision?

2. How do I feel inside when I'm making an important decision?

3. What actions do I take regarding my decision making?

4. The last time I made a bad decision, what happened?

5. What are the reasons I usually make bad decisions?

6. What problems have been caused by my decision making?

- These questions will give you insight into situations that test your decision-making skills. Identifying the situations, circumstances and the consequences of your decisions is the first step toward practicing critical thinking and effective decision making.

FINAL DECISION MAKING GOALS

- **Identify ways to practice critical thinking and develop your decision-making skills.**

1. Identify a situation in which you have made a bad decision. Analyze your goals and desired expectations. *Break the situation down into steps. Examine each step...*

2. Situation: *Describe the situation...*

3. Goals/Expectations: *Describe your ideal self in regards to the situation (or how you would have liked to react)...*

4. Steps in the event: *Now describe the situation in each step.*

5. Describe any benefits that this decision produced

6. Did the decision cost you anything or cause any harm?

7. Did you experience regret due to your actions? Why?

8. What would you do differently?

9. What prevented you from doing things differently then?

10. How can you overcome these barriers in the future?

FINAL EXAM REVIEW

- Any emotion you consistently act upon will only get stronger
- If you are highly emotional before making a decision, wait until you are calm to decide
- While you can't really control incoming emotions, you can control your behavioral response to those emotions
- The behavior you choose to deal with your emotions will either make the emotion stronger or weaker
- If you exercise your anger, it WILL get stronger

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU HAVE COMPLETED TRUANCY AWARENESS & COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE EDUCATION.

“I will not propose to you that my way is best. The decision is up to you...”—Dalai Lama

Please remember: Change is an inevitable process of life. You do not have to force yourself to practice the concepts in this course.

Simply being aware of and understanding the concepts offered to you in this course will create small, positive changes in your life...

Every day is a new day. Every day is a new opportunity. Each success—no matter how small—is still a success!

- Please print out your completed workbook, your completion report and your **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION**

We wish you the very best,

Gisella Bryant, RN, MSN AGNP

Program Director