

Social Decision Making/Problem Solving

Pre-K-8 students



- *Teacher-tested, research-validated program that teaches all children to think clearly when under stress.*
- *Teaches children the social & decision making skills they need to develop character, pursue healthy life choices, & avoid today's social problems.*

Results



- *Elementary students significantly improved their social decision-making and problem-solving skills relative to controls.*
- *Students showed more prosocial behavior in school and greater coping skills with stressors (e.g., conflicts with authority, peer relationships, academic pressure and substance abuse) upon transition to middle school compared to controls.*
- *In high school, previously trained students showed high levels of positive, prosocial behavior and decreased antisocial, self-destructive, and socially disordered behavior.*

The Program

Social Decision Making/Problem Solving works by training educators (teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, child study team staff, and community members) and parents to equip children with skills in self-control and group participation, the use of an eight-step social decision-making strategy, and the practical knowledge regarding the use of these skills in real life and academic areas.

The program is curriculum based and occurs in three phases. The readiness phase targets self-control, group participation, and social awareness skills. The instructional phase teaches an eight-step social decision making strategy to students. The application phase provides practice to help children apply these skills in real life interpersonal and academic situations.

The primary objective is to teach children a set of heuristic social decision-making thinking steps. Lessons are taught to the children on a regular basis by their classroom teacher or guidance counselor. Extensive guided practice and role-playing are used, as is skill modeling and the use of hypothetical social problem situations. Facilitative questioning and dialogue stimulates the integration of the techniques. Cooperative group projects and writing assignments further advance that process.

This program has been successful with students of varying demographics.

Professional Development

Staff provide a multi-day curriculum lab training workshop, with materials, for those who will be teaching SDM/PS directly to the students. Schools are asked to form a Social Decision Making Committee to provide leadership and guidance to the program's multiyear development. Additional training is available for committee members. These trainings most often are offered on the school district's site, but are also available at our New Jersey location.

Costs & Funding Options

Training prices include a per diem rate for the workshop, materials, and travel expenses for the trainer. Training workshops are usually limited to 30 people. Current prices can be obtained by calling the program.

The SDM/PS Program has qualified for funding in the areas of drug and alcohol prevention, character education, violence prevention, and funding for special needs students. We are able to provide information and a brief consultation to districts writing funding proposals.

Learning Standards

Health, Physical Education and Home Economics: 2) acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Career Development and Occupational Studies: 3) demonstrate mastery of the foundation skills and competencies essential for success in the workplace.

Contact

Linda Bruene Butler,
M.Ed.
University of Medicine &
Dentistry of NJ
UBHC - Behavioral
Research and Training
Institute
151 Centennial Avenue
Suite 1140
Piscataway, NJ 08854
732-235-9280
Fax: 732-235-9277
E-mail: spsweb@umdnj.edu
Website: www.umdnj.edu/spsweb

Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D.
Rutgers University
Dept. of Psychology
53 Avenue E
Livingston Campus
Piscataway, NJ 08854
E-mail: melias@rci.rutgers.edu