

Choice and decision making

This document is separated into session plans for 11-14 year olds and another for 14-18 year olds with alternative activities. Educators are encouraged to adapt all activities to the needs of their specific learners.

Learning how to make choices and decisions is an important life skill and being able to recognise risk, and ways we can reduce, remove, or take risks can help us in everyday life and difficult situations. Use the activities below to explore decision making and risk.

Recommended ages: 11-14



Suggested timing: 45 minutes



Learning objectives

Learners will:

- recognise what 'risk' is
- identify different risks in different contexts
- understand how decisions affect you and others
- critically think about risk-taking and reducing harm

Starter activity: What is risk



Ask learners to define the term 'risk'. What is a risk to them? One definition of risk is something that has a significant chance of the situation or activity, causing damage or harm to yourself and others.

Debate the question below:

"is taking risks always a bad thing?"

Encourage learners to think about how different things could put their wellbeing – psychologically, physically or emotionally – in danger of harm but how some risks could have benefits for their wellbeing too. Ask them how they can decide whether they should or should not take a chance? What influences their decision?

Core activity: Photo activity



Show learners the images on slide 4 to 7 of the PowerPoint and discuss one risk to the young people's wellbeing they can see.

Ask learners to think about the risks they can see in an everyday context. Then ask them to consider these pictures in the context of Covid-19 and lockdown measures. Do they think the risks change or increase?

Read out the following scenarios for each picture and ask learners to consider:

- what is the risk?
- who is at risk?
- what consequences could this risk have to others?
- Image 1. This photo was taken last week. Katie started to feel unwell. She has a temperature and a cough. Her friends invite her to the park for a picnic. She misses her friends a lot and has felt lonely lately. She goes to the park with them.

- Image 2. This photo was taken last week. It is Suraj's dad's birthday, and he and his sisters invite his friends and family to the house for a birthday party. No one feels sick, but they all go out often and mix with many people. Their elderly grandmother is also there. She has a health condition that affects her lungs. Suraj's mother is a doctor, and his sister works with older adults.
- Image 3. This photo was taken in April 2020. Susie lives alone, and her relatives live far away. She cannot go outside because she is vulnerable to Covid-19. She has not spoken to anyone face to face in weeks. She has a landline phone, but no internet.
- Image 4. This photo was taken in March 2020. David was scrolling through social media and saw a post about a cure for Covid-19. He was not sure if he believed the post, but he shared it to show his friends. His aunts and uncles saw the post and sent it on to all their friends, really believing it was true. His aunt even bought the cure from the internet to take it herself.

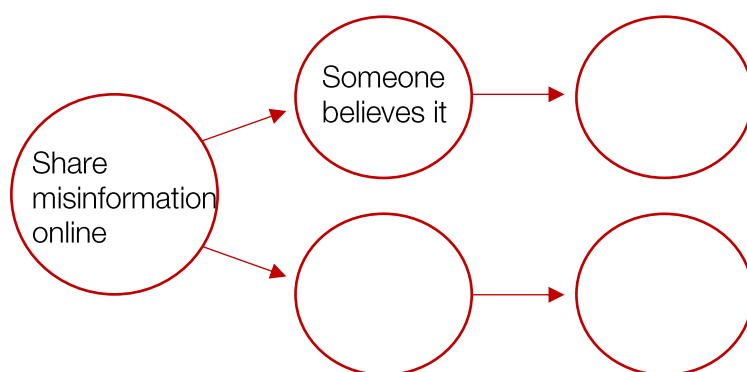
Take time to discuss one or a selection of the scenarios.

Extension activity: Chain of consequences



After learners have reflected and discussed the images; they can create a chain of consequences for some of the scenarios above.

Draw a circle and write the risk in it. Then draw arrows from that circle to all the consequences that action may have for different people in the scenario. These consequences may be good or bad.



Encourage learners to reflect on each circle in their chain. It may seem like one action can slide down a 'slippery slope' and cause something catastrophic. Although these all have consequences and that risks can cause harm, it is essential to remember that there are things we can do at each stage to reduce or remove risk. This is why decision making is so critical.

Ask them to look at the arrows on the chain. Can they think of one action people in the scenario could take to reduce or remove the risk?

Encourage learners to think about how they can incorporate this thinking into their daily lives. How can they consider the risks they take more in the future?



Choice and decision making

Learning how to make choices and decisions is an important life skill and being able to recognise risk, and ways we can reduce, remove, or take risks can help us in everyday life and difficult situations. Use the activities below to explore decision making and risk.

Recommended ages: 14-18



Suggested timing: 45 minutes



Learning objectives

Learners will:

- identify different risks in different contexts
- understand how decisions affect you and others
- critically think about risk-taking and reducing harm
- actively encourage others to consider the risks they take

Starter activity: What is risk



Ask learners to define the term 'risk'. What is a risk to them? One definition of risk is something that has a significant chance of the situation or activity, causing damage or harm to yourself and others.

Debate the question below:

"is taking risks always a bad thing?"

Encourage learners to think about how different things could put their wellbeing – psychologically, physically or emotionally – in danger of harm. Ask them how they can decide whether they should or shouldn't take a risk? What influences their decision?

Core activity: Photo activity



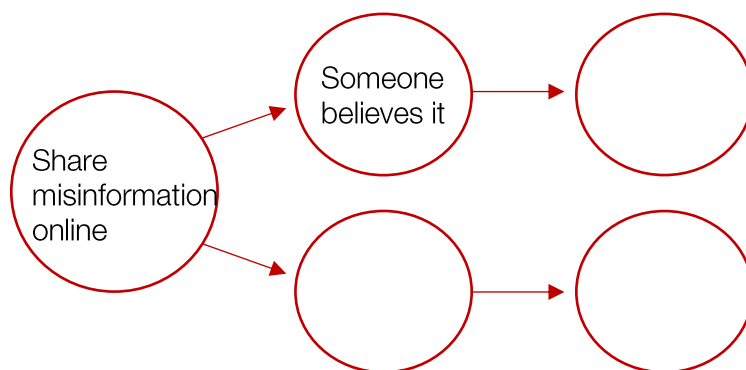
Show learners the images slide 4-7 on the PowerPoint and discuss one risk to the young people's wellbeing they can see.

Ask learners to think about the risks they can see in an everyday context. Then ask them to consider these pictures in the context of Covid-19 and lockdown measures. Do they think the risks change or increase?

Read out the following scenarios for each picture and ask learners to consider:

- what is the risk?
- who is at risk?
- what consequences could this risk have to others?

Draw a circle and write the risk in it. Then draw arrows from that circle to all the consequences that action may have for different people in the scenario. These consequences may be good or bad.



- Image 1. This photo was taken last week. Katie started to feel unwell recently. She has a temperature and a cough. Her friends invite her to the park for a picnic. She misses her friends a lot and has felt lonely lately. She goes to the park with them. Later, they decide to go to a party they have seen on social media. It is happening in a field in their town. They don't know the organiser or anyone else there.
- Image 2. This photo was taken last week. It is Suraj's birthday, and he invites all his friends and family to the house for a birthday party. No one feels sick or anything, but they all go out often and mix with lots of different people. Their elderly grandparent is also there. He has a severe lung condition. Suraj's uncle is a teacher, and his mother is a doctor.
- Image 3. This photo was taken in April 2020. Susie lives alone and no relatives locally. She cannot go outside because she is vulnerable to Covid-19. She hasn't spoken to anyone face to face in weeks. She has a landline phone, but no internet. She tries to fix a bulb in her house and climbs on a chair to reach it.
- Image 4. This photo was taken in March. David was scrolling through social media and saw a post about a cure for Covid-19. He wasn't sure if he believed the post, but he shared it anyway to show his friends. His aunts and uncles saw the post and sent it on to all their friends, really believing it was true. His aunt even bought the cure from the internet to take it herself.

Take time to discuss one or a selection of the scenarios.

Encourage learners to reflect on each circle in their chain. It may seem like action can slide down a 'slippery slope' and cause something catastrophic. Although all actions have consequences and risks that can cause harm, it is essential to remember that there are things we can do at every stage to reduce or remove risk. This is why decision making is so critical.

Ask them to look at the arrows on the chain. Can they think of one action people in the scenario could take to reduce or remove the risk?

Encourage learners to think about how they can incorporate this thinking into their daily lives. How can they consider the risks they take more in the future?

Extension activity: Educate others



Encourage learners to drive awareness of the risks above to others in their community. Have them pick one of the situations or something that they think is essential to drive awareness of and create a poster or social media post about the risk, consequence and what can be done to reduce the risk.

For more information about misinformation and how to spot it see our [Coronavirus Newsthink](#). For more information about hygiene measures and how coronavirus affects society see our [Hygiene and wellbeing resource](#).