

Exploring Leadership

PROBLEM SOLVING: RISK

Taking risks is a normal part of development that helps build confidence and decision-making skills. Contrary to popular belief, risk taking is healthy and will help young people thrive, providing it is healthy risk taking.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- When was the last time you tried something “risky”?
- What did you stand to lose or gain by taking the risk?

The word “risk” is defined as the possibility that something unpleasant or unwelcome will happen as a result of a particular action. For the rest of your life, you will be taking risks, and not all of them are bad or dangerous. In fact, taking sensible risks has many advantages, and it often leads to innovation and success.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Differentiate healthy and dangerous risks.
- Discuss positive and negative consequences of risks.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Computer to watch ahead of time: https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/healthy_risk_taking
- Projector to watch at the end: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rravJ7RVsY>
- Copies of Appendix and cups.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES:

Pair up. (Depending on total group size, small groups of 3-4 might be better.) Place the folded topics in a cup, and pass it around so each pair can draw one.

- Instructions: With your partner, discuss the positive and negative risks you could take within the category you selected. What are the responsible risks you might take in that category, and what do you stand to gain if you succeed? Also discuss possible dangerous risks in that category. What do you stand to lose?

FACILITATOR TIP:

- Encourage teens to respectfully disagree during the many opportunities for discussion and debate. Ask, don't tell, whenever possible.

- After five minutes, each pair (or a small group) will present their results to the group at large.
- Name the category of risk
- One member of each pair addresses the healthy, responsible risks.
- The other member of the pair addresses the negative, dangerous risks.
- Peers give feedback and add more positive and negative risks if possible.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did you decide which member of your pair would present the healthy risks and the negative risks? Did it have anything to do with personal experience?
- Which kind of risks were harder to think up: responsible ones or dangerous ones? Why?
- What other categories of risk are there that were not represented by the topic choices?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Which types of risks do you tend to take the most? Do you think things out in advance?
- Describe an example of a time you took a risk that had many positive rewards.
- What kind of risk-taking should you do more of? Why?



CONCLUSION:

Embracing risk-taking helps you overcome a fear of failure. The key is to understand the difference between a healthy, responsible risk and a dangerous one. Healthy risks are sensible, generally safe, and may lead to greater potential reward. Dangerous risks may involve momentary thrill for little potential reward. Show the one-minute video (see What You'll Need box above for link) to effectively explain that the key to responsible risk taking is thinking things out ahead of time.

Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution and is committed to a learning and working environment free from discrimination. For USU's non-discrimination notice, see equity.usu.edu/non-discrimination.

REFERENCES

- <https://wholeperson.com/pdf/TeenChoices.pdf>
- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/seven-reasons-why-risk-taking-leads-to-success_n_3749425
- <https://www.lifehack.org/285038/8-reasons-risk-takers-are-more-likely-successful>
- https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/healthy_risk_taking
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh4-R9xFAys>



APPENDIX:

Photocopy and cut out enough topics for every pair to draw one.

- Educational Risks
- Social Risks
- Risky Behaviors
- Family Risks
- Legal Risks
- Physical Risks
- Financial Risks
- Health Risks