

Safety in Self-Care

10-11 Year Olds

Day 3 of 3

Objectives

To introduce the concepts of:

- choice,
- responsibility,
- consequences, and
- agreements.

To apply these concepts to specific situations.

To establish that choice happens constantly, and children can change their course at any time by making different choices.

Introduction for adult

This age group is vulnerable for different reasons than younger children. They have more latitude in their activities and more often get themselves into situations where they may be at greater risk. They are more concerned about peer pressure and what others may think of them. They may have experienced trying to talk to an adult about a problem and not being understood or believed. They may feel they have few resources for help.

Consistent with these developmental issues, this discussion recognizes that establishing hard and fast rules is not the best way to shape the behavior of children at this age. Rather, we want to give our children an understanding of how they can be more effective in shaping their own lives through communication, agreements and a recognition of the dynamics and power of choices, consequences and personal responsibility.

Most importantly, this discussion enables children to see that any series of choices can be changed at any moment. This is particularly important in the prevention of child abuse and abduction. Often children are tricked or lured, only to realize later what is happening. At this point, children often feel guilty or too involved to change things. They may be fearful that they have done something wrong or that the people they care about will stop loving them if they tell about what has happened. These feelings are addressed in order to make it easier for children to stop abuse at any stage, and get the help they need.

Introduction for children

The older you get, the more decisions you have to make. Following the rules is one way to make decisions, but sometimes that doesn't work. Thinking about choices and consequences is an important part of being able to handle life situations safely.

Choices, Consequences and Responsibility

- Choice is the ability to make decisions. You make choices every day about what you think and do.
- Choice happens constantly and you can change your course of action at any time by shifting the direction of your choices.
- Responsibility means taking care of yourself and being accountable for your own decisions and choices. It does not mean that it's your fault if something bad happens.
- A consequence is something that happens naturally as a result of doing something else. When you make a choice or a decision, you need to think about what the consequences of that choice will be before you make it.
- An agreement is an understanding you make with someone else. You make agreements with your parents and your teacher about what you will do in certain situations.

Watch video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXi5Fb1TI4Y&t=6s>

Role-play

There are lots of times you make choices which affect your safety.

Let's think of times when you made choices that weren't good for you and how you might handle things differently next time. We can also talk about times when you were making poor choices and changed to go in another direction.

What agreements do we have about where you can or can't go?

Is part of the freedom you have based on us knowing we can count on you to keep your agreements or to be dependable?

RP: What if we give you permission to play at your friend's house? What agreements go along with that? Spoken or unspoken?

What if when you get over to your friend's house you find out that he has invited about ten other kids over and his parents aren't home?

Do you think that would be all right with us? What are your choices? Would you be embarrassed to call us?

RP: What if you get permission to go to the community center for a special show? Your mom drops you off and leaves, but the community center is closed. Then the mother of one of your friends, seeing that the center is closed, invites you to go get pizza with them. What are your choices? What would you do?

Are you responsible for whatever choice you make and the consequences of that choice?

What if you can't reach us to let us know what has happened?

What if you decide to go with your friend's mother and she doesn't get you back to the community center by the time your mom or dad come to pick you up? Who's responsible for what has happened?

What other choices are there?

Be careful not to confuse responsibility with blame. Things happen over which we have no control. Behaving responsibly does not mean it's your fault if something bad happens.

Is there always a best choice? How do you decide?

Do you have an agreement with us about what you should do when things don't work out as planned and you can't reach us?

What would be a good agreement for this type of situation?

Talk this through with children, allowing them to learn to think ahead about potential problems and to plan for the unexpected.

RP: What if a teenage cousin is staying with you for the afternoon and he wants to take you for a ride in his car, but you don't have permission to go? What do you do?

What if you tell your cousin that you're not going and he calls you names?

Would it be hard to stick with your decision?

RP: What if you're home by yourself and some friends come over? You don't have permission, but you let them in anyway.

What if they start getting into stuff that is off limits? What do you do?

Just because you've already made one poor choice doesn't mean you have to keep making poor choices.

What if your friends say, "Your parents will never know the difference. You don't have to tell them."

Is it okay to break your agreements just because you think your parents will never find out about it?

Is that just another way of lying? What are some of your choices in that situation?

What consequences do you think there might be for what has happened?

If something happened, even something when you have made poor choices, do you think you could call and ask for our help? We would be there for you, no matter what.

You always have permission to call if you need help.