

# Mapping Choices

## Purpose

Have a flow chart created on chart paper to show as an example. \*See below for examples.

Immediate gratification always feels better than saving for a later date. In our experience, convincing kids that managing anger in the moment so they can have an over-all happier day is difficult work. In this lesson, we show students a mental decision map. This helps them see that making the decision to cope and manage will have happier outcomes than if they make damaging decisions. This lesson can be used in lots of different ways as you encounter situations that trigger big emotional responses in your classroom.

## Teacher Work

Gather the students in a circle or meeting place. Explain a time that writing down the thoughts in your mind helped you make a good decision.



"The other day, I tried to decide whether or not I should stay up late to watch one of my favorite shows or go to bed on time. At first, I thought the choice was clear - staying up to watch a show is way more fun than going to bed! I've heard that seeing my thoughts on paper helps people make wiser decisions, so I listed out the Pros (good things) and Cons (bad things) about that choice. Pros: the show makes me happy, I want to find out what happens next, I want to talk about it with my friends... Cons: It will be difficult to wake up in the morning, my day will feel long if I am tired, I have important meetings and lessons the next day that require my energy, I wanted to bake cookies the next night but I will feel too tired if I stay up. Wow. After listing it out, it seems like one night staying up late kind of messes up my whole next day. That just doesn't seem worth it..."

Using this story, you can transition into talking about flow charts help students see how their decisions now may impact their day later. The examples attached at the end of this lesson are specific to a very particular student experience. See if you can take the idea and make it work for something in your classroom. Be sure to not single people out, but using a real event that has happened more than once will help the students relate to the scenario. Advocacy is touched upon in this lesson. Check out the blog to learn more about how advocacy is super important to teach in addition to coping skills.

## Student Work

Give them a paper or a whiteboard and a starting scenario. See if the students can work in pairs or small groups to come up with the different options or outcomes. Don't belabor this process. In about 3-5 minutes, pull the group back together and talk about the potential chain of events. There is no right answer; just getting the kids thinking about the many options and consequences that come with decisions is the important lesson. Realistically, the teacher will be the one making the flow charts if the situation arises in real life.

## Closing

"Think about this next time you feel yourself being treated unfairly or feel anger bubble up inside of you. What are your options? Ask for help mapping out your decision. If a teacher is mapping it out with you, think about all the possible outcomes. Make decisions that help you have great days."





