**Decision-Making**

**Introduction**

Decision-making may not always be an easy task for adolescents (e.g., staying out late with

friends the night before exams). Teenagers will also need to learn to acknowledge the responsibilities that go along with those decisions. With that in mind, the “E*ight Steps in Making a Decision”* (Robbins, 1991) will help guide teenagers to make rational decisions.

1. State the problem objectively. (Define what is happening.)
2. Gather information about the problem. (Do not try to solve problem.)
3. List pros and cons of the problem.
4. Develop alternatives. (Do not force yourself into only one choice, and be sure that each

solution solves the problem.)

1. Analyze alternatives. (Look at pros and cons.)
2. Select an alternative. (Mentee makes a decision based on what is best for him/her in this situation, keeping the goal in mind.)
3. Implement the alternative. (Test.)
4. Evaluate end results of decision made. (Make changes as necessary.)

If teenagers follow through these steps often enough, they will become familiar with the process and will be capable of applying it to any future complicated decision.

There are **three different types of decision-making styles: Inactive, Reactive, and Proactive.**

An **inactive decision-maker** is someone who fails to make choices. A teenager who has this style of decision-making usually procrastinates until a future time because of indecision. Eventually, the option merely plays itself out. Teenagers who have this style have difficulty developing self-confidence, and feel that they have no control of their destiny.

A **reactive-decision maker** is someone who allows peers, siblings, parents, etc. to make the

decision for them. Teenagers with this style are easily influenced by what others think, do, or

suggest. They are easily persuaded by peer-pressure, develop a negative self-esteem, and have a need to be liked by others.

A **proactive-decision maker** is someone who follows the eight steps of decision-making and

assumes responsibility for the consequences. In this case, the teenager takes on responsibility rather than being driven by circumstances and conditions or being influenced by others. Teenagers with this style of decision-making often experience a feeling of empowerment or inspiration because they know that they are in control of their own destinies.