

**TRANSITIONAL
LIFE SKILLS
FOR TEENS**

TEENS~ACTIONS CONSEQUENCES AND REWARDS ▶

**Facilitator Reproducible
Activities for Groups
and Individuals**

**Ester R. A. Leutenberg
Carol Butler, MS Ed, RN, C**

Illustrated by
Amy L. Brodsky, LISW-S

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101 W. 2nd St., Suite 203
Duluth, MN 55802

800-247-6789

books@wholeperson.com
www.wholeperson.com

Teens – Actions, Consequences, Rewards

Facilitator Reproducible Activities for Groups and Individuals

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Art Director: Joy Morgan Dey
Assistant Art Director: Mathew Pawlak

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The Purpose

Teens ~ Actions, Consequences, Rewards

This workbook was written to encourage teens to stop and think before they act,
consider the consequences of their actions,
and to capitalize on the rewards of positive actions.

Teens may turn a deaf ear to warnings about consequences.

A sense of invincibility says, "It won't happen to me."
A drive for rewards often outweighs the possibility of harm.

Adding into the mix ...

Adolescent hormones
Quest for excitement
Adrenaline of anger
Chemistry of romance
Self-Esteem issues

and then ...

Forethought goes out the window.

What *will* encourage typical, often headstrong, teens to stop and think?

Self-directed thoughts, decisions, and actions that lead to real rewards?
The excitement of risks coupled with probable positive outcomes?

The activities will help teens to consider these goals before acting:

Make decisions based on probable outcomes versus immediate gratification.
Uncover hidden consequences and rewards.
Discover healthy vs. unhealthy risks.
Define safe-risks.
Avoid preventable dangers.
Recognize positive attributes.
Handle difficult circumstances.
Work toward authentic rewards.

The value of this workbook:

Instead of being talked at – teens talk to each other.
Instead of being told to listen – teens listen to each other.
Instead of being pressured for perfection – teens express creatively.
Instead of being compelled to share – teens self-disclose at their discretion.
Instead of being told what to think – teens draw their own conclusions.
Instead of being passive – teens involve themselves in introspection and interaction.

**Teens are encouraged to think about consequences
and take risks ... healthy and safe risks!**

Trust your heart if the seas catch fire, live by love though the stars walk backward.

~ E. E. Cummings

Format of the Book

Introduction for Teen Participants

This introduction motivates the teens and helps them look forward to participating in the activities.

Present the handout, page viii, as an overview before the first activity.

Cover page for each chapter

Each chapter's cover page provides an inspirational quotation and describes each session to help facilitators accomplish the following:

- Select topics.
- Prepare the group.
- Stimulate discussion about the quotation.

After the first activity in each chapter, teens may want to vote on which activity to do next. Unless otherwise stated, there is no particular order for the chapters or the handouts in the chapters.

Behavioral Coping Skills

The back of each cover page lists the behavioral coping skills in each activity.

- Teens can preview the skills they will work on.
- Facilitators may use these as behavioral goals and competencies to evaluate.

Chapters

FIRST ACTIVITY - *My Actions Book*

1. Healthy and Unhealthy Risks
2. Decisions
3. Types of Consequences and Rewards
4. Dangers
5. Attributes
6. Circumstances
7. Rewards

Recap of *Teens ~ Actions, Consequences, Rewards*

Versatility

- A chapter may serve as an entire workshop.
- Strategically select portions of the book to better match the skills you want to drive home.
- Facilitators may skip around by picking and choosing among different activities and chapters.
- Sessions may stand alone based on specific needs.
- Most handouts are adaptable to individual or group use.

Components in each session

Reproducible handouts – Facilitators may photocopy and distribute sheets as they are presented, or they may white out and/or add text as desired and then photocopy.

For the Facilitator – Information on the back of each handout:

I. Purpose

The goals for the teens in each session.

II. Skills

Behavioral objectives and competencies.

III. Possible Activities

Ways to present topics and responses to elicit.

IV. Enrichment Activities

Additional learning experiences; ways to conclude or follow up.

Skills Teens will Practice in these Chapters

Chapter Cover Pages

Front: Skills defined for teens.

Back: Competencies listed for facilitators to evaluate.

Throughout this workbook, teens will be encouraged to engage in the following activities:

Demonstrate oral, written, and creative expression skills.

Practice giving and receiving feedback.

FIRST ACTIVITY - *My Actions Book*

- Organize work for safekeeping
- Identify the benefits of journals

Chapter 1. Healthy and Unhealthy Risks

- Self-assess risk factors
- Identify positive risks
- Plan safe actions
- Self-protect physically and emotionally
- Self-motivate

Chapter 2. Decisions

- Compare impulsive with thoughtful decisions
- Make and assess decisions
- Identify motives for actions
- Predict outcomes

Chapter 3. Types of Consequences and Rewards

- Identify types of consequences and rewards
- Compare genuine and superficial consequences and rewards
- Predict actions, consequences, and rewards

Chapter 4. Danger

- Personalize addiction and recovery concepts
- Identify recovery choices
- Describe violence prevention plans
- Connect food issues with emotions
- Promote safe driving.
- Discuss emotional aspects of sex
- Prevent self-harm
- Choose to live and thrive
- State gun safety concepts
- Prevent dating violence
- Break the bullying cycle
- Diminish gang involvement

Chapter 5. Attributes

- Practice healthy habits
- Develop positive traits
- Demonstrate transparency
- Promote positive change

6. Chapter Circumstances

- Replace dysfunction with function
- Recognize similarities despite differences
- Prevent avoidable problems
- Advocate for people in need
- Improve academic performance
- Decide when to fit in or opt out

7. Chapter Rewards

- Identify the rewards of hope
- Avoid or learn from mistakes
- Implement Mother Teresa's suggestions
- Acknowledge rewards of love and loss

Recap of *Teens ~ Actions, Consequences, Rewards*

- Self-assess comprehension of content
- Journal about current and future rewards
- State concepts learned in each chapter
- Complete *My Actions Book*

Ideas to Enhance Interest and Participation

Before the first session, suggest that teens obtain a three-ring binder, a notebook or a scrapbook which will be the foundation of the **FIRST ACTIVITY - *My Actions Book***.

Have a three-ring hole punch and glue available. Encourage teens to save their completed handouts and related work. They can insert them in their ***My Actions Book*** as they complete them.

The **FIRST ACTIVITY - *My Actions Book***, page 13 and the concluding activity, **Recap – *My Actions Book***, page 128 will explain how teens will preserve their work, personalize skills and maintain accomplishments.

Begin.

Discuss the *Introduction for Teen Participants*, page vii, before the first activity.

Read the quotation on the chapter cover page before the first activity in each chapter.

Prepare for each session.

Review the page(s) and obtain materials – easily available paper, pens, markers, etc.

Photocopy according to options selected – for individual or team formats, etc.

Create a comfortable climate.

Assure teens: “What’s on the completed handout stays on the handout and does not need to be shared.”

Promote confidentiality: “What’s said in this room stays in this room.”

Remind teens to use code names, to avoid embarrassing anyone.

Example: “MBS” for “My buddy Steve.”

Encourage positive risk-taking.

Emphasize that positive actions yield rewards – the greater their involvement, the greater their growth. Suggest baby steps out of comfort zones – play a game, act in a skit, write a song, etc.

Empower teens.

Explain that teens decide their levels of participation and disclosure; no one is pressured to share.

Emphasize that perfect grammar, spelling, artistic talent, or ability to write or act are not required.

Emphasize rewards.

Explain that not all actions lead to rewards. Some may lead to consequences.

Remind teens that rewards are stronger motivators than punishments.

Make it fun to learn.

The more teens talk and interact, the more teens learn.

The more modalities the better; encourage expression through words, movement, music, art, etc.

Promote positive peer power.

Teens watch and listen to peers more than they pay attention to adults.

Encourage peer feedback, respectful debates, open minds, lively discussions, teamwork, etc.

Remember *Recap*, pages 121 to 128, when all of your selected sessions are completed.

Refer teens who seem to be experiencing difficulties to a school counselor, mental health or medical professional. If danger is imminent, call 911 or your local emergency services number, or arrange for teens to go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Teens ~ Actions, Consequences, Rewards
Introduction for Teen Participants

RIDDLES

What do an astronaut and an actor have in common?

They could crash in outer space or at the box office. • They both take risks.
They could land on Mars or become movie stars. • They both want to reach for the stars.
They take calculated risks. • They have lots of people supporting them in their work.

What does a drunk driver and a person texting while walking on a pier have in common?

Poor judgment. • Not using common sense. • They think nothing bad happens.
They think they can luck out one more time. • They take risks without considering outcomes.

The older you get the more freedom you have to

To think for yourself.
To decide on your actions.
To work toward rewards.

Would you rather

Gamble on your life?
Or ...take positive risks?

You choose!

The activities in this book will help guide you in these directions:

Explore your healthy and unhealthy risks.
Make decisions based on your predicted outcomes.
Uncover your hidden consequences and rewards.
Avoid preventable dangers.
Enhance your positive traits.
Handle your circumstances
Discover your rewards.

*Trust your heart if the seas catch fire,
live by love though the stars walk backward.*

~ E. E. Cummings

But remember ...

Safety First!!!

If you or someone you know wants to harm self or others,
tell a trusted adult and/or call 911 or your local emergency services number,
or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Teens ~ Actions, Consequences, Rewards

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Reviewers – Annette Damien, MS, PPS
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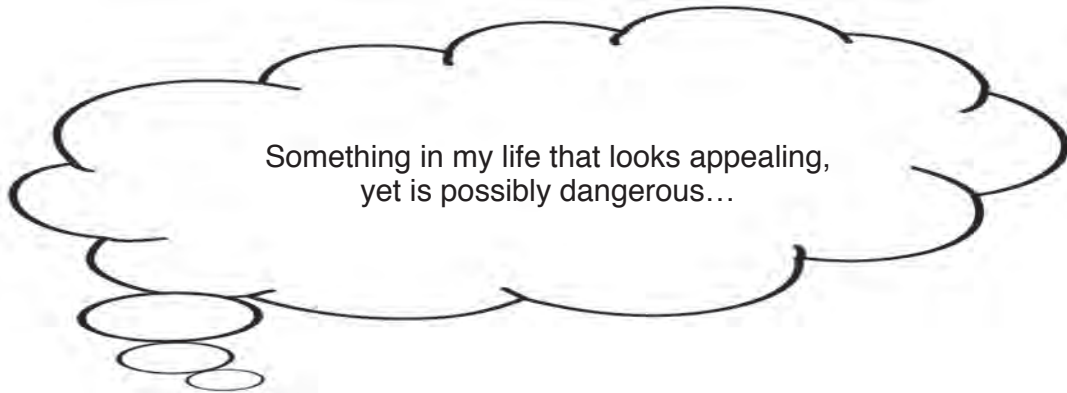
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MY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

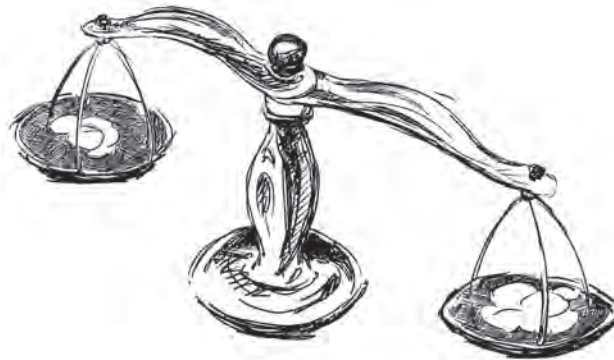
A region in your brain can warn you in advance when a behavior might lead to negative outcomes.

Yes, it alerts you to oncoming traffic, but ...
Tune into a more subtle risk.

My Early Warning System monitors my environmental cues.



My Early Warning System weighs my possible negative outcomes.



My possible negative outcomes ...

My Early Warning System helps me adjust my behavior to avoid danger.

My actions will be...

MY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

FOR THE FACILITATOR

I. Purpose

To identify the functions of the brain's early warning system.

To practice these capabilities concerning a current attractive but harmful risk.

II. Skills

State potential dangers, evaluate probable negative outcomes and plan safe actions.

III. Possible Activities

- a. Recruit a volunteer to draw on the board; whisper a request to draw a traffic light.
- b. Ask teens the purpose of red, yellow and green lights. (Stop, caution or slowdown, go).
- c. Explain that brains have similar safety systems.
- d. Distribute the *My Early Warning System* handout; a volunteer reads the top four lines aloud.
- e. Emphasize that teens are to write about something dangerous they could be tempted to do.
- f. Allow time for completion.
- g. Encourage teens to share their responses and receive peer feedback.

Possibilities

Something in my life that looks appealing, yet is possibly dangerous ...

- Alcohol, drugs, cigarettes
- Face-to-face or online bullying, gossiping, discrimination, judgmental remarks
- Gambling, stealing
- Lying, manipulating, cheating
- Unsafe sex, pressuring someone to have sex, sexting
- Posting or sending photos

My possible negative outcomes ...

- Damage to physical and emotional health; one's own or another's death
- Guilt from inflicting invisible wounds on others through bullying, etc.
- Juvenile justice system
- Reputation as untrustworthy, cruel, bigoted
- Unwanted pregnancy, legal charges, physical and emotional harm to oneself and others

My actions will be ...

- Avoid unhealthy substances
- Treat others as I want to be treated
- Earn money in honest ways
- Tell the truth, ask for what I want, never cheat people out of money, never cheat on tests
- Make sexual decisions based on both partners' values, safety, and health considerations

IV. Enrichment Activities

- a. Ask teens why an emergency vehicle cannot be missed. (Flashing lights, bells and whistles).
- b. Pose the question "Why do we sometimes miss messages from an internal warning system?"

Possibilities

- They're not always as loud and clear as a siren
 - They may be heard as a still, small voice
 - We may wish to ignore them due to the deceptive appeal of the danger
- c. Ask teens what traffic rules apply to their Early Warning System. (Stop, look and listen; wait for the green light; ignore distractions; pay attention to warning signs, etc.).
 - d. Present the possibilities ("g" above) that were not addressed to the group. Discuss what the "early warnings" look like for each situation.