



A Guide to Training in Decision-Making for People with Developmental Disabilities

Horrigan Cole Enterprises

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A Guide to Training in Decision-Making for People with Developmental Disabilities

Developed for Horrigan Cole Enterprises

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Training exercises in this Training Guide have been adapted from Making Choices, published by the Accreditation Council on Services for People with Disabilities. 100 West Road, Suite 408, Towson, Maryland. (410) 583-0060.

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Use of this Training Guide

This Guide is a simple script for people to teach individuals with developmental disabilities to learn and practice a basic problem solving model called S.T.O.G. (See, Think, O.K.?, Go). This guide was field tested with 75 people with a range of developmental disabilities and 25 support staff. This guide is easily adaptable to the needs of any audience.

Questions without action in the text are for basic class discussions. Words in capital letters denote expected answers from the audience. “< >” denote teacher actions. Behind each section of the Guide are the limited number of posters or handouts used for the course. The teachers in the field test, used newsprint and a blackboard to display classwork.

This guide was used for a five-week course of two hours of instruction at each class section. The Guide was designed to be used for 10 students. It is recommended by the teachers, and many of the support staff who field tested the Guide, that the material be repeated with the students every so often. Subjective and objective evaluation data from the field testing of this guide showed that students were able to use the S.T.O.G. concept to make decisions, but not without continued support.

A final suggestion from the teachers is that the S.T.O.G. concept or worksheet could be reduced to a business card size in some fashion, and laminated, for people to carry with them as a reminder to use the S.T.O.G. system to make decisions.

Session 1

Increasing Confidence and Introduction to S.T.O.G.

ICE BREAKER

Have you ever done something that you didn't want to do? Give me an example.

The message in these situations is often that you're not your own authority - that you're not in charge.

How does this make you feel?

One way to be in charge is to make your own decisions. This class will teach you how to make decisions, or how to improve your decision making skills.

DISCUSSION

Everyone makes decisions and choices every day. There is no right way to make a decision. YOUR way is the BEST way.

When someone makes a choice or a decision, they use their past experience. This means they think about similar or the same decisions they've made before and use that information to help them make a decision. What is experience?

PRACTICE

For example, I . . . (teacher gives example of simple decision made and describes past experience used to make the decision)

Think about how you started your day and the choices you had to make. Tell us about one of those choices.

<Teacher makes the list of choices with picture cues on newsprint.>

Now, tell me about things that have happened to you in the past that you thought about when you made this decision or choice.

DISCUSSION

Very good!! All of you make choices and decisions everyday - and are successful at it!! (or, it's never to late to start having experiences)

The more experience you have with making decisions, the more confidence you have. With some choices you have so much past experience and confidence that you don't think about the choice any longer.

Sometimes experiences with choices are negative, or not good. This can happen in group homes where people sometimes are given very few choices about, for example, when to shower, when to eat meals, where to sleep, or where to keep your things.

It takes courage to make decisions. You are all courageous!!! Good for you!!!

This class will teach you a way to make good choices for YOU. We call it the "STOG". It stands for "See, Think, O.K.?, and Go". This class will give you training and tools so that you can leave our 5 week class better prepared to make you own decisions. Most people don't do the "Go" part and try their decision after they decide to make it. We hope this class will make you want to act on your decision.

<Pass out the basic STOG handout and display on overhead projector, easel or newsprint. Review the STOG steps>

PRACTICE

Let's use STOG to help you make decisions for yourself.

<Assist each interested class member to complete a S.T.O.G., using an overhead projector, easel or newsprint, and the handout to record their work. Save a copy of the S.T.O.G.s for review in future classes, but assure the students take one with them if they like.>

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?)



Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1.



2.



3.



Then think about:



Head - Is this the best choice for me?



Heart - How do I feel about this choice?



Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?



Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



Make a decision



Go for it! How did it work?

Session 2

S.T.O.G. Practice

REVIEW

Let's review from last week's class.

- Σ Is there a right or wrong way to make a decision or choice? NO
- Σ Whose way is the best way to make a decision or choice? YOURS
- Σ What information do people use to make the decision or choice? PAST EXPERIENCE

Now let's review the way to make a decision or choice with the STOG. What are the four steps?

<Use overhead/poster of STOG icons for cues>

- Σ SEE
- Σ THINK
- Σ OK?
- Σ GO

DISCUSSION

Very good!

SCRIPT FOR TEACHING S.T.O.G

Teachers should read the script aloud to self-advocates. A "< >" in the script is the cue for the teacher to take action.

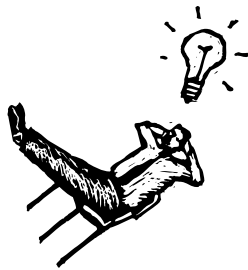
Step 1: "See"



The first step on the handout simply states "What do I see"?

<Help the group discuss and identify what is the choice or problem.>

Step 2: "Think"



Now we're going to talk about the THINK section of S.T.O.G. We will list all the possibilities or solutions to the choice or problem. To make sure we let ourselves think of ALL the possibilities, we want to BRAINSTORM. Brainstorming means that you have a sudden bright idea - or that your brain has a storm!!!!

<Show Brainstorming poster>

So, let's put our "thinking caps" on and think of all the possible solutions to the choice or decision that we identified in the "See" step. We won't judge any idea as good or bad. Some ideas may sound silly or crazy, but it doesn't make any difference. All ideas are GOOD ideas because they are YOUR ideas!

<Assist the group in brainstorming solutions to the problem.>



Step 3: "O.K.?"

Now you have ideas about the choices you could make or how to solve the problem. You can now go back to the ideas and decide which solution or choice you like best.

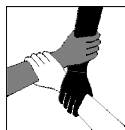
Exploring all parts of a situation can help in making the best choices. You can help yourself do this by thinking about four symbols of choices, then answering some questions that go along with these elements. The four elements are:



HEAD



HEART



HANDS



FUTURE



HEAD

The head stands for the sensible part of the choice. To decide if a choice is right for you, ask yourself the following questions:

- ≤ Can I afford this choice?
- ≤ Will this choice help me get other things I need and want?
- ≤ Is this the best choice for me?
- ≤ How will this affect me in the future?
- ≤ How will I feel about this choice tomorrow?



HEART

The heart stands for how you feel about your choice. The following questions will help you learn how you feel:

- ≤ What do I think about this choice today?
- ≤ Do I feel happy? Why?
- ≤ Do I feel afraid? Why?

Sometimes a person feels one way about a decision, but after some thought changes his or her mind. It's okay to change your mind about a decision if it's truly what you want. Make sure the decision is based on what is best for YOU. Your decision should not be based on what someone else has "talked you into." Your first reaction to a decision is usually the right choice.



HANDS

Hands represent how a choice will affect other people. Ask yourself:

- ≤ Whom will my decision affect?
- ≤ How will my decision affect others?
- ≤ Will anyone try to stop me from making this decision? Why?
- ≤ Is there someone I should ask for advice?
- ≤ What are my responsibilities (legal)?
- ≤ Is it safe?



FUTURE

Future talks about if and how your decision will affect the rest of your life. Hopefully you have a dream for your life. Your choices and decisions should help you to live your dream.

<Assist the group in reviewing each choice or solution by using the pictures on the following page : “Head, Heart, Hands, Future.” Then, ask the group to discuss which choice or decision seems the best. This will be their choice or solution.>

Step 4: “Go!”



Excellent work! The last step is to try out your choice or solution. This is an important step because many people do not actually do what they say they will. When you are finished, ask yourself if the choice or solution worked. If not, you can use the S.T.O.G. again to find another choice or solution. Use S.T.O.G. for making decisions in your self-advocacy group, or for personal decisions in your life.

- - <This is the end of the script for teaching S.T.O.G.> - -

S.T.O.G.



See



Think



O.K.?

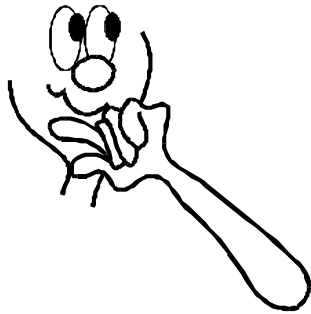


Go!

Brainstorm



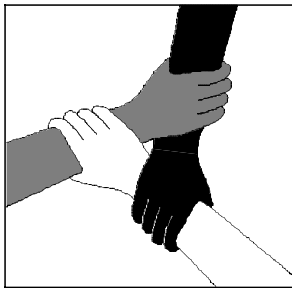
Head, Heart, Hands, Future



Head



Heart



Hands



Future

Session 3

People Who Do and Don't Help and What to Do

REVIEW

We're not going to talk much about STOG today, so before we start to make sure we don't forget it, let's review what the STOG steps are:

- Σ SEE
- Σ THINK
- Σ OK?
- Σ GO

<Use STOG on overhead or easel for pictorial cues>

Did you try out your decision from that you made at our last class? How did it go?

DISCUSSION

Everyone seeks advice of friends and family to get advice on their choices, but YOU make the final choice.

Let's pick one of the decisions you talked about in the first class. Let's talk about who you talked to before you made the decision:

- Σ friends
- Σ family
- Σ professionals
- Σ others

<Teacher notes each participants' response>

What questions did you ask?

Who made the final decision?

Will you ask these people for advice again?

This is part of the important past experience you use to make decisions that we talked about in the first class. Now you know some people you will talk to and some you won't the next time you need some advice to make a decision.

Unfortunately, people with disabilities aren't always given a chance to make their own decisions and people in their life make decisions for them. Why do you think that happens?

<Teacher notes responses on newsprint>

That's right. People think that because you have a disability, you probably can't make your own good decisions. Is that right? NO

Let's have each person tell us who in their life might stop them from making a decision.

<Write the answers on the newsprint>

How does this make you feel?

<Write the answers on the newsprint>

PRACTICE

Note:

At this point students typically discuss that these experiences made them angry or that they had difficulty speaking up for themselves when this happened. Depending on your students needs, below are two additional strategies for the remainder of class that require the use of video programs.

Angry response:

Anger is a correct way for you to feel when this happens to you. This is also a signal that there is a problem to be solved and hopefully STOG can help you do that.

Let's practice some social skills to help these people understand that you can and should be making choices about your life. The social skills we'll practice today are "staying calm" and "asking for help" (use "Social Skills" Lessons 7, 10, 11, 14, 15 from the "Beginning Steps to Self Advocacy" video training package published by The University of Southern California University Affiliated Program, 213-669-2300)

Need to speak up response:

Let's practice some ways to get better at speaking up for ourselves.

(Provide a list of local self advocacy groups for reference as a place for people with disabilities to practice speaking up for themselves. Use the "Robert's Choice" section from the "Beginning Steps to Self Advocacy" video package referenced above or the "Assertiveness" section of the video and Exercise #1 "Speaking Up" and Exercise #7 "Sculpture" from "Four Easy Pieces" video package published by Advocating Change Together, (612) 641-0297)

Session 4

Ways to Make Decisions

DISCUSSION

How is the work going on the decisions you made in class with STOG?

Sometimes people make decisions very quickly, and other times people take a lot of time to make decisions.

<Suggest displaying pictorial cues to assist with these discussions, e.g. a scene with someone pushing ahead of someone else in line, etc.)

Scientists have found there are three ways people make decisions:

1. Don't make a decision and wait until someone else to makes the decision for you.

What are some decisions you might not want to make and would wait until someone else made it for you?

<Teacher notes responses>

2. Make a decision very fast, without thinking about it much, because you panic (you're afraid), or because it seems dangerous.

What are some decisions you might make quickly because you're afraid our you think it is dangerous?

<Teacher notes responses.>

3. Taking the time to think through the problem, like with STOG.

Which way do you usually make decisions? Why?

<Teacher notes participants' responses>

Let's review STOG again.

<Teacher reviews STOG>

PRACTICE

Let's get out the work you've done with STOG. Let's think what would have happened if, like we just discussed:

1. We let someone else make the decision for us. What decisions would have been made?
2. We make the decision quickly? (no time to brainstorm great ideas)

<Teacher notes responses.>

DISCUSSION

There's not always time to use STOG to make decisions, but you see what happens if you let someone else make the decision for you or when you make a decision too fast.

Always try to find the time to use STOG.

Session 5

Rights and Responsibilities; S.T.O.G. Review

REVIEW

How is the work going on the decisions you made in class with STOG?

DISCUSSION

Decision making is a right. What is a right?

POWER OR PRIVILEGE SOMEONE IS ALLOWED

All rights come with responsibilities. What are responsibilities?

CHOOSING RIGHT FROM WRONG; THAT YOU CAN BE TRUSTED

Can you tell me what your rights are?

<Trainer writes on newsprint>

Can you tell me what your responsibilities are with each right?

<Trainer notes on newsprint.>

People First of California, a state wide self advocacy organization, has done a lot of work to write down people's right and responsibilities. Let's go over those.

<Pass out and review the Rights and Responsibilities handout.>

Very good. Well, this is our last class. Let's work on making one more decision using STOG before the class ends.

<Trainer walks participants' through the STOG again as done earlier.>

You've all done excellent work!! Remember, you are in charge of making your own decisions, and S.T.O.G. can help you make good decisions.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We are PEOPLE FIRST. Our disabilities are a normal part of life. As American citizens, we have the same rights and must meet the same responsibilities as anyone. We're entitled to the support we need to do that.

RIGHTS

- To live like normal people.
- To have the relationships we choose.
- To have the medical care we need.
- To learn all we can.
- To control our lives, take risks, and make choices.
- To come and go as we want.
- To be free and not in state hospitals.
- To have wishes and dreams.
- To be treated as equals.
- To have and express our own feelings and opinions - and to be heard and taken seriously.
- To be free to ask for what we want.
- To stand up for ourselves as people, agencies, and the government.
- To live free from abuse.
- To work.
- To have fun.
- To get information from professionals.
- To have privacy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- To not harm ourselves or others.
- To treat others as equals, with respect.
- To take care of our health, and to ask for help if we need it.
- To use what we learn.
- To be responsible for the consequences of our own actions.
- To be dependable and let people know where we are.
- To accept other places to live, and not act out on other people.
- To believe in ourselves, keep control, and not get mad at ourselves.
- To act like an equal.
- To find out what's right for us, and speak up in whatever way we can.
- To ask when we want something from someone.
- To be strong, face our fears, and ask for help when we need it.
- To tell if someone is hurting us.
- To do the job right.
- To not hurt anyone in the process
- To think about information we get.
- To ask for a place away from people.

If you have questions or want more information, contact: California People First, 120 1 Street, Second Floor - B, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 552-6625

APPENDIX

S.T.O.G. SAMPLES

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



See

What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?)

My favorite staff person is leaving! I want to do something for her.



Think

Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1. Wish her good luck.



No



It's not enough



n/a



n/a

2. Give her money.



No



I don't have much



n/a



n/a

3. Buy her a gift.



Yes



Good



Day staff need to help me



n/a

Then think about:



Head - Is this the best choice for me?



Heart - How do I feel about this choice?



Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?



Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



O.K.?

Make a decision

I will buy her a gift.



Go!

Go for it! How did it work?

Day staff forgot to help me. I didn't remind them.

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?)
I want to find a boyfriend.



Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1. Try to find someone through the telefriend program.				
Yes	The regional center telefriend program is safe	n/a	I want to leave the group home to live with a boyfriend	
2. Go to a party or dance given by a group I know.				
No	It's safer to go to a party given by people you know	n/a		
3. Meet somebody at work.				
OK		n/a	I work	

Then think about:

- Head - Is this the best choice for me?
- Heart - How do I feel about this choice?
- Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?
- Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



Make a decision
I will try the Regional Center telefriend program.



Go for it! How did it work?
I called the Regional Center. I am waiting for the information.

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



See

What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?)

I would like to go on a double date with my girlfriend, Maria.



Think

Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1. Call my brother and ask him to go on a double date.



Yes



Maria is stubborn.
I'm nervous about
talking to her.



- Maria might get mad
- My brother is in LA
- Mom may need to drive



I want to get
married

2. Talk my girlfriend (Maria) into going on a double date.



I want to get
married

3.



Then think about:



Head - Is this the best choice for me?



Heart - How do I feel about this choice?



Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?



Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



O.K.?

Make a decision

I will talk to my brother (& mother) about going on a double date.



Go!

Go for it! How did it work? **My brother doesn't want to go on a double date and he won't say why. I don't know anyone else to ask. I'm going to forget it.**

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



See





What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?)





What color nailpolish shall I pick today?







Think

Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1. **Pick a color that matches the color of my clothes.**
   

2. **Pick a color I like.**
   

3. **Pick a color I like.**
   

Then think about:



Head - Is this the best choice for me?



Heart - How do I feel about this choice?



Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?



Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



O.K.?

Make a decision

Pick a color that matches the color of my clothes.



Go!

Go for it! How did it work?

People say they like the color of my nails.

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions





See

What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?) **Some decisions (like planning meals or choosing foods at the market) take a long time to make. When I'm under pressure I get nervous and I can't make a decision.**



Think

Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1. **Tell, in a polite way, the person who is putting pressure on me to make a decision, to give me some more time.**
 Yes - I need more time  I may get verbally frustrated  •Others may have to wait •My mom may get upset  I want to think faster to make decisions on my own

2. **Make a choice and don't worry if it's completely right.**

3. **Plan or get information before I need to make a decision, or find someone to discuss it with, so I know what I need to do.**

Then think about:



Head - Is this the best choice for me?



Heart - How do I feel about this choice?



Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?



Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



O.K.?

Make a decision **Tell, in a polite way, the person who is putting pressure on me to make a decision, to give me some more time.**



Go!

Go for it! How did it work?

I don't have the courage yet to say "give me more time."

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?) **Everyday, I need to leave the group home with clean, dry clothes, in case I need to change. Group home staff forget and I often have to wear wet clothes.**



Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|------------|--|-----------|--|--|--|-----|
| | 1. Yell at the group home staff. | Yes | | OK | | Group home staff get upset, but it works | | n/a |
| | 2. My boyfriend, Jay, and I will remind staff about my clothes the night before. | Yes | | OK | | Jay will do it | | n/a |
| | 3. My day staff can call to help. | Yes | | OK | | Day staff could write it up in the daily log or call, but they don't want to do it because it's not their responsibility | | n/a |

Then think about:

- Head - Is this the best choice for me?
- Heart - How do I feel about this choice?
- Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?
- Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



Make a decision **My boyfriend and I will remind staff to pack dry clothes for me the night before.**



Go for it! How did it work?
It has been working for three weeks!

S.T.O.G.
A Good Way to Make Decisions



See

What do I see? (What is the choice or problem?)

My younger sister teases me and bosses me around.



Think

Think about and list the possibilities or solutions.

1. Tell my brother what my sister is doing so she'll get in trouble and stop.



Yes



Good



• Brother has done it before
• Sister will be mad



n/a

2. Get a lock on my bedroom door and lock my sister out.



No, parents won't let me



OK



My sister will be mad at me



n/a

3. Tease my sister so she'll stop.



She sometimes ignores me when I do it



I would love it



• My grandma has to break up the fight
• My sister gets mad and throws things



n/a

Then think about:



Head - Is this the best choice for me?



Heart - How do I feel about this choice?



Hands - Who will be affected by this choice?



Future - How will this affect my life and/or dreams?



O.K.?

Make a decision **Tell my brother what my sister is doing so she'll get in trouble and stop teasing me and bossing me around.**



Go!

Go for it! How did it work? **My brother talked to my sister and she hasn't teased or bossed me around for 3 weeks.**

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