



Switch on your decision making brain

Strong decision making skills reduce impulsive responses to emotions. Like when we react first, and think of the consequences later.

Decision making skills help us face up to problems and work out solutions, instead of avoiding issues and hoping they will go away. Studies of emotional regulation show that people who are good at problem solving, tend to have lower levels of emotional distress. To be good at making decisions, we need problem solving skills and awareness of our values and bigger life goals. Knowing your values helps you make decisions that 'feel right'.

The first skill in being good at decision making is learning to switch off your emotional brain and switch on your decision making brain. All planning and problem solving occurs in the front of your brain. Emotions and impulses come from somewhere in the centre. The best way to practice switching on your decision making brain is by stopping and taking a breath before you respond.

SWITCH ON YOUR DECISION MAKING BRAIN WITH STOP AND THINK AHEAD



Stop.



Take a breath. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.



Observe two body signals.



Predict how you want to feel in 5 minutes



Try to think ahead to how you want to feel in 2 hours.



PROBLEM SOLVING IN 5 STEPS

STEP 1. THE PROBLEM

Break the problem situation up into different parts. Describe the problem, what you are thinking, your feelings, your body signals and behaviour.

Describe the problem

Thinking

Feelings

Body Signals

Behaviours

STEP 2. THINK AHEAD

Imagine what you want to feel like in 5 minutes time. Now imagine how you want to feel in 2 hours time.

5 Minutes

2 Hours

STEP 3. VALUES

Remind yourself of your top 3 values. Keep your next steps in line with these values.

1.

2.

3.

STEP 4. SOLUTIONS

Come up with some ideas to solve the problem. Consider your thoughts, feelings, body signals and behaviour.

STEP 5. PLAN AHEAD

What could go wrong? What will you do if this happens?



PRACTICE & REFLECT

Consider the five steps in problem solving when you face difficulties this week. Tick it off in the calendar when you have solved it.

MON TUE WED THUR FRI SAT SUN