

Name: _____ Date: _____

One way to learn to make choices that lead to happiness is to examine our assumptions, intentions and motivations in a given situation. These elements work together to help us determine the proper choices to make in order to achieve our intentional life goals. By evaluating our assumptions, intentions, and motivations, and by teaching our children to do the same, we learn to be responsible for our own happiness, and we develop family resilience.

Explore the possibilities in making good choices by completing the questions below with your child.

A Assumption

If you're facing a problem, the first question to ask your child is, "What assumptions might you be making that might be contributing to the problem?"

For example, suppose your child doesn't like cleaning her room. You might be assuming that your child is just being defiant, but what if you asked your child if she would like some help? Then instead of your child assuming that cleaning her room is a chore, she might assume instead that it is a good opportunity to spend some quality time with you.

I Intention

The next question to ask your child is, "What is your intention?" What is your child trying to accomplish with the behavior? Are your child's assumptions and motivations working together to help to accomplish their intention? If not, what would need to change about your child's assumptions and motivations in order to achieve their intention? If what they're doing isn't working to accomplish their intention, is it possible for them to do something different?

M Motivation

Finally, ask your child, "What is your motivation here?" All behavior is purposeful. This means that people only engage in a behavior if there's a reward for it. If we examine our motivations, we can truly be honest with ourselves about why we tend to engage in certain patterns of behavior. If your child chooses to change the motivation for the behavior, does it change the intention? Does it change the underlying assumptions? Does it lead to better choices?

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Now that you've thought about assumptions, intentions, and motivations that might be contributing to the problem, go through the questions below with your child. Try to be aware of your own assumption, intentions, and motivations as well, and how they might be interfering with your own ability to make good choices.

ASSUMPTIONS

What assumptions might your child be making that might be contributing to the problem?

What assumptions might you be making that might be contributing to the problem?

What are some other assumptions your child might make that may lead to better choices?

What are some other possible assumptions you might make that may lead to better choices?

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INTENTIONS

What intentions might your child have that might be contributing to the problem?

What intentions might you have that might be contributing to the problem?

What are some other intentions your child might have that may lead to better choices?

What are some other possible intentions you might have that may lead to better choices?

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MOTIVATIONS

What motivations (rewards) might your child be seeking in this situation that might be contributing to the problem? What's the reason for your child's choice?

What motivations (rewards) might you be seeking in this situation that might be contributing to the problem? What's the reason for your choice?

Is there another motivation (reward) your child might seek that would lead to a better choice in this situation?

Is there another motivation (reward) you might seek that would lead to a better choice in this situation?

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Go back and look at your responses to the previous questions on this AIM worksheet. Use your responses about these previous questions to answer the questions below.

How many of the assumptions you listed were internally motivated? That is, how many of the assumptions you and your child made were about making choices to change your own behaviors and beliefs? List them here.

How many of the assumptions you and your child listed were externally motivated? That is, how many of your assumption were about getting each other to change your behaviors and beliefs? List them here.

How many of the intentions you and your child listed were internally motivated? How many of your intentions were about things you have the power to change by making better choices? List them here.

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How many of the intentions you and your child listed were externally motivated? That is, how many of your intentions were about what other people choose to do? List them here.

How many of the motivations you and your child listed were internally motivated? That is, how many of your motivations were about rewards you were choosing for yourself? List them here.

How many of the motivations you and your child listed were externally motivated? That is, how many of your motivations were rewards you expect other people to choose to give to you? List them here.

5.5 Positive Parenting and Choices

Ecoplay uses an authoritative approach in which children are allowed some control over that happens to them. As we discussed in the previous session, this means giving your children the opportunity to make choices that are acceptable to both you and your child. Children can't learn to make good choices without the opportunity to practice making choices. The way to teach them to make good choices is to give them as many opportunities as possible to practice their choice-making skills.

Communicating with your child about choices and consequences allows your child some control within parameters that you define while still allowing you to retain most of the control over choices and consequences. You can't learn to make good choices unless you have the opportunity to make "not-so-good" choices. In Ecoplay, the parent controls which choices are within the realm of acceptability so that the "not so good" choices aren't catastrophic choices.

One way to start exploring your child's choice-making skills is with the *Ecoplay Choices and Consequences Contract*.

This contract is included in the homework resources for last week's session. The *Ecoplay Choice-Giving* handout resource for this week will demonstrate how to give your child the opportunity to make choices. The *Ecoplay Choice-Giving* handout can be used in conjunction with the *Ecoplay Choices and Consequences Contract* to improve your child's choice-making skills.