

STRATEGIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DECISION MAKING: THE SMART APPROACH



STRATEGY	DIMENSIONS	SAMPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS
<u>SEEK HELP</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking information Requesting mediation Welcoming correction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where might I seek additional information or an unbiased, objective opinion? Would it help to involve a mediator or consultant? Do I welcome correction or input from others, including subordinates?
<u>MANAGE YOUR EMOTIONS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying emotions Managing emotions Both positive (excitement) and negative (depression, anxiety, anger) emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are my emotional reactions to this situation? Am I feeling anxious, frustrated, or pressured? How might my emotions influence my decision-making? Would taking a “time out” or deep breath help? Using “Freeze Frame” technique? Am I managing stress each day?
<u>ANTICIPATE CONSEQUENCES</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consequences to others and to self Long-term and short-term consequences Positive and negative consequences Risk management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the likely short-term and long-term outcomes of various choices? Who will be affected by my decisions and how? How might this decision impact my career and me? Which outcomes in this situation are controllable? How can risks be minimized? How can benefits be maximized?
<u>RECOGNIZE RULES AND CONTEXT</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize rules—formal (e.g., laws & policies) and informal (prevailing social norms) Recognize the power dynamics (e.g., social hierarchies, decision-makers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the causes of the problems in this situation? Which causes can I change? What ethical principles, laws, or regulations apply in this situation? Who are the decision-makers in this situation? Does anyone have the power to control outcomes? If so, who and how?
<u>TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS AND MOTIVES</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test your assumptions and unspoken rules Examine your motives Empathically compare your assumptions and motives to those of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might I be making faulty assumptions about the causes of the situation, alternatives, or other’s intentions? How can I find out? What are my motives? Are they the same or different as those I serve? Could self-serving biases be distorting my perception of the situation? How will others view my choices?
<u>Notes:</u>	<p>The strategies are related and overlapping, but they have distinct elements. E.g., testing assumptions is sometimes a good way to manage emotions and it can lead to seeking help.</p>	

Want to be SMARTER?
“Evaluate” outcomes of your actions and “Revise” your approach based on outcomes