

Helping Students Solve Problems

The "SODAS" Method

Developed by Jan Rosa 1973

One of the major obstacles that teenagers face is learning to make good, rational decisions. Often, students simply do the first thing that comes to mind or what "everyone else" is doing, instead of examining their situation and thinking logically of their choices and the possible consequences of their choices. This is a simple method that you can use to help your student develop better problem solving skills.

1. **Situation** - look at the situation. (Describe the problem.)
2. **Options** - list as many choices as you can. (Ways to solve the problem) List at least three.
3. **Disadvantages** - list as many disadvantages (negative things that could happen) of each option as you can. List at least three.
4. **Advantages** - list as many advantages (positive things that could happen) of each option as you can. List at least three.
5. **Solution** - based on the advantages and disadvantages, select the best option

It is extremely important that your student learn to make rational choices. This method helps them to examine problems in a rational way that is easy for them to remember. Use every opportunity to help your student develop this skill. For example, if they ask you for help or if you hear of a situation in the news that could pertain to your student, these are great chances for you to help your student make good decisions. But remember, it is their decision and part of growing up is learning from one's mistakes ... allow your student to grow this way (as long as their choice does not bring harm to themselves or others.)

For most of us, this process seems very simplistic and tedious, but many of these students have never had the guidance of a trusted adult and do not know how to look at situations realistically. This is really a process that most of us do automatically when we are faced with a choice in our everyday lives, but it is something that some kids need to be taught.

Here are some cases in which your student could use the SODAS method:

1. Your student tells you that they saw another student using drugs/alcohol.
2. In the news, you see an article about some youths that robbed a store to get some money.
3. Your student has earned an "F" on an English paper.
4. Your student saw another kid at school drop a \$10.00 bill.

In fact, almost every situation is an opportunity to help your student become a better decision-maker, try and use these opportunities.

SODAS

RATIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Situation - Look at the situation. (Describe the problem.)

Options - List as many choices as you can. (Different ways to solve the problem.) List at least three.

Disadvantages - List as many disadvantages of each option as you can. (Negative things that could happen.) List at least three.

Advantages - List as many advantages of each option as you can. (Positive things that could happen.) List at least three.

Solution - Based on the advantages and disadvantages select the best option.

SODAS
RATIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Situation -

Options -

Disadvantages

Advantages -

Solution -
