

Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Processes for Working with Transition-Aged Youth & Young Adults

SODAS Framework

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FILE: Mod SODAS HANDOUT ppt 101006

NOTE: Print this off as a HANDOUT with 3 slides per page.
Participants will then be able to make notes on this doc.

THE
COALITION

OF BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH
AGENCIES, INC.

Coalition's Center for Rehabilitation and Recovery, October 2006

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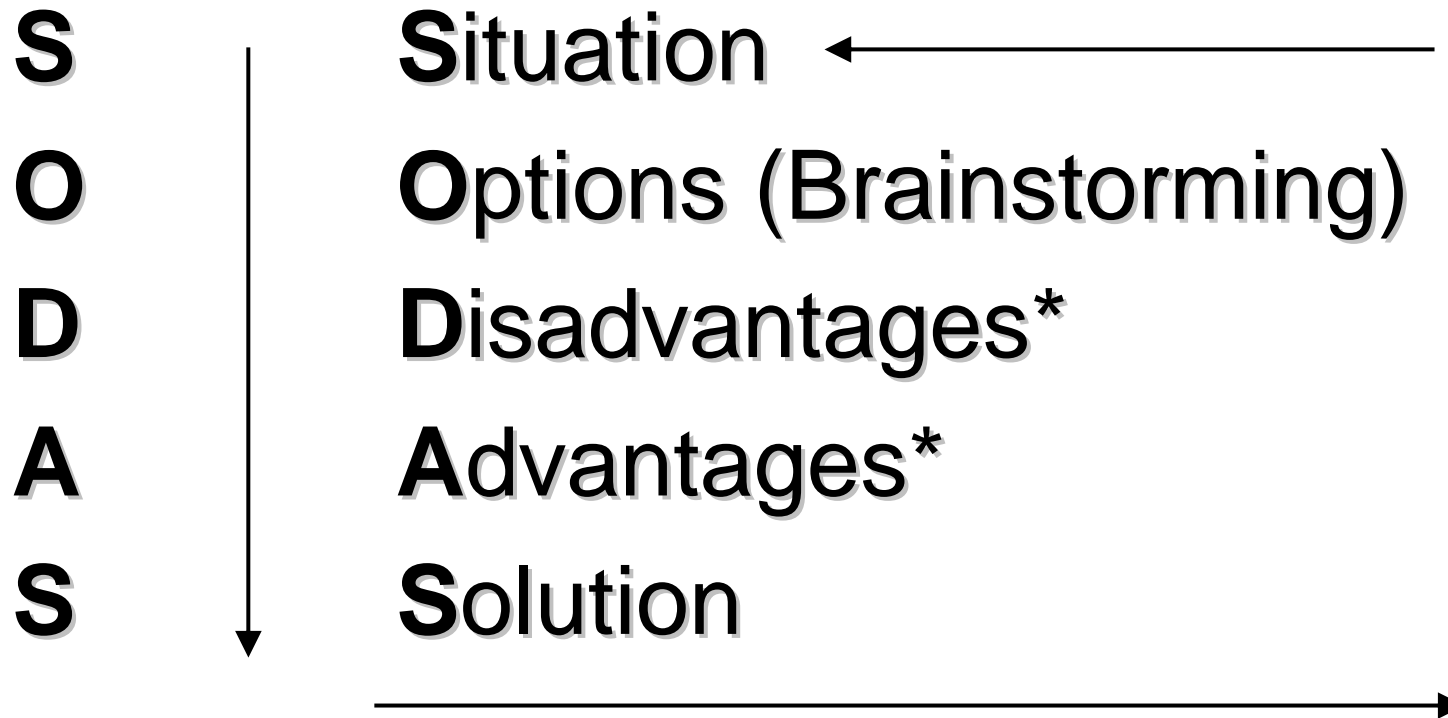
Problem-Solving & Decision-Making

- Integral in every person's daily life
- Successful transition to adulthood requires
 - Communicating competently
 - Working cooperatively with others
 - Expressing one's own opinions and beliefs
 - Understanding/appreciating perspectives of others
 - Reasoned disagreement, negotiation & compromise
- Youth & young adults struggle, particularly those with EBD

Problem-Solving & Decision-Making

- Teaching youth with EBD to make better decisions and resolve problems
 - Feel empowered, self-confident
 - Better able to get along with others
 - Better able to develop and maintain friendships and intimate personal relationships
 - More likely to create positive outcomes
 - More likely to improve their quality of life

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



SODAS Component Slides:

Preparation

- The Transition Facilitator (TF) makes the youth feel comfortable
- Introduces the young person to the SODAS process
- Explains how using problem-solving and decision-making can benefit the young person
- Uses rationales that fit youth's strengths and future goals

S = Situation

- Clear and complete picture of the situation
- What is the problem?
 - Who, what, where, when, & how
- Uses rationales that fit youth's strengths and future goals
 - As clear and behavioral as possible
- What are the feelings involved with the situation
 - Young person's feelings?
 - What do family members feel when the problem occurs?
 - How do others feel, e.g., friends, employer, teacher?
- Additional sample questions
 - What stops you from...?
 - How do you feel when...?
 - What happens after you...?
 - What exactly was said when...?

O = Options

- Assist youth in generating possible options
- Accept all of the options – evaluate later
- Reinforce youth for ideas and options
- Some types of questions that can assist in generating options
 - What can be done to solve the problem?
 - How can you achieve your goal?
 - What do you want to do?
 - What else could you do? What about...?
 - We have _____ on the list, how about considering _____?

SODAS Practice Demonstration

Group Practice Demo

- Role-play demonstration
- TF = Transition Facilitator
- Youth = Transition-age youth, young person, or young adult
- Scribe = Make notes on SODAS Worksheet (p.27) for the TFs
- Role-play practice demonstration on p.17
- Use the “**SODAS component slides**” for making your notes regarding the qualitative and process aspects of SODAS.
- We’ll appreciate your perspective and feedback on improving these interactions between a TF and the young person.

D = Disadvantages A = Advantages

- Help the youth explore the realistic A & D of **each option**
- May involve revising or combining aspects of options
 - What are the positives? What are the possible benefits? What are the advantages? Why are those things important to you?
 - What are the negatives? What are the drawbacks/disadvantages? What potential danger or harm could come of this option? Why are those things important?
 - How might family members and others who support you feel or be affected? What might happen for you as a result of their feelings or the impact on them? How about other people (e.g., employers, friends, teachers)? What might happen right away? How about a week or a month from now? What if you changed the option a little?

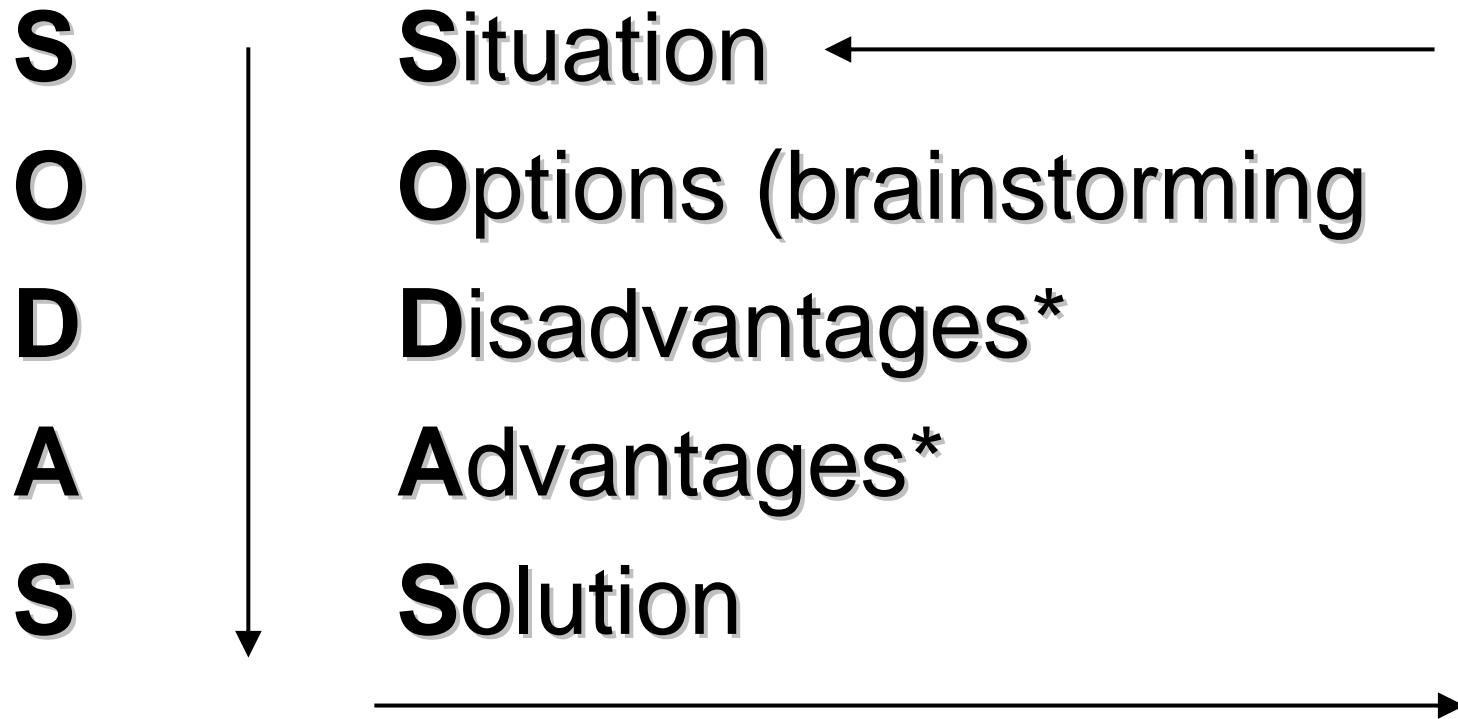
S = Solution

- Guide the youth in selecting an option that is safe & can use
- Choice must be **owned** by the youth
 - Remember the situation identified in the beginning. Will the selected option help resolve the situation?
 - How feasible is the option? Can it be done? Can the young person and his/her support system “pull it off”?
 - How to do it? Get at the specifics of who, what, when, where, and how regarding the actual implementation of the selected option.
Again, options and strategies may be refined as you go.
- Practice? Options involving human interaction may need to be role-played to make sure the young person, family members, and/or people who support the young person know what they are going to say and do. What if the person does or says X or Y? Anticipate it. Practice it. Reinforce appropriate behavior as it is rehearsed. Plan for the future.

Was the quality of the interaction appropriate for the situation?

- Solicit youth's input throughout interactions.
- Acknowledge youth's input (active listening).
- Remain non-judgmental
- Pleasant & steady voice tone (avoid lecturing).
- Express enthusiasm where appropriate.
- Facial expressions/Eye contact/Body language match. to
- Express empathy, concern, care, &/or encouragement.
- Offer assistance, as appropriate.
- Set limits and expectations, as necessary.
- Use positive descriptive praise.

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



Practice SODAS – 1A

- SODAS Behavior Rehearsal Manual – READ.
 - General Instruction for All Participants: SODAS - p. 3-4.
 - Practice Session 1, p. 3-4.
 - REVIEW SODAS Component **slides** on this PPT HANDOUT
- COUNT off: Ones = YP; Twos = TF.
 - READ -- Ones = YP, p.5; Twos = TF, p.6.
 - Fill out SODAS Worksheet (p. 27-28).
 - » Situation component.
 - » Options component.
- Volunteers to serve in:
 - Young person role
 - TF role
 - Scribe
 - Everyone else will observe and provide feedback

Practice SODAS – 1B

- Behavioral rehearsal forms:
 - Young person role.
 - » Your SODAS Worksheet.
 - TF role.
 - » Your SODAS Worksheet.
 - » SODAS component slides on this PPT HANDOUT.
 - Everyone else will observe and provide feedback
 - » Make notes on SODAS component slides on this ppt.
- Beh. Reh. Practice – Assume your roles!!
 - I’ll interrupt occasionally to comment & give feedback.
 - Ask others of you for your input and feedback.
- Let’s Practice – We’re all here to learn & have fun!

Practice SODAS – 1C

- Complete A & D component
 - Use your SODAS Worksheet
 - Fill out A & Ds based on options that have evolved from the Beh. Reh. role play. Everyone using same options!
- Resume Beh. Reh. Practice
 - Assume your roles.
 - I'll interrupt occasionally to comment & give feedback.
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- Let's Practice – We're all here to learn & have fun!
 - Professionalism.
 - Culture of giving & accepting positive & corrective feedback.

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- Additional sample questions
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 - How do you feel when...?
 - What happens after you...?
 - What exactly was said when...?

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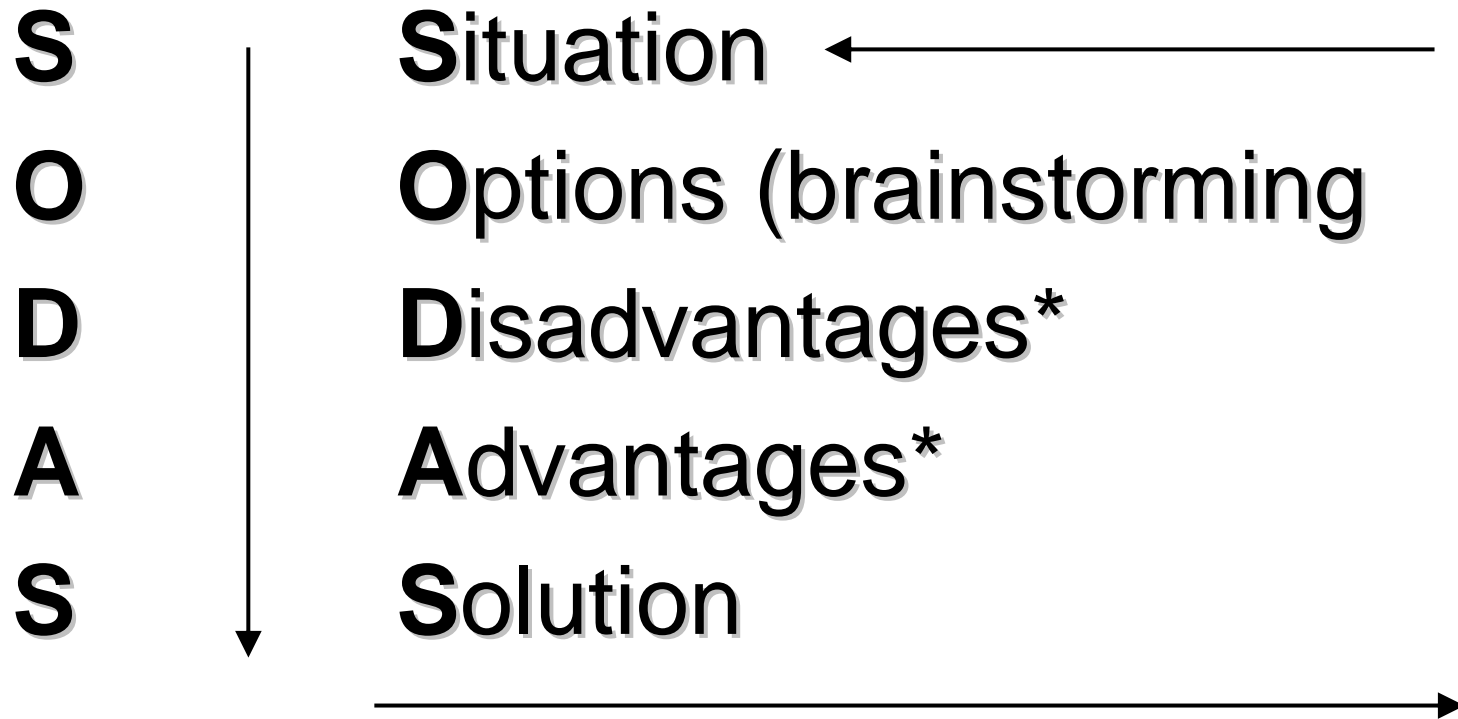
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- Offer assistance, as appropriate.
- Set limits and expectations, as necessary.
- Use positive descriptive praise.

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



Benefits to TF Using SODAS

- Benefits to TF for being non-judgmental.
 - Youth feels that TF understands him/her.
 - TF learns what youth finds reinforcing about options.
 - TF can use this “functional assessment” type of information when intervening with inappropriate behavior.
 - E.g., The TF thought drug use was because of peer pressure, but now finds out that the youth uses to relax or escape problems.
 - Similarly, more effective solutions will result if TF listens to youth’s perspective on A and D of options.
 - E.g., option: To avoid shoplifting, stay away from friends after school – BUT, youth sees this as a disadvantage because he/she likes to be with friends.
 - TF is not endorsing options, just acknowledging them at this point.

Challenge 1: Participation

- Getting the youth to participate in generating options
 - Goal is to get youth contributing to the brainstorming
 - May need to remind youth that all options can be listed
 - Praise any attempts to participate
 - Foster interest through rationales or direct questions
- If youth is still not on board
 - May need to elicit options by modeling some
 - Make sure these are person-centered and strength-based

Challenge 2: Non-Judgmental

- TF stay open, objective, and non-judgmental
 - Youth may list options that are dangerous, silly, extreme, or impossible to implement
 - Avoid saying: “That’s a good one, but I don’t know about this? Do you really think this is a good idea?”
 - The Option component is to generate as many options as possible
 - The Advantages and Disadvantages component is more evaluative

Challenge 3: A of “Negative” Options

- Difficult to acknowledge/validate advantages of negative behavior. For example:
 - Youth lists “getting high” helps me relax.
 - Possible responses:
 - » *Not validating*: “Well it may, but drugs are really bad for you.”
 - » *Not validating*: “Well, yes I suppose that is an advantage.”
 - » *Better*: TF “Okay, that could be an advantage.”
- TF should encourage youth to list options no matter how unreasonable sounding they are
- The A and D component is about generating options, not evaluating them.

Challenge 4: Not Listening to Youth

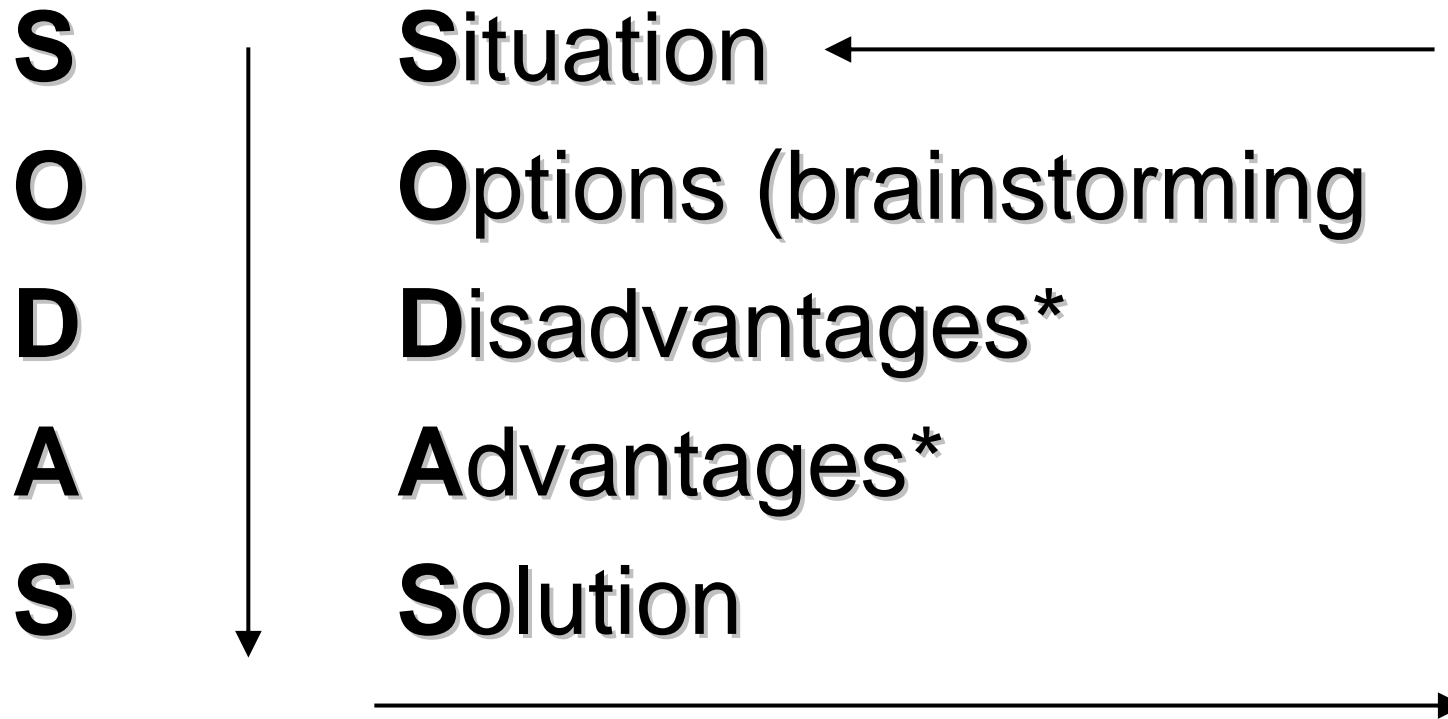
- Don't ignore **disadvantages** of TF "favored" option.
 - Option favored by TF: Don't hang out with friends after school as a way to avoid shoplifting.
 - Youth sees **disadvantage** of not having time with friends.
 - TF glosses over youth's concerns and emphasizes advantages of option.
- Youth will not implement TF favored options if:
 - They do not feel ownership of them.
 - If they hold no reinforcers for the youth.

Challenge 5: YP Selects Harmful S

■ TF should:

- Discuss potential harmful consequences
- Dissuade the youth from engaging in any behavior that could be harmful to self or others using rationales and “care” statements.
 - » Rationale = risks to youth for engaging in or avoiding inappropriate behavior.
 - » Care statement= TF cares about well-being and safety of youth
- Remind youth that TF must report threats of harm to self or others.
 - » Based on state law and program procedures.
 - » TF should have established ground rules from Day 1 –
 - » Including conditions for breaking confidentiality.
- Implement established “Prevention Plan” if necessary.
 - » OR may have to develop one.
- Immediately follow-up with supervisor, parents, & authorities as required.

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



Practice SODAS – 2A

- SODAS Behavior Rehearsal Manual – READ
 - General Instruction for All Participants: SODAS, p. 9-10.
 - Practice Session 2, p. 9-10.
 - REVIEW SODAS component slides on this PPT HANDOUT
- COUNT off: Ones = YP; Twos = TF.
 - READ -- Ones = YP, p.11-12; Twos = TF, p.13.
 - Fill out SODAS Worksheet (p. 29-30).
 - » Situation component.
 - » Options component.
- Volunteers to serve as:
 - Young person role.
 - TF role.
 - Everyone will observe & provide feedback.

Practice SODAS – 2B

- Behavioral rehearsal forms:
 - Young person role.
 - » Your SODAS Worksheet.
 - TF role.
 - » Your SODAS Worksheet.
 - » SODAS Component Checklist.
 - Everyone else will. Everyone else will.
 - » SODAS component slides on this PPT HANDOUT
- Beh. Reh. Practice – Assume your roles!!
 - I’ll interrupt occasionally to comment & give feedback.
 - Ask others of you for your input and feedback.
- Let’s Practice – We’re all here to learn & have fun!

Practice SODAS – 2C

- Complete A & D component
 - Use your SODAS Worksheet
 - Fill out A & Ds based on options that have evolved from the Beh. Reh. role play. Everyone using same options!
- Resume Beh. Reh. Practice
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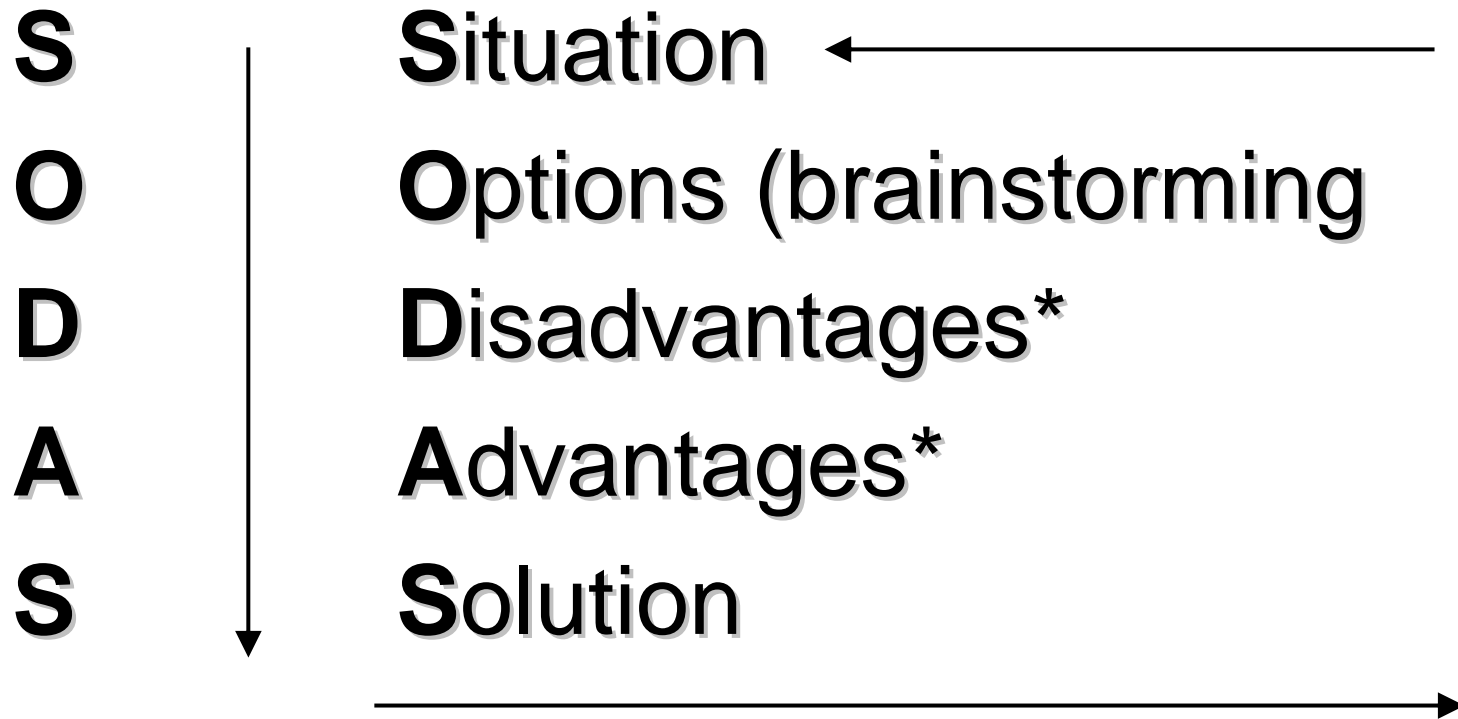
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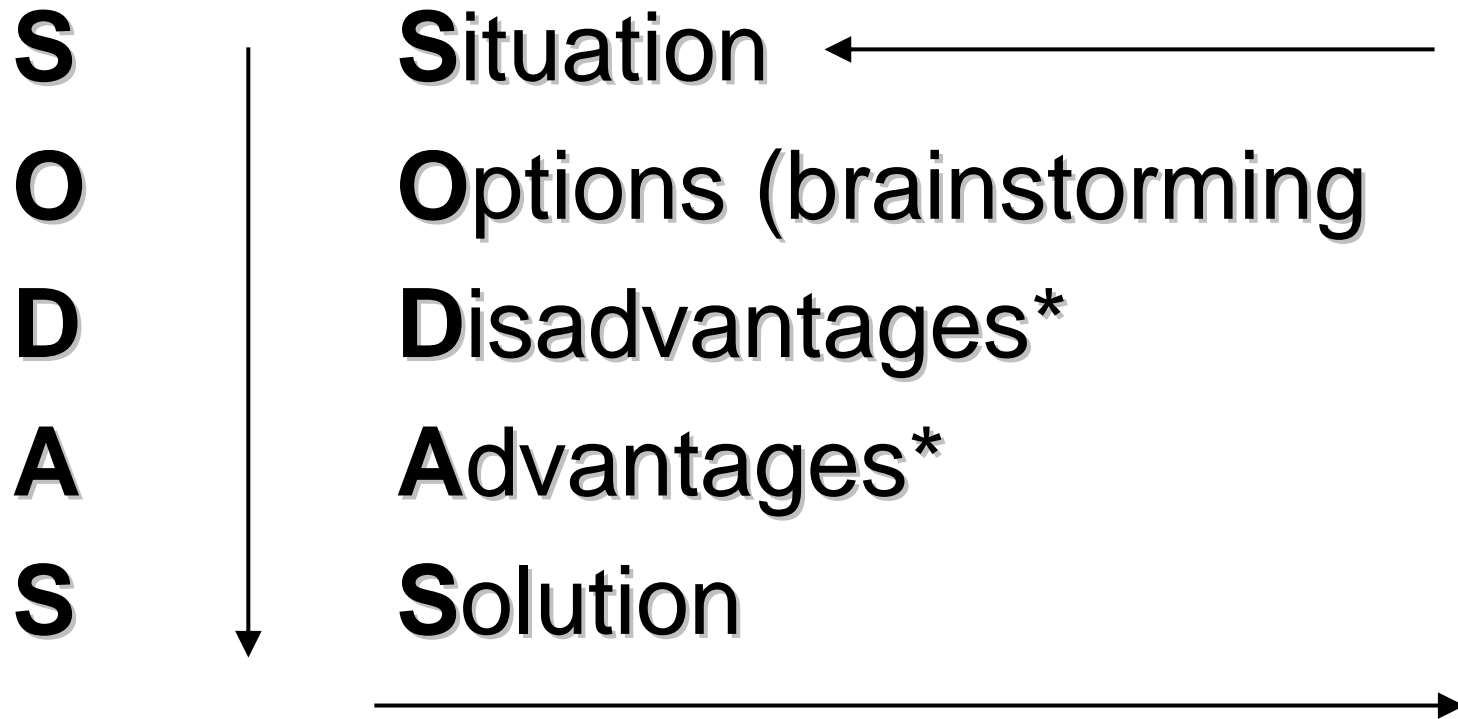
SODAS Problem-Solving Method



Benefits to Youth Using SODAS

- Benefits for conducting Options & the A & D components.
 - Helps youth understand there are alternative way to address a given situation.
 - Learn how to think thorough a situation before acting.
 - Learn that some times seemingly poor options can be changed into more realistic and more beneficial ones.

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



Follow-up 1

- Follow-up includes asking and discovering:
 - Whether or not the plan was implemented? What happened when the plan was tried?
 - If it was not implemented, maybe the problem was not so critical after all, OR maybe the young person just wanted time to talk, OR still not comfortable with option selected OR implementation plan.
 - If the plan was implemented, follow-up includes praising youth for participating in the problem-solving/decision-making process and for their hard work in following through with the option that was selected.

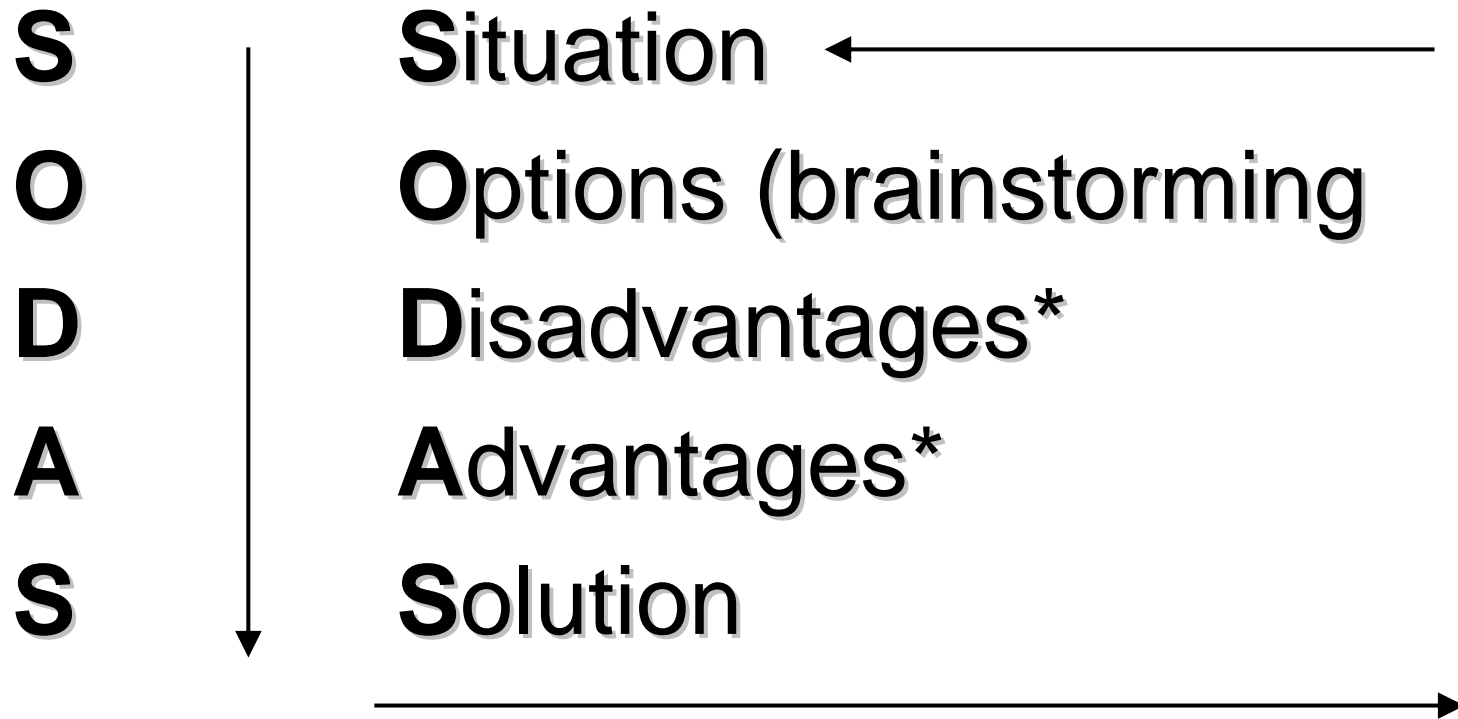
Follow-up 2

- Did the solution help resolve the situation?
- If it did not, then:
 - Use this opportunity to teach the young person how to persist and to normalize the experience of trying multiple options before an actual solution is found
 - Try to help young person see this experience as a learning opportunity, instead of a failure
 - Remind him/her of the phrase “if at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again”
 - Following-up with the young person is an important part of the process because it provides great opportunities to reconnect with the young person about the situation he/she previously problem-solved
 - Obtain new information for further problem-solving/decision-making, as well as give descriptive praise for effort made and encourage persistence toward reaching the goal.

Follow-up 3

- Checking in with the youth as he or she enacts a solution is critical in order to:
 - Establish concrete next steps and timelines
 - Provide support
 - Help the youth deal with unanticipated consequences or actions of others
 - Practice skills needed to implement the solution
 - Encourage the youth to actually follow-through with the solution.

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



SODAS Framework

- TF applies SODAs with young person to address several “real life” problems
- TF teaches the process to young person
- Over time the youth will learn to apply SODAS on his/her own to:
 - Improve decision-making.
 - Improve confidence in own decision-making abilities.
 - Improve quality of life.

How to Teach SODAS to Youth -1

- Teach SODAS in absence of a serious problem.
 - Explain it procedurally
 - Use a situation where it was used with youth as example.
 - Helpful to use diagram of SODAS Framework and copies of SODAS worksheets (See Module Appendix).
 - Model how writing key points down can help keep issues clear and allow for quick review and summary.
- Provide rationales for youth learning SODAS.
 - Using SODAs improves decision-making and personal outcomes.
 - This is especially the case in the midst of pressures, like:
 - » Employer raising his voice at him/her
 - » Parent telling him/her “no” to a request.
 - » Friends pressuring him/her to do something illegal.

How to Teach SODAS to Youth - 2

- Explain each component of SODAS.
 - Check to see if youth is understanding terms.
 - Use example relevant to youth, e.g., previous successful application that the TF had used with the youth.
 - Have youth explain each part to demonstrate that he/she “got it”
- Switch roles, have the youth apply SODAS in a “TF role.” while TF role-plays the youth
 - Can use same situation.
 - Better if a new situation, for example:
 - » A situation relevant to TF (but not *too* personal)
 - » Another situation that would be relevant to the youth
 - Again, for teaching purposes, this should not be a particularly sensitive issue for the youth

How to Teach SODAS to Youth - 3

- Provide SODAS materials.
 - Diagram of SODAS Framework from this module's appendix.
 - Several copies of SODAS worksheets.
 - Decide on location where the youth plans to keep them.
 - Maybe helpful to create a small, easy to carry, laminated card with SODAS steps printed on it.

How to Teach SODAS to Youth - 4

- Plan for youth's use of SODAS.
 - Remind youth of a situation that might come up.
 - » Let's say your mom starts riding you about your hair color again, how about if you write up a SODAS on how you might handle that so that you maximize benefits for yourself.
 - » “We can go through it together when we meet on Tuesday”
 - » Repeat rationales for learning and using SODAS.
 - » Provide encouragement, positive descriptive praise, and active follow-up to promote the use of SODAS.
 - » Remind youth that he/she can seek assistance in thinking through problem-solving strategies for addressing challenging situations. We all need trusted mentors to assist with problem-solving at times.

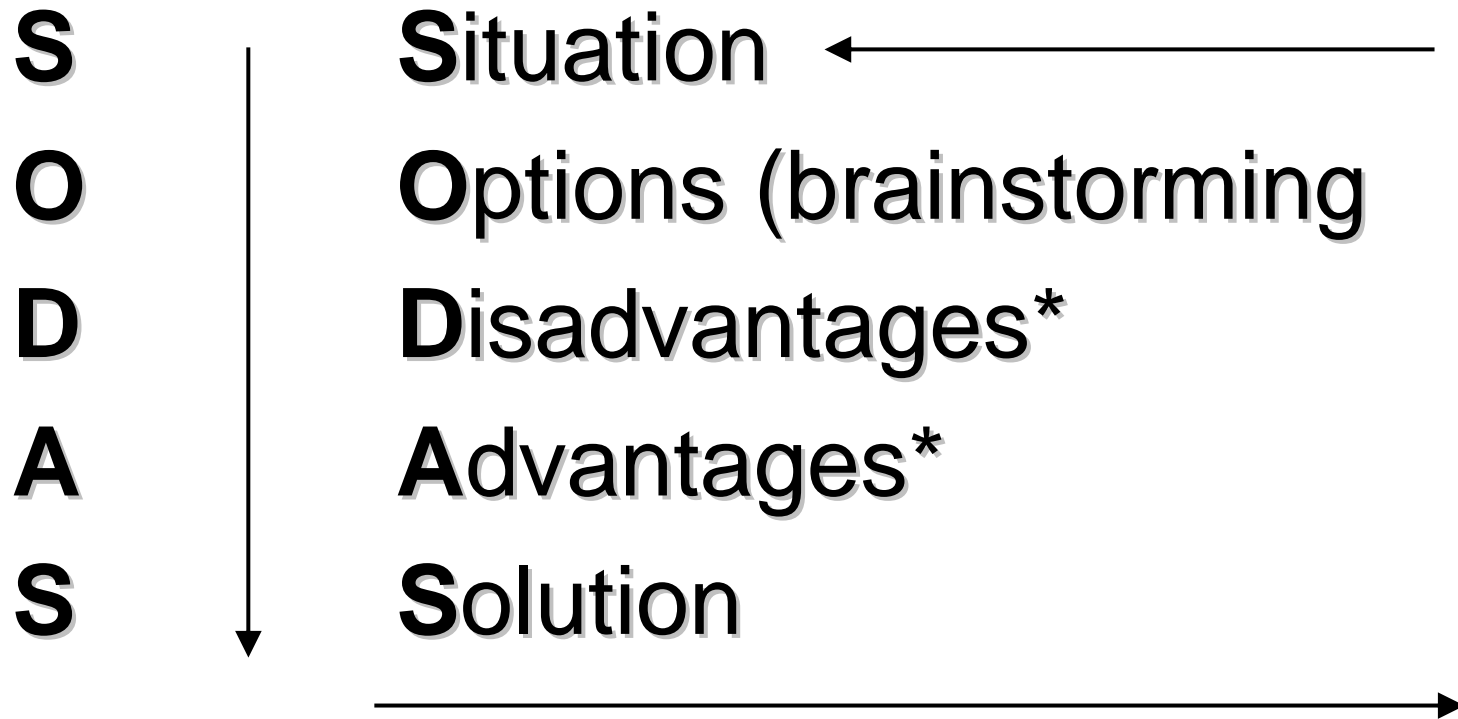
How to Teach SODAS to Youth - 5

- Example of “Teaching of SODAS to a Youth.”
 - SODAS Personnel Training Module – READ – p.19-23.
 - » Introduction: How to Teach SODAS to Youth.
 - » Example: Teaching SODAS to Youth.
- Behavioral Rehearsal of “Teaching of SODAS to a Youth.”
- Let’s learn and have fun!!

Please consider visiting our websites

- Transition to Independence Process - TIP website
 - <http://tip.fmhi.usf.edu>
 - » TIP System Development and Operations Manual
 - » Personnel Training Modules
 - » Theory and Research Basis for TIP System
- National Center on Youth Transition – NCYT website
 - <http://ncyt.fmhi.usf.edu>
- Contact us for agency and systems capacity building.
clark@fmhi.usf.edu
 - Community systems development on program planning.
 - Technical assistance on program implementation and evaluation.
 - Competency-Based Training and Training-of-Trainer Workshops.

SODAS Problem-Solving Method



Practice SODAS – 3B

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- Express empathy, concern, care, &/or encouragement.
- Offer assistance, as appropriate.
- Set limits and expectations, as necessary.
- Use positive descriptive praise.

Follow-up 1

- Follow-up includes asking and discovering:
 - Whether or not the plan was implemented? What happened when the plan was tried?
 - If it was not implemented, maybe the problem was not so critical after all, OR maybe the young person just wanted time to talk, OR still not comfortable with option selected OR implementation plan.
 - If the plan was implemented, follow-up includes offering descriptive praise for engaging in the problem-solving/decision-making process and for following through with the option that was selected.

Follow-up 2

- Did the solution help resolve the situation?
- If it did not, then:
 - use this opportunity to teach the young person how to persist and to normalize the experience that many people go through in trying multiple options until an actual satisfactory solution is found.
 - Try to help him/her see this experience as a learning opportunity, instead of a failure.
 - Remind him/her of the phrase “if at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again”.
 - Following-up with the young person is an important part of the process because it provides great opportunities to reconnect with the young person about the situation he/she previously problem-solved,
 - obtain new information for further problem-solving/decision-making, as well as give descriptive praise for effort made and encourage persistence toward reaching the goal.

Follow-up 3

- Checking in with the youth as he or she enacts a solution is critical in order to:
- Establish concrete next steps and timelines
- Provide support
- Help the youth deal with unanticipated consequences or actions of others
- Practice skills needed to implement the solution
- Encourage the youth to actually follow-through with the solution.

Good Show!!

**Thanks for all your participation
in creating a fun
and educative
session!!**

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Go Forth!!

**And apply these core competencies
to benefit young people
and yourself!!**

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Please consider visiting our websites

- Transition to Independence Process - TIP website
 - <http://tip.fmhi.usf.edu>
 - » TIP System Development and Operations Manual
 - » Personnel Training Modules
 - » Theory and Research Basis for TIP System
- National Center on Youth Transition – NCYT website
 - <http://ncyt.fmhi.usf.edu>
- Contact us for agency and systems capacity building.
clark@fmhi.usf.edu
 - Community systems development on program planning.
 - Technical assistance on program implementation and evaluation.
 - Competency-Based Training and Training-of-Trainer Workshops.