Feelings and Options

Choose a dilemma that you want your students to analyze.

1. **Identify**: Who are the different people involved in the dilemma? What challenge are they facing?

2. **Feel:** What do you think each person in the dilemma is feeling? Why might the situation be hard or challenging for each of them?

3. **Imagine:** Imagine options for how the situation could be handled. Come up with as many ideas as possible. Highlight or circle which option might lead to the most positive outcome, where most people feel good or taken care of.

4. **Say:** Thinking more about the idea you chose for handling the situation, what could the people involved say?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?
Feelings and Options scaffolds perspective taking, empathic problem-solving, ethics spotting, and communication skills for social dilemmas of digital life.

Application: When and where can I use it?
Feelings and Options is a thinking routine for engaging with social and emotional dilemmas. It's designed to support students to explore different perspectives and practice language for constructive and kind communication. By using this routine repeatedly, students can develop the sensitivity to recognize dilemmas and the dispositions to 1) explore and care about others' perspectives, and 2) envision options and possible impacts before acting.

This routine is designed to be paired with dilemma scenarios. You can create your own dilemma, or choose a dilemma from our digital dilemmas compilation.

Each step of *Feelings and Options* can be done by students individually, in pairs or small groups, or as a whole-class discussion. Consider what might work best for your students.

This activity can be used anywhere educators see a connection to their learning goals. For example:
- advisory period, where students are learning SEL or character education skills
- library or media class, where students are learning about digital citizenship and technology
- health or wellness class, where students are learning about healthy relationships
- English language arts (ELA), connected to any reading that includes relational dilemmas or social-emotional conflict
- special topics classes, like religion, leadership, or student council

This activity is flexible! Students can complete the thinking routine in about 15 minutes. You can extend the steps with more discussion and expand the activity so it's a special unit with follow-ups over a week or month. We recommend that you use this thinking routine as just that: a repeated routine. This helps students internalize the steps and thinking we want to support outside of the classroom.

Share your experience with this thinking routine on social media using the hashtags **#PZThinkingRoutines** and **#FeelingsAndOptions.**

PZ PROJECT ZERO
HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

common sense education

This thinking routine was developed by the Digital Dilemmas project at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and colleagues at Common Sense Education.
Explore more Thinking Routines at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines

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Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Here are some suggestions for deepening each step of the *Feelings and Options* routine:

- Identify - Encourage students to write down all of the people who are involved (e.g., "*The people involved are: Tim, Jason, and Tim's parents. The dilemma they are facing is that Jason feels overwhelmed by how much Tim is texting him, but Tim is having a hard time and needs a lot of support from his friends.*")
- Feel - Encourage students to take perspectives of how all characters involved are feeling. Prompt students to clearly label the feelings, and describe why they might feel that way. Ask: Are there any other ways the people in the situation might be feeling? How might additional people (e.g., friends not named in the dilemma) feel about the situation?"
- Imagine - Have students imagine many ways of handling the situation, regardless of outcome. Then encourage them to select the dilemma that's most beneficial for everyone involved in the dilemma. Ask: Are there any downsides to the suggestion you came up with?
- Say - After students write out the text, encourage them to consider whether they would really say the words they have come up with. Ask: Do you think the person(s) involved would really say that? Could you see yourself actually saying/sending a message like this, if you were the person in the dilemma? Why, or why not? What if the person instead said ___? What if person B didn't respond that way? What could person A do or say next?

As you wrap up, consider asking students: What's one thing you're taking away from Feelings and Options? This is a great way for students to identify and affirm the different thinking skills they practiced (e.g., perspective taking, considering different options, and anticipating tricky conversations).