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Disclaimer

The concept behind the development of this training tool using the Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulation (VEILS®) methodology is built around the Lincoln University Model for Suicide Prevention and its Life Preservation Index. The model views suicidal ideation and behavior as the result of a combination of structural, cultural, social and individual factors. The index outlines how social connectedness serves as an effective buffer towards suicidal ideation and subsequent suicidal behavior. This multi-dimensional approach, combined with the methodology of WILL Interactive, Inc., led to the development of the story lines in this VEILS®.

Lincoln University, the Army Research Laboratory and WILL Interactive, Inc., the producers of this VEILS®, disclaim any and all responsibility for any action that any individual takes—or does not take—under any circumstance in real life.

The purpose of this VEILS® is to share information and stimulate thought about situations and issues that may be encountered in real life. It does not provide any guidance and is not a source of any policy. Individuals should

always assess the unique circumstances of each situation they encounter and respond as they determine to be appropriate based upon the aggregate of their knowledge and experience.

This VEILS® is not intended to prescribe any course of action to be followed in any real-life situation, whether or not that situation is the same as—or similar to—one portrayed in this VEILS®. This VEILS® does not replace human interaction in any manner whatsoever.

A portion of the research for the development of this training tool was sponsored by the Army Research Laboratory and was accomplished under Cooperative Agreement Number W911NF-07-2-0062. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the Army Research Laboratory or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government is authorized to reproduce and distribute reprints for Government purposes notwithstanding any copyright notation hereon.

More Information

This Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulation (VEILS®) is a component of the Life Preservation Training curriculum offered through Lincoln University-Missouri's Center for Suicide Prevention Research and Studies.

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For more information about **The Home Front** and/or other WILL VEILS®, visit www.willinteractive.com or call 1-877-ALL-WILL (255-9455).

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INTRODUCTION



Lincoln University, an historically Black university founded in 1866 by the enlisted men and officers of the 62nd and 65th United States Colored Infantries, is located in Jefferson City, Missouri. These heroic men, who fought for the freedom of African Americans and the stability of the Union, continued a civilian war against the absence of education for African Americans. What began as a conversation around a campfire at Ft. McIntosh, Texas became a blueprint for an institution that today boasts a diverse student population and nationally accredited programs. Given its humble yet determined beginnings, Lincoln University is honored and deeply appreciative to have worked with the United States Army in the 21st century as a partner in developing two suicide prevention and training tools.

The collaboration between Lincoln University, the Army Research Laboratory, WILL Interactive, Inc., and the Office of the G-1 has produced a second training module for suicide prevention. Those involved in this effort include:

Lincoln University

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Antonio Holland, Ph.D.	Researcher
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Ray Rosales, LTC U.S. Army (Retired)	Project Officer

WILL Interactive

Grady Weatherford	Director
Karen Palting	Senior Producer
Vallery Linn	Producer
Chris Stezin	Writer

RUNNING THE PROGRAM

The Home Front is available in both disc and online formats. If you are using the disc version, the program should automatically launch in your default web browser when it is inserted in your computer's DVD drive. If your computer does not have the required version of Adobe Flash, you will automatically be prompted to install it. If the program does not self-start, please complete the following steps:

Windows Users

1. Insert **The Home Front** into your DVD-ROM drive.
2. If **The Home Front** does not self-start within 30 seconds, follow the next steps:
 - a) Open Windows Explorer (My Computer) and browse to your DVD drive.
 - b) Double-click on "The_Home_Front.exe".

Mac Users

1. Insert **The Home Front** into your DVD-ROM drive.
2. Double click on the **The Home Front** disc icon on your desktop (or browse to it's location in the Finder).
3. Double click on "The_Home_Front.app".

System Requirements:

- Windows XP, Vista, or 7 / Mac OS 10.4 or higher
- Adobe Flash Player 10+
- 1Ghz or faster processor (2GHz recommended for full-screen playback at high resolutions)
- 256MB of RAM (512MB recommended)
- DVD-ROM Drive
- Video Card & Display (1024 * 768 minimum resolution)
- Sound Card & Speakers / Headphones
- Keyboard & Mouse

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Projecting for a Large Audience

The Home Front can be projected onto a screen for large audiences, given the right equipment, *if the classroom/auditorium is already set up to project multimedia.*

*If the classroom auditorium is only set up to use or project TV/VCR images and you want to project **The Home Front**, you have two options.*

1. Large Computer Monitor (21" or more) for a small group.
2. Computer Projection System with LCD projector for large groups.

Graphics/Color Issues

The Home Front is designed to work best in a screen resolution of at least 1024 by 768, with at least High Color (16 bit) color palette/depth.

INTERACTIVE MOVIE OVERVIEW

The Home Front is a Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulation created to address some of the need for suicide awareness training and prevention for the U.S. Army. The instructional content of the program is based on Lincoln University's Risk Assessment Model using social indicators to determine risk and protective factors for suicidal ideation. This model emphasizes a holistic approach to looking at suicide through structural, cultural, social, and individual factors. The program also incorporates elements of the U.S. Army Public Health Command's Suicide Awareness for Soldiers/ACE curriculum as well as a resiliency component.

Goals

The goals of this program are: to provide you with basic knowledge in recognizing the warning signs and risk factors for suicidal ideation in others and in yourself; to provide insight as to how to intervene to help possible victims; to educate you regarding the causes of suicidal ideation and behavior; to stress the importance of developing and maintaining strong social bonds; to convey that mental wellness and awareness of high-risk situations can reduce the likelihood of acute depression and suicide in the future; to provide a guide for emotional balance and resilience as protective factors; and, to encourage the development of critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills to help prevent suicide.

Instructional Design

The software allows you to assume the roles of fictional characters and to see the consequences of the behaviors you select in a non-judgmental interactive movie. The software engages, entertains, and utilizes behavior modification techniques and skills that include: reinforcement (both positive and negative), critical thinking, decision-making, communication, problem solving, building on existing strengths and learning through consequences.

Synopsis

The purpose of this second installment of the life preservation curricula is to build upon the basic concept of recognizing suicidal ideation and behavior within the self and others by presenting life challenges and providing a safe way for the characters to deal with them. Built into the storylines of each of the six scenarios are learning objectives derived from our theoretical model of suicidal ideation and behavior. This model focuses on the interplay of individual, social and structural levels as possible dimensions of risk assessment for suicidal ideation and behavior. Some of these learning objectives are listed below:

1. Recognizing warning signs of suicidal ideation;
2. Recognizing risks factors for suicidal behavior;
3. Emphasizing the importance of social support (family, friends, spirituality and religious practices) in preventing suicidal ideation;
4. The role of effective communication skills in addressing behavioral health issues;
5. The importance of balancing family and career duties;

6. Enhancing awareness about resources available to military families regarding behavioral health issues; and,
7. Explaining the importance of resiliency as both a coping mechanism and a tool for self-preservation.

Each scenario has a set of discussion questions that will reinforce the learning objectives. It is crucial that Soldiers discuss these questions and get an opportunity to respond to them. This exercise, best facilitated in small groups of no more than 30 people, will enrich the viewing experience and provide a basis for assessing individual self efficacy in both identifying at risk individuals and knowing what to do to provide those at-risk individuals with help. As discussion develops, remember to highlight the key learning objectives by asking how they are reflected within the Soldier's decision choices. For example, if a Soldier explained his/her choice of not joining friends for dinner as an acceptable choice, remind him/her that social support serves as a key buffer to suicidal ideation. Again, utilize discussion as a way to ensure that everyone has processed the intended lessons learned.

TIPS FOR PLAYING

Navigating the Program

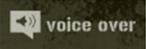
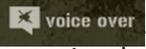
When a vignette plays to its conclusion, the program will automatically move to the next screen. You must manually click out of text screens.

The *next* and *back* buttons appear at the bottom of almost all screens.

- The *back* button  allows players to go back and make a different choice.
- The *next* button  sends players to the next screen or video.



In video screens, the *next* and *back* buttons appear with a movie player control (see below). These controls will appear briefly at the beginning of each video and will reappear when the cursor is rolled over the screen.

Clicking on the *menu* button  returns the player to the beginning. Prior navigation will not be saved. The *voice over* button toggles voice-over audio recordings of the on-screen text. When the button is set to the  position, voice-over will be heard; when it is set to , it will not be heard. The *full-screen* button toggles full-screen mode. You can expand the program to full-screen view by clicking on . When in full-screen mode, click the button again to exit full-screen and return to normal view. You may also use the ESC key to exit full-screen mode at any time.

Choices are highlighted as they are made, so when you back up, get “kicked back” into an earlier part of the program, or return to the menu and start over, all decisions previously made will be highlighted. These highlights only indicate previous choices; they do not stop you from making the same choice again. In order to erase these highlights, you must refresh and/or restart the program.

Movie Player

When you start the interactive movie or make a decision, the movie player window will appear. The movie should begin automatically.

Several other controls are available on the tool bar below the video:

- **Play/Pause.** Once the movie has started, the play button  will turn into a pause button ; when you click the pause button, it turns into a play button again.
- **Stop.** Click the stop button  any time to stop the video. Click the play button to resume the video from the beginning.
- **Running Bar.** You can move back and forth within a video by clicking and dragging the running bar directly below the video. 
- **Closed Captioning.** This button toggles the visibility of text captions for video dialogue. When the button is set to the  position, closed-captions will be displayed; when it is set to , they will not be displayed.

PLAYBACK PROBLEMS

Video Skips and Hesitations

The Home Front is not made for older computers. Skips and hesitations in the video indicate that part of your computer cannot keep up. This is generally caused by a lack of either CPU processor speed, amount of physical memory (RAM) or both.

If you have the minimum system requirements, you may be able to improve performance by closing all other applications and/or decreasing your desktop resolution.

No Sound

Double-check the wires—be certain that the speakers have electricity, that all the connections are in the right places, and that the speakers are turned on and the volume is up.

If you still do not have sound, contact your computer support folks and tell them you may have a problem with your sound card or speakers.

USAGE OPTIONS AND TIME REQUIRED

The Home Front is designed for use as both a facilitated instructional tool and as a self-instructed, self-paced activity. Choosing the instructional method depends on available time, resources, and personal preferences.

When using the program individually, one complete pathway for both characters can be finished in approximately one hour.

Warning:

Although there are no explicit depictions of suicide or death, **The Home Front** is based on real events. Survivors of suicide and/or combat veterans may have strong reactions to some of the situations depicted in the VEILS®. **Warning: vivid combat re-enactment scenes**¹

¹ According to Bryan, L.E. Dhillon-Davis and K.K. Dhillon-Davis (2009), viewing video-based media has been found to be a safe educational tool.

SELF-INSTRUCTION

The Home Front is designed to function as a facilitated instruction tool and as a self-instructed, self-paced activity. You may elect to work individually or in small groups.

Schedule instruction time so a facilitator/instructor can be available for consultation whenever possible.

Pay close attention to the choices that you make and the information provided following your decision. The information presented may reinforce your decision. Other times, it may ask you to reconsider your decision. The scenarios that follow as the result of your decisions should also make you think about the quality of the decision that you made.

STORY SYNOPSES AND CHARACTER OUTLINES



Elizabeth Dowdell is a professional and caring soldier confronted with the demands of her job and her family. She provides an open ear to Washer, a fellow soldier experiencing some behavioral health issues. The demands of her job have reduced the time she has to devote to her family needs, especially her son, Ethan. Fortunately, the Army's recent push to train and educate line leaders has brought SSG Salyers in her command. This experienced leader has been concerned about the apparent behavioral and performance changes exhibited by SGT Dowdell. Having identified signs that are a source of concern, SSG Salyers is taking a proactive role to assess and intervene before SGT Dowdell slides into a serious behavioral health condition.

You will be directed back into the program until you have navigated to a good ending.

Discussion Questions

Would you consider Dowdell as being isolated? Why or why not?

Social support; warning signs of suicide

Would you explain your personal problems to your superior if you were in jeopardy of a poor performance appraisal?

Effective communication; accessing military support resources; resiliency

What do you think about Dowdell's interaction with Washer?

Effective communication; accessing military support resources; resiliency

Do you believe that mental health services within the Army have improved in recent years (in terms of both access and quality)?

Accessing military support resources



Megan Jeremy is a Reservist sergeant who has a Soldier who is not coping well with behavioral health issues. Jeremy recognizes that her role as a leader demands that she look after the well being of her Soldiers. She confronted with the difficulties of keeping up with English and getting him the required help. English is not actively engaged in a social support system of any form and lives in a community that does not have easy access to behavioral health specialists.

You will be directed back into the program until you have navigated to a good ending.

Discussion Questions

As a member of leadership, did Jeremy set a good example of establishing a line of communication between herself and her Soldiers?

Effective communication; duty to career; access to military support resources

It is difficult to communicate with English on a regular basis. Did Jeremy do a good job handling this obstacle?

Effective communication; social support; warning signs of suicide; accessing military support resources

What are some of the other factors that can impede access to behavioral health care for reservists?

Accessing military support resources



Richard Peterson is a National Guardsman who is denied his job by his former employer upon his return from deployment. He refuses to challenge his former employer for his old job as outlined in USERRA, yet he has no other option to successfully provide for his family. This leads to financial difficulties and a subsequent downward spiral, including: frequent conflict with spouse; substance abuse; and, finally, being arrested for a DUI (driving under the influence). The response of a friend and the resources put forth by the NG will provide for a better outcome.

You will be directed back into the program until you have navigated to a good ending.

Discussion Questions

What caused Peterson to become so annoyed at the coffee shop? Peterson's outburst could have resulted in legal trouble. What are the ramifications of such an incident?

Role conflict between family and work; effective communication

Is Peterson doing enough to look for a job? To provide for his family? Why or why not?

Duty to family; effective communication; resiliency

Peterson alludes to faking a car accident as a means to provide for his family. Why would he opt to die as a solution rather than trying to find or create one?

Suicidal behavior; resiliency; duty to family; USERRA



Antonio Rosales is a Reservist who lives with his parents and is not adjusting to civilian life following deployment. Rosales was cross-leveled to a combat support hospital that was deployed. He was traumatized by his experience in theater and is not willing to talk about it to family or friends. His actions have cut him off from people who can provide him help and support. Some of his symptoms include co-morbid factors of suicidal ideation: depression, hyper vigilance, a lack of concentration, difficulty sleeping and angry outbursts.

You will be directed back into the program until you have navigated to a good ending.

Discussion Questions

Rosales did not partake in his usual routine once he returned. How did avoiding school and friends hurt him?

Family and social support; effective communication; warning signs of suicide; accessing military support resources

Rosales did not want to return to his reserve unit due to the fact that he was cross-leveled. This is another behavioral indicator of his struggle to reconnect with familiar constructs in his life. How does this isolation affect other areas of his life (e.g. family, friends, and school)?

Duty to career; resiliency; access to military support services; social isolation

What is the effect of his residential location on his desire to seek help for his behavioral health issues?

Access to military support services



Carl Foreman is a DA civilian confronted with relocation issues when his installation is selected for closing because of the BRAC. The challenges associated with uprooting his family and moving to a new installation are examined as stressors that can lead to suicidal ideation and other behavioral health conditions (depression, anger, substance abuse). Although members of his social support system (wife, boss and friends) are proactive in engaging him and helping him face his problems, Foreman is oblivious to the risk of suicidal ideation he is experiencing. Thankfully, his wife's supportive and objective analysis of the situation combined with her effective communication skills help Foreman avoid ending his life.

You will be directed back into the program until you have navigated to a good ending.

Discussion Questions

How would you characterize Foreman's attitude towards his family's input regarding the BRAC? Does his work related problems increase his risk for suicidal ideation?

Effective communication; social support; accessing military support resources

Did you think that Foreman's reliance on pills to complete an assignment was cause for alarm?

Warning signs of suicide

Was there a better way for Foreman to deal with his daughter's anger?

Effective communication; resiliency; duty to family



Maria Cartwright is a 28 year old wife of a deployed Soldier and step-mother to Frankie, a teenager who has exhibited marked change in behavior that seems to be self-destructive. The triggering event for Frankie's change in behavior was the deployment of her father. Maria is conflicted as to which course of action to take to seek help for Frankie. Part of her resistance to seeking help from the Army is her concern that such action would interfere with her husband's career. As a result, she relies on her civilian friend, Gail, to counsel her. An informative conversation with her husband removes the suspicion she has of seeking

behavioral health counseling and its effect on her husband's career. Maria experiences challenges associated with: responding to Frankie's behavior; the amount of information shared with her spouse; and, reliance on social support and utilization of military resources.

You will be directed back into the program until you have navigated to a good ending.

Discussion Questions

Why didn't Maria alert her husband earlier regarding Frankie's behavior? Was she right to avoid seeking help from within the Army?

Effective communication

Many teens go through a "difficult" period as a part of growing up. What did Frankie say or do that would make you take her behavior seriously rather than dismiss it as a phase?

Suicidal ideation and behavior; warning signs of suicide

How did Maria grow from this experience? How did she use her social support systems?

Resiliency; accessing military support services; effective communication

These discussion questions serve as guides to create a well-rounded learning experience that will cause Soldiers to explain and defend the choices made for each character within each scenario. In line with effective communication, it is not necessary to characterize a response as wrong or negative; rather, as the instructor, your mission is to introduce and explain positive, life preserving responses that are reflective of the learning objectives for the film.

Thank you for your commitment to life preservation and for your time as group facilitator.

PROGRAM DIAGRAMS

The purpose of the program diagrams, **pages 16-27**, is to provide a reference and guide for navigating the pathways. The duration for completion of pathways are provided and are based on playing “straight through” to an outcome and pausing for text screens. Following a bad outcome and being returned to the beginning of the program, backing up to explore multiple choices, and longer pauses at text boxes have not been factored into the approximate playing times.

In order to present the most efficient and understandable representation of the program, these diagrams move from choice to choice. The videos and text boxes that populate the program between choices are not indicated. There may be several video clips and text boxes between any two choices.

Page 15 contains the key for the diagrams and their color coding.

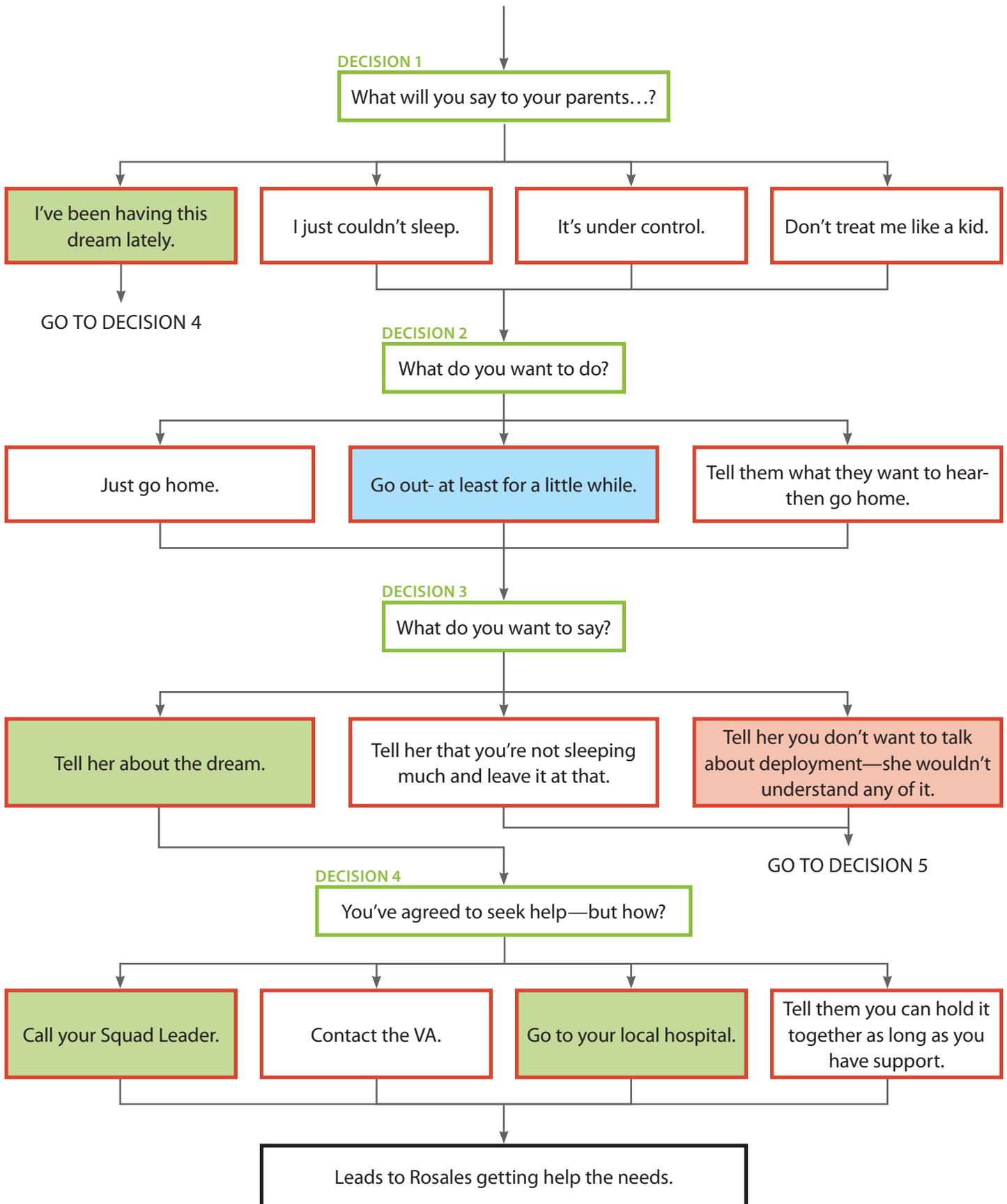
NOTE: For individual play, it may be beneficial to copy these diagrams. Each decision has been numbered to aid in facilitation; you can walk through a specific pathway using the decision numbers (e.g.—“At Dowdell decision number five, “Do you want to pick up the phone?” choose ‘Yes.’ At decision number six, choose ‘*Ethan didn’t want to get out of bed this morning,*’ etc.)

Diagram Key

	=	Question
	=	Choice/Active Link — No effect on ending
	=	Choice/Active Link — Best choice, but no effect on ending
	=	Choice/Active Link — Pathway to positive ending
	=	Choice/Active Link — Pathway to bad ending
No Box	=	Navigation
	=	Positive Ending
	=	Bad Ending

ANTONIO ROSALES

INTRODUCTORY VIDEO AND TEXT



ANTONIO ROSALES
(CONTINUED)

DECISION 5

What do you want to do?

Tell them the truth—you're slipping and you need help.

Tell them you're fine and you'll straighten this out with SSG Arbus.

Leads to Rosales getting help.

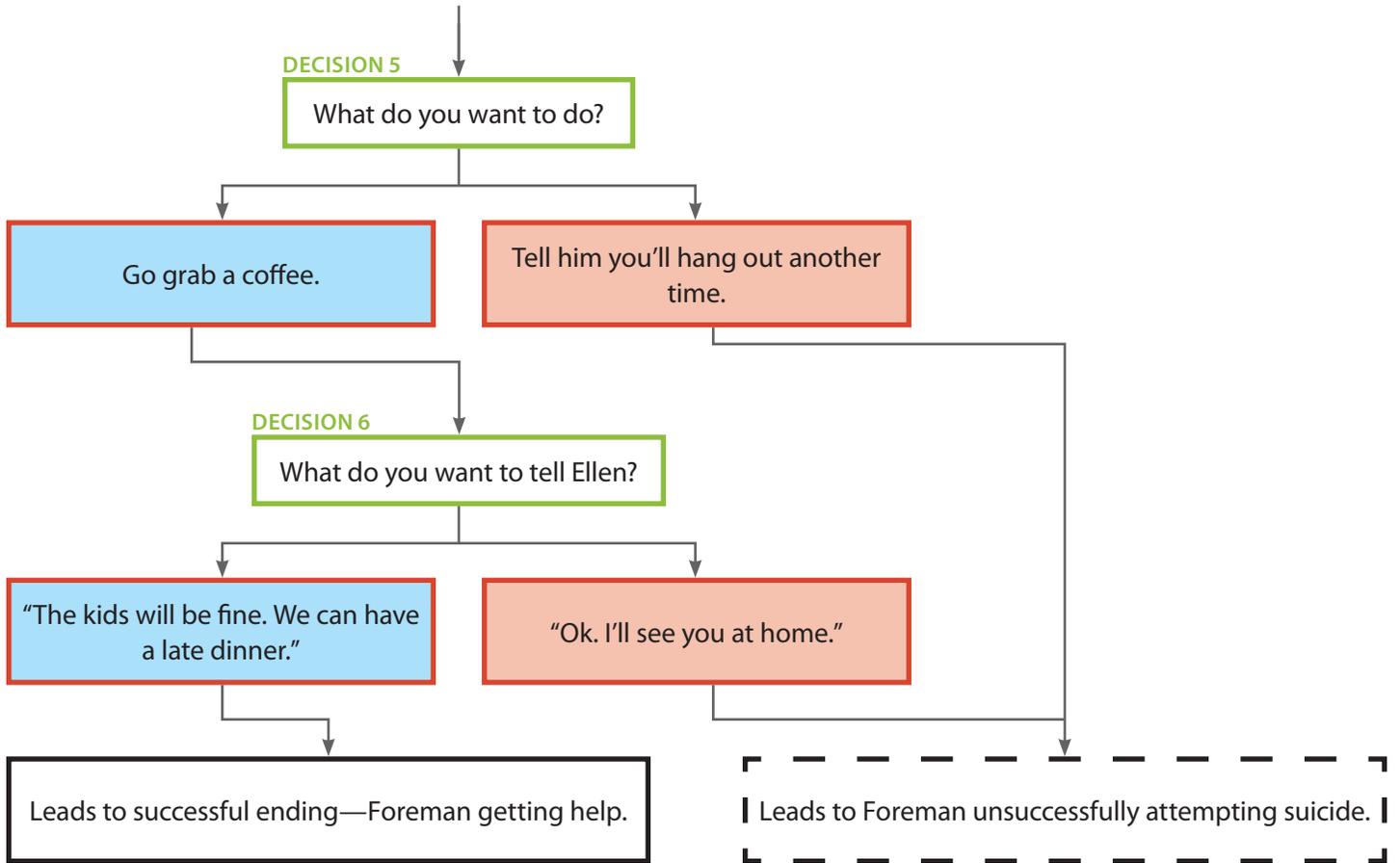
Leads to Rosales unsuccessfully attempting suicide.

CARL FOREMAN

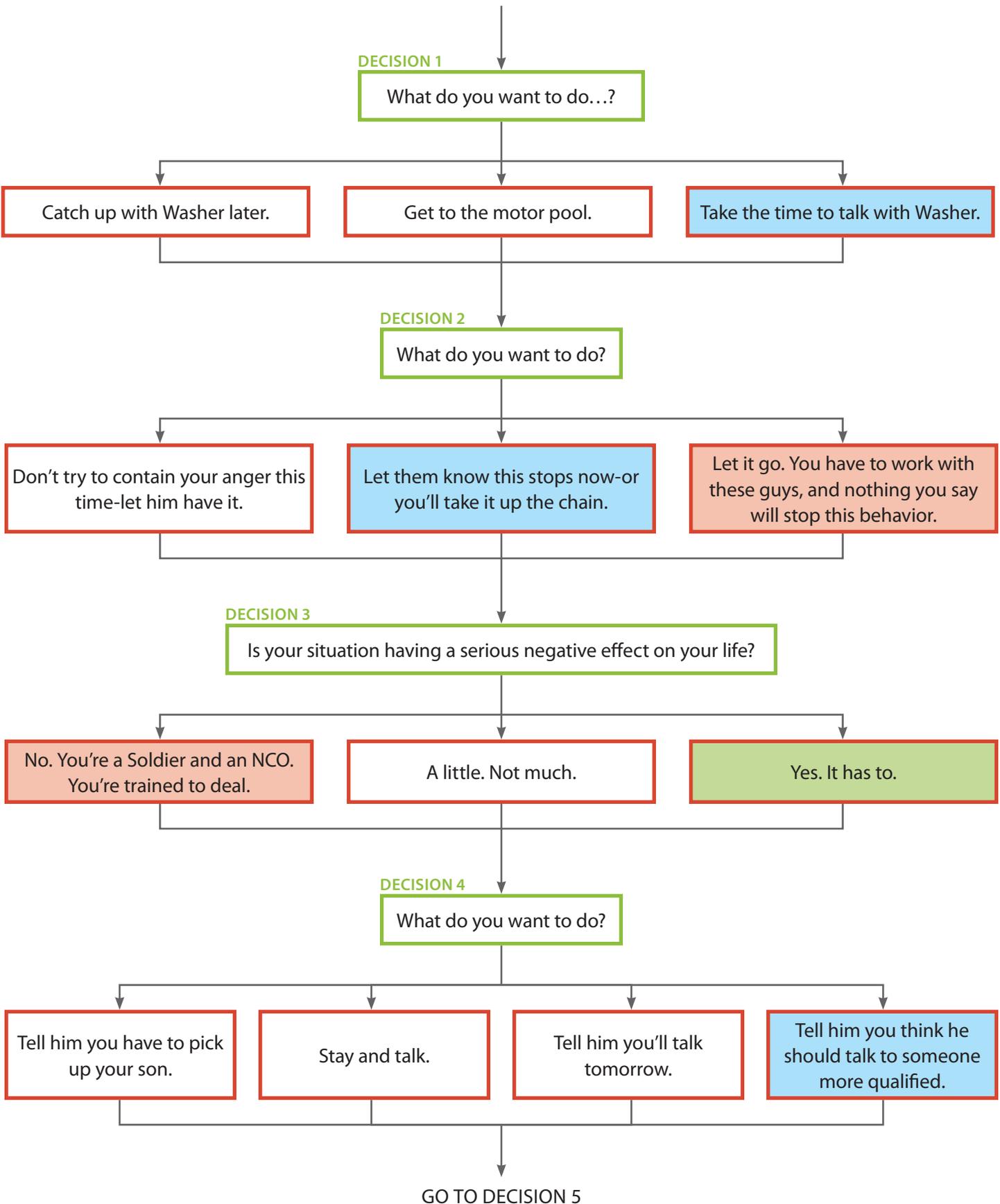
INTRODUCTORY VIDEO AND TEXT



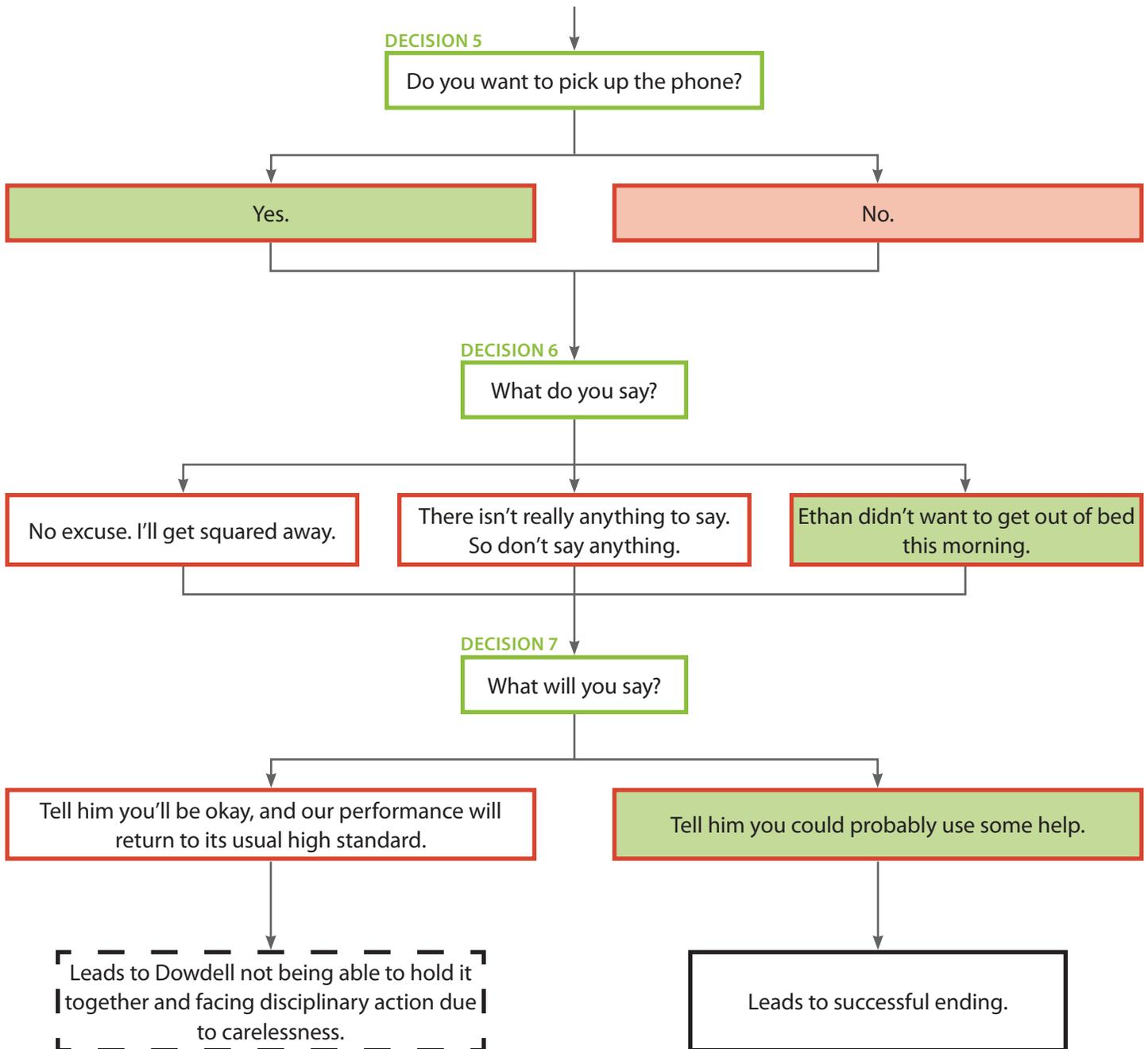
CARL FOREMAN (CONTINUED)



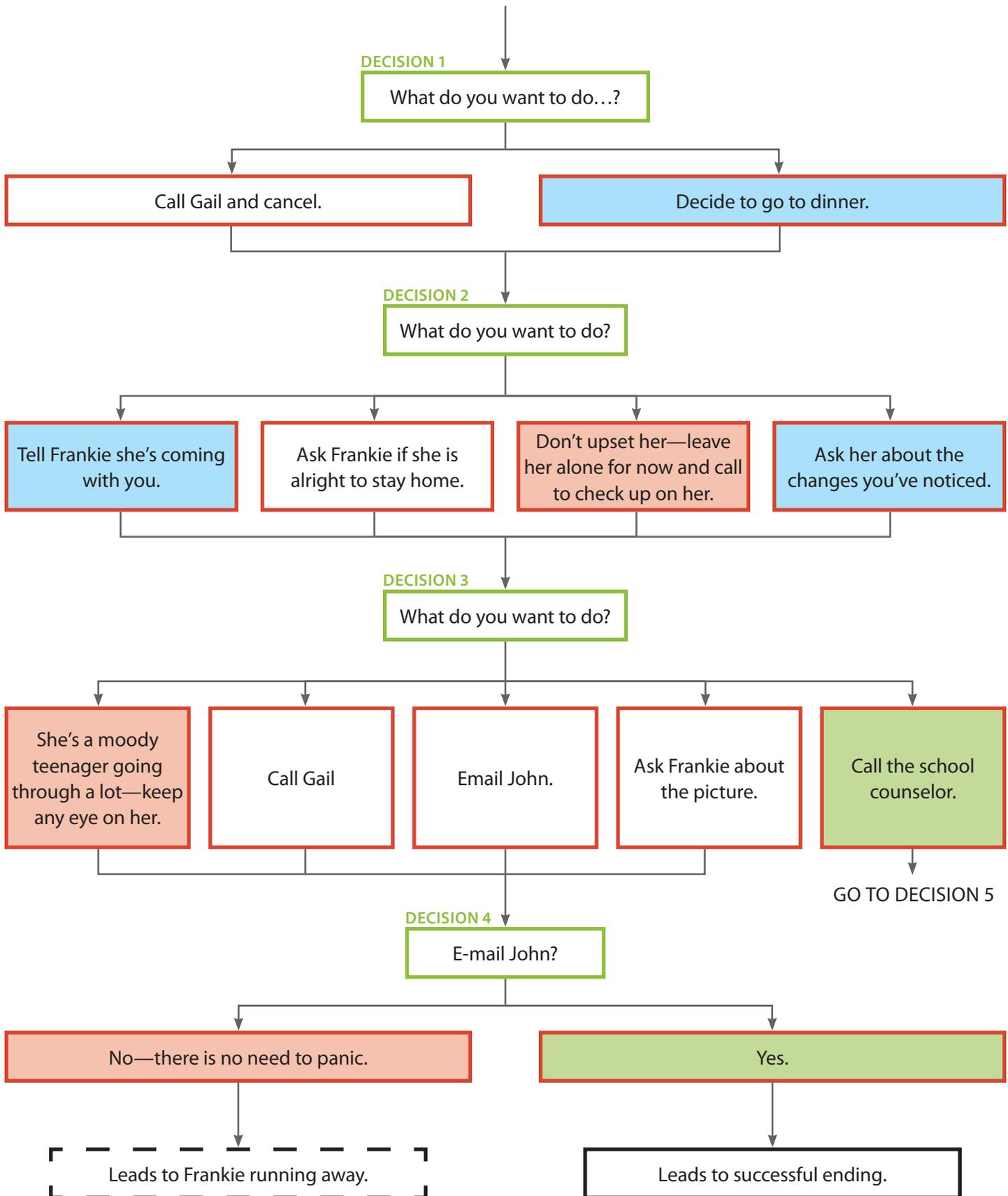
ELIZABETH DOWDELL
INTRODUCTORY VIDEO AND TEXT



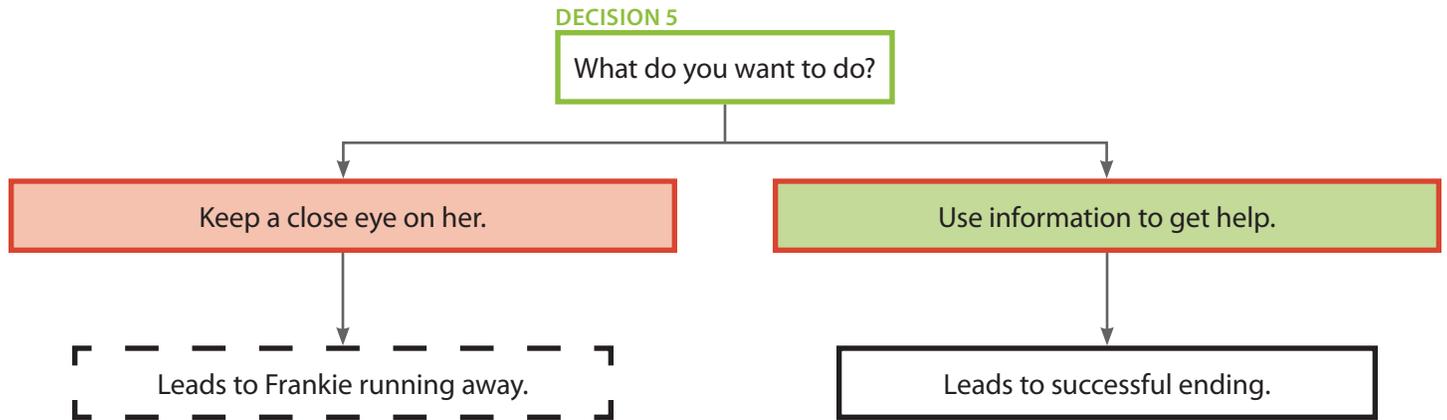
ELIZABETH DOWDELL
(CONTINUED)

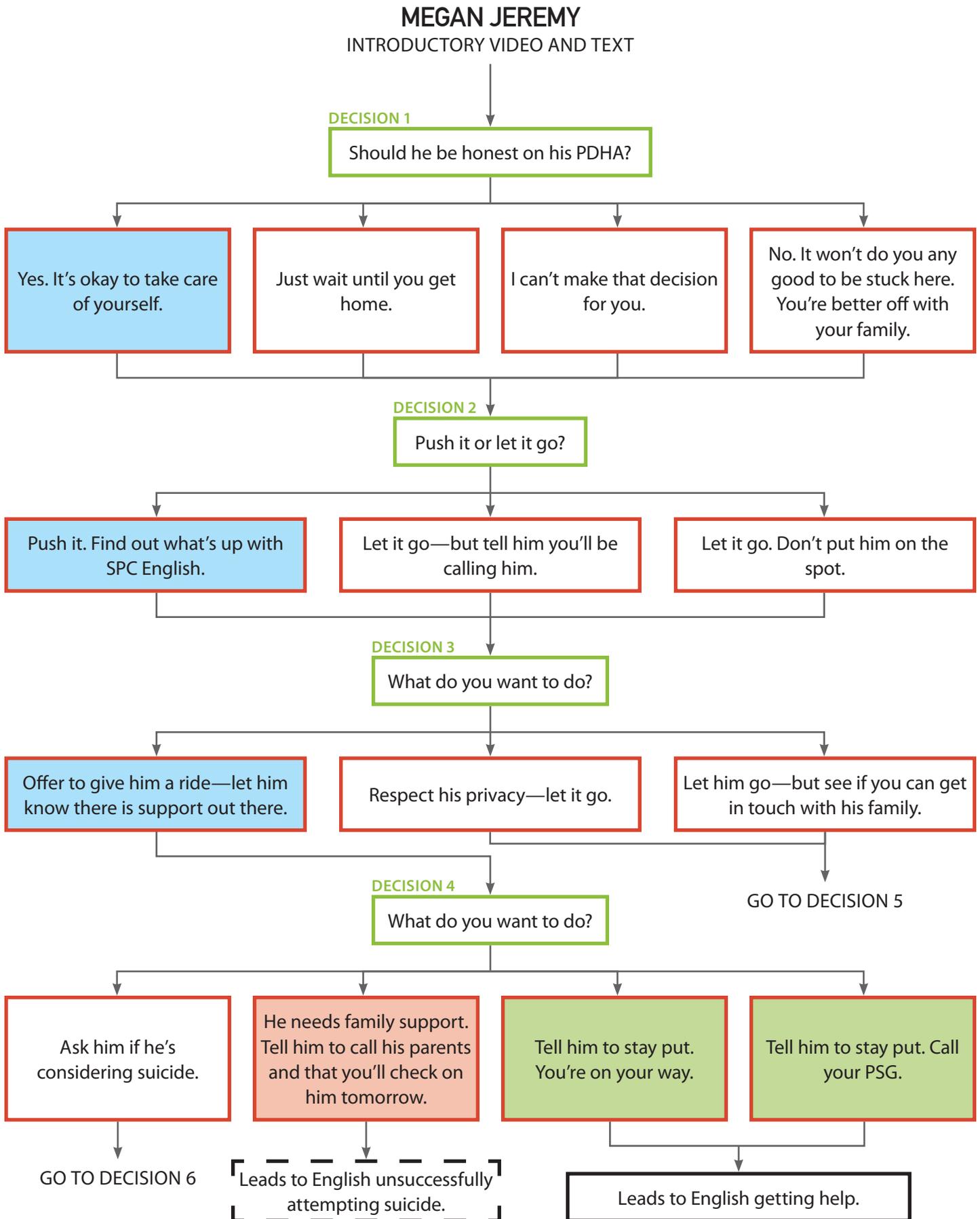


MARIA CARTWRIGHT
INTRODUCTORY VIDEO AND TEXT

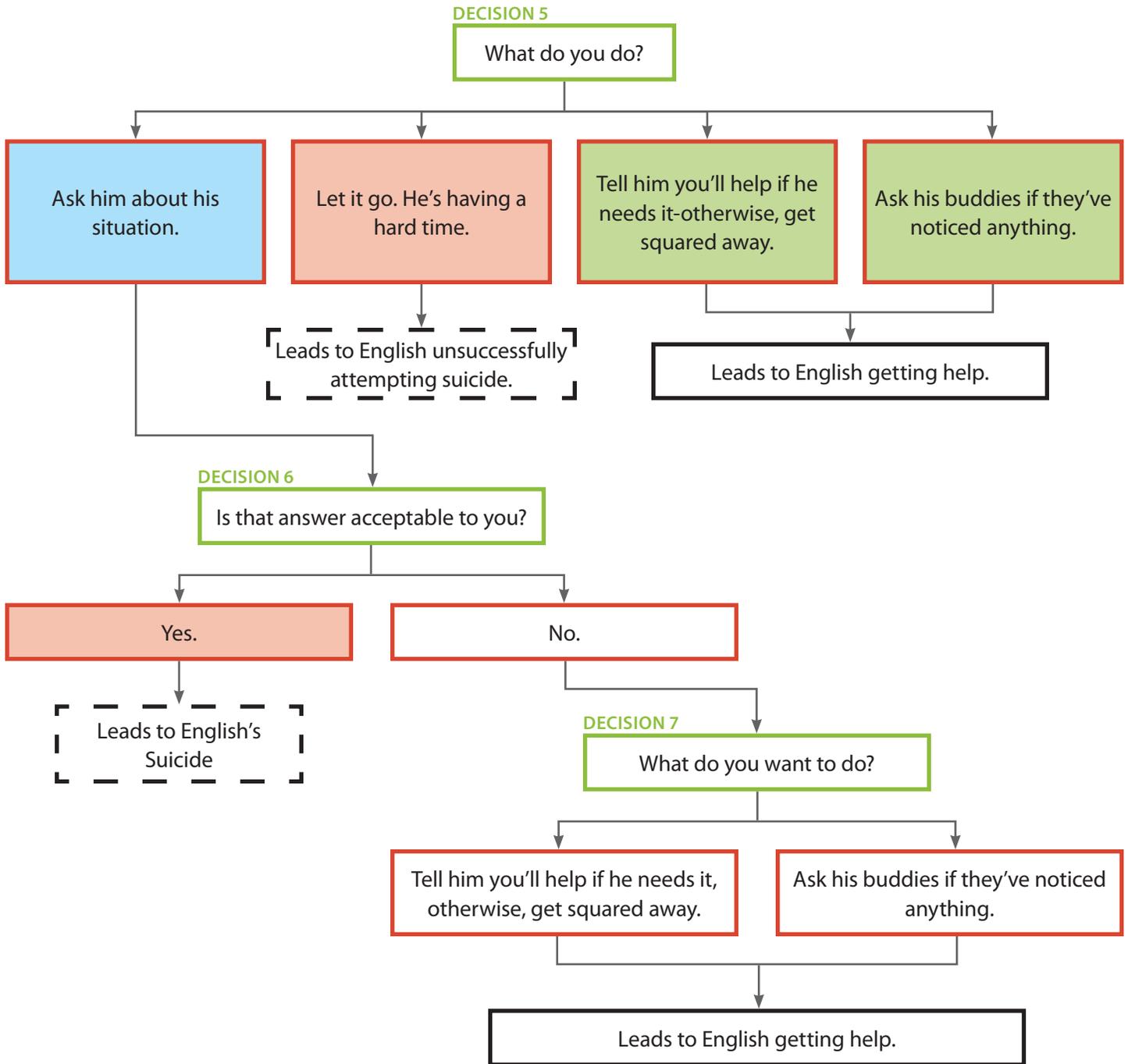


MARIA CARTWRIGHT
(CONTINUED)

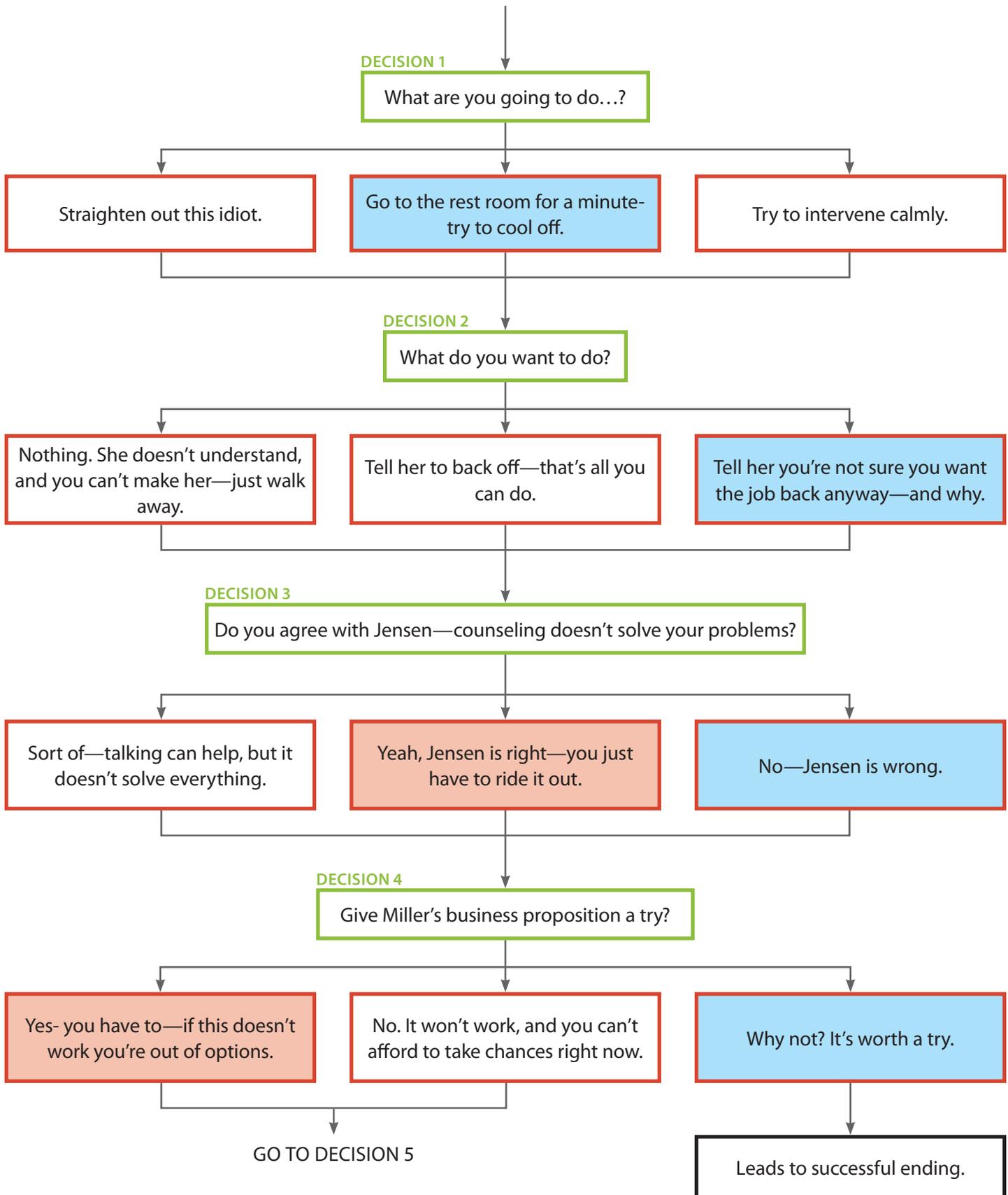




MEGAN JEREMY
(CONTINUED)



RICHARD PETERSON
INTRODUCTORY VIDEO AND TEXT



RICHARD PETERSON
(CONTINUED)

