Strategies for Professional Decision Making: The **SMART** Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>SAMPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS</th>
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| **SEEK Help**       | • 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? |
| **MANAGE Your Emotions** | • What are my emotional reactions to this situation? Am I anxious, frustrated, or depressed?  
                             • How might my emotions influence my decision-making?  
                             • Would taking a “time out” or deep breath help? |
| **ANTICIPATE Consequences** | • 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? |
| **RECOGNIZE Rules and Context** | • 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?  
                                    • Does anyone have the power to control outcomes? If so, who and how? |
| **TEST Your Assumptions and Motives** | • Am I making faulty assumptions about the causes of the situation, alternatives, or others’ intentions? How can I find out?  
                                      • What are my motives? Are they the same as the people I serve?  
                                      • How will others view my choices? |

**NOTE:** The strategies often overlap, e.g., testing assumptions is often a good way to manage emotions and it can lead to seeking help.  
Want to be SMARTER? Add “**Evaluate**” outcomes of your actions, and “**Revise**” your approach based on outcomes.

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