Reducing Risk and Raising Success

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee has summarized useful steps in managing risk that are important to consider when managing shooting sports programs and activities. The Four Step Risk Management Model (Avoid, Reduce, Transfer, and Accept) is useful in understanding the different ways to manage risks. The Four Steps are:

1. Avoid - To avoid the risk means we simply do not do the activity. If there is a severe weather condition or situation that is unsafe, we should probably avoid the activity. The term “reasonable” on a risk management plan is subjective and can vary based on the situation. If the activity is not appropriate for the setting or circumstances, it is safe to avoid the activity.

2. Reduce - When we retain risk that means we are willing to do the activity because it presents a low risk of injury. While there could be some injury, it isn’t likely to be a major injury. For example, just because a 4-H camper might skin their knee running in the grass doesn’t mean we need help managing the potential outcomes. An example of this is wearing helmets while riding horses; while it doesn’t take the injury away, it can make the injury less severe. We can reduce risk by using equipment. Also, consider using a different activity or location if the risk is too high. Anytime you have a group of youth under your supervision, you should have an understanding of the potential risks and be able to consider where you are. The 4-H program works with youth that are at various skill levels and ages, and the activity must be age-appropriate and meet the needs of the participants.

3. Transfer - To transfer the risk means we can’t avoid the risk, we can’t reduce the risk, and we can’t accept the risk. We can find someone to do the activity that doesn’t want to or can’t. If you have a shooting program but you don’t want or can’t do the risk management, you can hire a program manager or shooting instructor. This is an important step when thinking about youth risk management.

4. Accept - We are not able to avoid, reduce, or transfer the risk. We accept the risk of a given situation. Acceptance is a reality of working with youth. As a 4-H educator/leader, you are usually going to be the person that is responsible for the event. Having the opportunity to contribute to youth’s growth and development is highly rewarding. It also comes with great challenges. 4-H educators/leaders need to be prepared to deal with challenging situations and unexpected events. Remember that all individuals involved in a shooting program must be aware of the risks and should be prepared to deal with them. Those may include educators/leaders, parents, and other youth involved in the program.

With youth risk management, we are also responsible for helping our members to make safe choices. We need to help our young people plan, be aware of their surroundings, and know what to do in case of an emergency. Youth risk management is about helping our young people to make safe choices. We want to give our youth the tools they need to make good choices. It is important for young people to understand the consequences of their actions. Positive Youth Development concepts guide 4-H and teach us that positive long-term outcomes occur during an official 4-H Event. To avoid the risk means we simply do not do the activity. If there is a severe weather condition or situation that is unsafe, we should probably avoid the activity. The term “reasonable” on a risk management plan is subjective and can vary based on the situation. If the activity is not appropriate for the setting or circumstances, it is safe to avoid the activity. The 4-H program works with youth that are at various skill levels and ages, and the activity must be age-appropriate and meet the needs of the participants.