Figure 1. DECIDE: a model of the decision-making process.

1. **D** = Define the problem.
   (1) what is the problem? (2) why should anything be done at all? (3) what should or could be happening?

2. **E** = Establish the criteria.
   What criteria are desirable? What do you want to achieve in your decision? What do you want to preserve? What do you want to avoid as problems?

3. **C** = Consider all the alternatives.
   What are possible choices that meet the criteria? Consider all the factors that affect the alternatives.

4. **I** = Identify the best alternative.
   Selection of the best alternative is based on experience, intuition, and experimentation. Use the Maximizing or Satisficing approach.

5. **D** = Develop and implement a plan of action.
   How is the plan of action going to be implemented? What are the resources used in the actual implementation process?

6. **E** = Evaluate and monitor the solution.
   Troubleshoot your decision. What could go wrong? What can be done to correct the problem? FEEDBACK when necessary.

To assist managers in making decisions, **Figure 2** is an application of the DECIDE model using a health care example.
D = Define the problem
Overcrowded emergency room (ER) at Horizons Health Care System. Some patients have minor cuts and bruises, and others are trauma cases. Patients and families are complaining about the long wait, and hospital personnel are doing their best to ease the overcrowding. Everyone expects management to find a solution to the overcrowding problem.

E = Establish the criteria
The established criteria must be consistent with the hospital's values, mission, vision, and culture. Achieve: faster patient response, more satisfied patients and families, more motivated staff. Preserve: quality of patient care provided; high patient and employee satisfaction with hospital. Avoid: unhappy patients, loss of patients to competitors.

C = Consider all the alternatives
Increase the number of beds in the ER (importance or value: 8); increase the size of the ER (9); educate patients about the roles of ERs (4); provide discounts for uninsured patients to seek services through the outpatient clinics (3), recruit more physicians, nurses, and other staff to work in the ER (5), expedite the process of admitting a patient to the hospital from the ER (7); do not provide primary health services in the ER (2), improve the communication and coordination among hospital departments (6); Send patients to neighboring hospitals and clinics (1). Do nothing (0).

I = Identify the best alternative
Increase the size of the ER to provide additional space, and separate pediatric from adult ER cases and trauma cases, and redesign to include separate entrances to alleviate the overcrowding.

D = Develop and implement a plan of action
Expand the ER will require capital improvement plan; allocate resources, including budget and time table for anticipated date of completion.

E = Evaluate and monitor the solution
Continue to monitor the overcrowding issue. Triage patients. More patients are in each of separate ERs. Examine other alternative solutions, ie, hire additional personnel to staff the ERs to provide more efficient and prompt care.