



Being Assertive & Using Refusal Strategies

Materials:

- Completed Worksheet (from previous lesson)
- Worksheet

Brainstorm

In the previous lesson, we talked about a situation where someone really wanted to go to a party but their parents wouldn't allow them to because there wasn't an adult present. Do you think this is fair?

Discuss

Call on student volunteers to share their opinions. Continue the discussion and elicit from students information about why parents might not want them to go to a party if parents weren't present. Ask questions such as: What do you think parents are worried about? What do you think your family might be trying to protect you from? (drugs, sexual activity, smoking, alcohol, etc.)

Dive in!

It can be really hard to resist joining in on something when your peers are doing it. During our Brainstorm activity, we discussed some of the things the people who love you might be worried about: Smoking, vaping, drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity. In today's lesson, we'll practice some refusal strategies to help us become more comfortable at handling situations in which we may be pressured to engage in sexual activity that we're not comfortable with, use drugs or alcohol, or smoke or vape. A **refusal strategy** is a way that you can say no to something without just saying no. It's important that we stay calm but assertive in these situations. Being **assertive** means that you are direct and confident without being rude or aggressive. Being assertive is a skill that can be challenging even for adults, but with practice you can get better at it. When we are assertive we don't raise our voice or use offensive language, but we state our feelings and opinions directly. For example, if someone was encouraging you to use drugs, you could say, "No thanks. I'm focusing on my fitness and that wouldn't help me achieve my goals." If someone tries to pressure you into sexual activity by saying, "What are you afraid of?" You could respond assertively by saying, "I'm not afraid. I just don't want to." If you don't want to do it, you can also just say no firmly, such as: "No thanks, I'd rather not." Another way to say no is to blame it on someone else. For example, "My parents will kill me if they find out I've been smoking." Or: "My coach will kick me off the team if we get caught drinking." One



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final way you could refuse is by redirecting the group to a different activity. For example, “What about we go check out that movie we’ve been wanting to see instead of going to a party?”

Activity

Distribute the Worksheet and have students refer to the Worksheet from Problem Solving (from the previous lesson). Together as a class, review the refusal strategies that could be used instead of going to the party (from scenario 2 on Worksheet for Problem Solving). Then, pair students and have them role play using each of the refusal strategies for both scenarios.

Reflect

Have students respond to the question at the bottom of the worksheet. Smoking, vaping, using drugs, and drinking alcohol can have catastrophic effects on your body and mind, including addiction, disease, and even death. Avoiding these substances can help keep you healthy. Write about why you are grateful to have a healthy mind and body. Describe what having a healthy mind and body allows you to do that would be more difficult if you weren’t healthy.

Extend and Enrich

There are many references to sex, drugs, alcohol, smoking, and vaping in the media, especially in advertisements, music, TV shows, and movies. Have students evaluate one and then ask them to create their own PSA (Public Service Announcement) promoting drug, alcohol, smoking, or vaping prevention. Students can choose to create a poster, podcast, PPT, video, or other resource.

For additional resources and ideas, check out Common Sense Media at:

www.commonsense.org/education/.

Professional Development

Studies suggest that teachers also need help saying no to extra tasks, roles, and assignments. Are there areas that you can reduce your extra workload by saying no?