

## STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF

**Topic Area:** Behavioral skills for resisting social influences that promote tobacco use.

**Audience:** Middle School

**Method:** Classroom Activity

**Time Frame:** 20 minutes plus discussion

**Materials Needed:** "Response Matrix" handout, "Ways to Say No" handout, Technique Cards.

### Learning Objectives:

- All students will have the opportunity to practice refusing tobacco offers assertively.
- By practicing to say "no" assertively, students will be better prepared to deal with the situation when it happens.

### Activity:

- Introduce the lesson: "Most people don't use tobacco. Tobacco use is not an acceptable behavior in many parts of society anymore and it's harmful to your health. However, once in a while you may experience pressure to use tobacco. Today, you'll learn ways to refuse or avoid peer pressure to use tobacco. You can apply these same skills anytime you get pressure from peers to do something you don't want to do."
- Go over the following definitions:
  - **Peer Pressure:** Influence or persuasion by people your own age.
  - **Direct Pressure:** An actual offer.
  - **Indirect Pressure:** No actual offer but you feel pressure to use in order to fit in, to be liked or accepted.
- Ask for examples of both direct and indirect peer pressure.
- Explain that one way to deal with peer pressure is to **avoid** the situation. This means that you do not enter the situation at all and don't risk being pressured. An example is:
  - "You're invited to a friend's house and you find out that some of the people there will be smoking. You tell your friend that you can't come now, but will see him/her another day."
- Ask students for another example of avoiding a situation where tobacco use is happening. Write the following points on the board.
  - Know when and where a pressure situation may come up (e.g., kids smoking at the park).
  - Think of the alternative to avoid the situation (e.g., go another time, stay away from them when they're smoking, etc.).
  - Take action. Follow through with one of your alternatives.

## STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF (CONTINUED)

- Explain that at times a person may not be able to avoid a situation. Then the best thing to do is to **escape** as soon as you can. Give the following example:
  - “You are at a party and people are passing a cigarette around. You walk away from that group and go to a different room, or leave the party, giving an excuse, such as being expected home by a certain time.”
- Inform students that there are times when a person can't avoid a situation or escape from pressure. A way to deal with those situations is to use **refusal techniques**, different ways to say “no.”
- Explain that responses to pressure usually fall into 3 categories: Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive.
- Pass out the “Response Matrix” handout. Review the three types of responses.
- Tell students that each of them will have an opportunity to practice refusing tobacco offers assertively. Inform the class that by practicing how to say no assertively to peer pressure, they will be better prepared to deal with the situation when it happens.
- Divide students into groups of two or three.
- Give each group a Technique Card to use. Tell them to start thinking about a response to fit the technique on the card.
- Explain the role play situation:
  - “You and a group of friends get together after school to listen to some music at someone’s house. Some of the friends start smoking. One of them says, “Would you like a cigarette?”
- Go around the room and make the offer to each group, “Would you like a cigarette?”
- Give feedback as to how to improve if needed. Give the group an opportunity to improve his/her technique if the response was weak.

### Discussion Ideas:

- What were the main points of today’s lesson?
- What is the most effective refusal response? (Answer: Being assertive)
- Why is an assertive response the best?
- What problems could an aggressive or passive response cause?
- Where do the perceptions that most teens don’t smoke come from? What reinforces these perceptions?
- What can we do to accurately portray the number of people who are tobacco free?

**\*\*The above activity was adapted from Project TNT – Toward No Tobacco Use. Project TNT was created by the Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research at the University of Southern California and can be found at ETR Associates at [www.etr.org](http://www.etr.org).**

**RESPONSE MATRIX**

	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Aggressive</b>	<b>Assertive</b>
<b>Voice</b> (verbal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ soft</li> <li>▪ shaky</li> <li>▪ hesitant</li> <li>▪ unsure</li> <li>▪ weak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pushy</li> <li>▪ loud</li> <li>▪ angry</li> <li>▪ fast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ confident</li> <li>▪ certain</li> <li>▪ sure</li> <li>▪ calm</li> </ul>
<b>Facial Expression</b> (nonverbal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ no eye contact</li> <li>▪ looks around</li> <li>▪ looks down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ staring</li> <li>▪ pinched</li> <li>▪ frowning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ friendly</li> <li>▪ calm</li> <li>▪ eye contact</li> </ul>
<b>Body Language</b> (nonverbal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ backing away</li> <li>▪ slouching</li> <li>▪ fidgeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ leaning forward</li> <li>▪ invade other person's space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ relaxed</li> <li>▪ good posture</li> <li>▪ standing straight (not leaning forward or invading other's space)</li> </ul>

## Ways to Say "NO"

### **Avoid the offer**

- Don't enter the situation where you may be pressured.

### **Escape the offer**

#### **Walk Away**

- Leave before an offer is made.

#### **Give an excuse**

- "I'm supposed to meet my friend."
- "See you later."
- "Gotta run."
- "I forgot my books."

#### **Cold shoulder**

- Ignore the offer, or change the subject.
- Talk to someone else in the group.
- Walk away.

### **Refuse the offer**

#### **Simple rejection**

- "No."
- "No, thanks."

#### **Self-statements**

- "I don't smoke."
- "I have too much going for me to start this habit."
- "I'm not the type of person who smokes."

#### **Consequences**

- "Smoking will give me bad breath."
- "Smoking will make it harder for me to breathe when I play basketball."

### **Broken record**

- "No, thanks...No, thanks...No thanks."
- "I don't want any...I don't want any."

### **Strength in numbers**

- Look for other non-users. If confronted with an offer, stick together and use "we" statements.
- "We don't want to smoke."
- "We have better things to do."

### **Reversing the pressure**

- "No thanks. I thought you were my friend and my friends wouldn't want me to get into trouble."
- "Why are you pressuring me to do something I don't want to?"

### **Activism**

- "I don't smoke, and you shouldn't either."
- "I don't want to be around you when you're smoking."
- "You really should try to quit using that stuff."

### **Other statement**

- "I know you are trying to be my friend, but I don't smoke."

### **Exchange statement**

- "No thanks, let's go get a pizza instead."
- "I don't smoke, but if you need someone to talk to I'm always here."

### **Combination**

- "I know you are trying to be my friend, but I don't smoke. How about going to get something to eat instead?"

**Be assertive when using these ways to say "NO"!**

# Technique Cards

Copy or cut and paste each stage on card stock or 3"x5" cards and laminate.

**Walk away**

**Give an excuse**

**Cold shoulder**

**Simple  
rejection**

**Self-statement**

**Consequences**

**Broken record**

**Reversing the  
pressure**

**Strength in  
numbers**

**Activism**

**Other  
statement**

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statement**

**Combination  
statement**