

# Refusal Skills

## Summary

This lesson will help students develop strategies to manage peer pressure.

## Main Core Tie

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 6: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT \(HD\) Standard HI.HD.8:](#)

## Additional Core Ties

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 1: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF HEALTHY SELF \(HF\) Standard HI.HF.4:](#)

## Materials

Worksheets: ["Refusal Skills®,"](#) ["Hot Spot Role Play Rotation Schedule"](#)

Role Plays: "Refusal Skills®"

- [Poster:](#)

"Refusal Skills® Steps," "Is Life Magic?"

Materials: Glass of water, piece of typing paper

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Develop strategies to manage peer pressure.

## Instructional Procedures

### **Lesson at a Glance**

Play and discuss "Is Life Magic?"

Explain the five steps of "Refusal Skills®."

Discuss and practice the "Refusal Skills® Steps" worksheet in class.

Role-play using "Refusal Skills®."

### **New Vocabulary**

peer pressure

refusal skills

### **Introduction (Setting Focus)**

Play the game "Is Life Magic?"

Display the poster, "Is Life Magic?"

Feign psychic skills and build the idea that, by magic, the teacher will know the birthday of any student.

Ask a student volunteer to identify whether the day of the month, 1-31, of his or her birthday appears in line one. Repeat for lines two, three, four and five. Name the date of birth.

The secret of the "Is Life Magic?" poster is as follows: As the lines are identified, select the first number of the line in which the date appears. Add all the selected first numbers, and the resulting sum will be the birthday date. (For example, if the 25 were the birthday, it would be in line one [first number is 1], line four [first number is 8] and line five [first number is 16]:  $1+8+16=25$ ).

Explain how the magic is apparently done in the "Birthday Magic" game, and let the students practice performing the magic on each other.

Discuss the game using the following prompts:

Why do some things appear magic to some people?

How can learning skills make it appear that you are magic?

What kinds of skills do people learn to make their lives appear magic?

Identify and list situations when peers or friends have asked students to do something they didn't want to do or something that was "trouble."

Discuss that some people seem to be able to handle these kinds of situations as if by magic, while others seem to always fall for the pressure.

Discuss the purpose of this lesson, which is to learn skills of refusal that will allow students to deal effectively with pressure situations, keep friends, have fun, stay out of trouble and stay in control.

Emphasize that Refusal Skills® will only work if there is an intent to avoid trouble and say "no" to peer pressure.

### **Body (Strategies/ Activities)**

Students complete the "Refusal Skills® " worksheet during the course of the discussion.

Step 1 - Ask questions to see if there is trouble. Stop asking if trouble is found.

Discuss the idea that the best time to get out of trouble is before we get in it.

Use a glass full of water (representing trouble) and a piece of paper (representing a person) to demonstrate the questioning skill.

A volunteer is assigned the job of removing the paper from the table without spilling any water.

Tell the volunteer, "Imagine your friend asks you to go for a ride after school. You ask questions and find out that your friend is planning to steal the car for a joy ride." Place the glass on the paper about one inch from the edge. Tell the student to grasp the opposite edge and remove the paper by only touching the paper and without spilling any water.

Discuss the difficulty of the task and how it relates to staying out of trouble. It is easy to remove the paper when the glass is on the edge of the paper.

Tell the volunteer, "Imagine you wait until you are sitting in the car before you ask questions and find out the car is stolen." Place the glass about four inches from the edge of the paper and tell the volunteer to get out of trouble (pull away the paper). Discuss how getting out of trouble (not getting the paper wet) is getting more difficult.

Tell the volunteer, "Imagine you wait until you are riding around in the car before you ask questions and find out the car is stolen." Place the glass right in the middle of the paper. Tell the volunteer to get out of trouble (pull the paper out) without getting any water on the paper. Discuss the difficulty of the task and how it relates to getting out of this type of troubled situation.

Tell the volunteer, "Imagine you wait until you are riding around in the car with a police car chasing you before you ask questions and find out the car is stolen." Place the glass on the paper about two inches from the end of the paper closest to where the volunteer is grasping the paper. Tell the volunteer that he or she is in pretty deep now, but try to get out of trouble (pull the paper out with out getting any water on the table).

Discuss what has been learned from the paper and glass exercise. Reinforce that asking questions can help you get out of trouble before you are in it. Ask again, when is the best time to get out of trouble?

Remind students that once they have identified the trouble, or if they discover there isn't any trouble, they can quit asking questions.

Role play the questioning skill with several of the situations discussed above.

Complete step 1 of the worksheet and share answers with the class.

Step 2 - Name the trouble.

Explain that using legal names, like "shoplifting," "assault," "vandalism," and "trespassing,"

can help a friend realize what she or he is really asking you to do and emphasize the seriousness of it.

Discuss that some troubled situations don't have legal names, like "making fun of someone."

Discuss that if the legal name is not known, or if the trouble doesn't have one, students can say something like, "That's mean," "That's dangerous," or "That's wrong."

Discuss examples of key phrases, e.g., "That's mean," "That's dangerous," or "That's wrong."

Students complete step 2 on the worksheet and share answers with the class.

#### Step 3 - State the consequences.

Discuss that there are a variety of consequences (physical, legal, social) to others as well as oneself for different types of trouble.

Discuss that consequences may be different for each person, and that stating the consequences helps a friend realize what could happen to you and them.

Discuss that one possible consequence is, "I just wouldn't feel right about that." It's a consequence that you really can't argue with, and a good friend will respect your feelings.

Discuss examples of key phrases, e.g., "We could get arrested," "My parents wouldn't let me see you anymore," or "We could get hurt."

Students complete step 3 of their answer sheets and share their answers with the class.

#### Step 4 - Suggest an alternative.

Discuss how suggesting an alternative means letting friends know that we are rejecting the trouble and not the friendship.

Discuss that one alternative could be to go somewhere with friends and figure out what to do. It provides a way to still do something fun together, but in a safe, legal, and responsible way. Alternatives should be positive and realistic, and work best when they fit the situation. Alternatives don't have to be more exciting than the friend's idea, but can be something simple like going for a walk.

Discuss examples of key phrases, e.g., "Let's play basketball," "Let's get something to eat," "Let's go sit and talk."

Students complete step 4 of their answer sheet and share answers with the class.

#### Step 5 - Move it, sell it, leave the door open.

Discuss ways of moving away from the trouble.

Discuss different ways of selling alternatives and making them sound fun, challenging, and appealing. This may include involving others in the activity, and should emphasize the importance of the friendship.

Discuss that friends don't always have to agree on everything and that sometimes people just need to leave the situation, "leaving the door open." Emphasize that leaving the door open in a kind manner lets friends know they are still wanted, and that we want to do things together.

Students complete step 5 on the worksheet and share answers with the class.

Students develop role plays that demonstrate the five-step Refusal Skills® model.

Discuss what would happen if a friend just didn't listen. The following steps can be used when under pressure, or if you are interrupted when trying to use the Refusal Skills® techniques.

Stay calm.

Say the person's name, make eye contact and say, "Listen to me."

Pause to see if the person is listening.

If the person is listening, then continue to use the skills.

If the person still doesn't listen after two or three times saying, "Listen to me," then leave, saying something like, "I'll see you later."

Students complete role play practice using the "Hot Spot Role-Play Rotation Schedule" and various role play scenarios.

Divide students into groups of four, with each student having a "Hot Spot Role-Play Rotation Schedule."

Each member of the group identifies himself or herself as either person 1, person 2, person 3, or person 4. Explain that each person will take turns persuading, refusing, coaching, and recording as explained in the "Hot Spot Role-Play Rotation Schedule."

Begin the activity by giving the class a situation, e.g., smoke a cigarette in the park, egg a house, skip school, steal something, key a car, spray-paint, drink a wine cooler, or cheat on a test.

Person 1 tries to persuade; person 2 uses the Refusal Skills® to refuse the pressure; person 3 coaches person 2 in using the Refusal Skills®; person 4 checks off each step that person 2 uses.

After about 45 seconds, person 4 gives a thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs horizontal to let the class know how the group did.

Briefly discuss how the role plays went and give feedback on how to use Refusal Skills® more effectively.

Repeat the activity with situations two, three and four. Students may also select their own situations for the role plays.

### **Closure (Wrap-Up and Extension)**

Reinforce that using the Refusal Skills® is a lifelong practice, and encourage students to think about different situations and how they could use the skills.

Discuss how these skills could appear to be magic to someone who did not know them.

Discuss how Refusal Skills® could magically help someone out of a difficult situation.

Authors

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