

Refusal Skills

So, what do you do when someone pressures you to try alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs?

Please review this list of skills and choose a few that you are comfortable using. To have the best chance of handling this pressure successfully, take the time to learn these skills and practice so you will be confident and prepared.

Attention! With some changes, these skills can also be used to resist the pressure to be a part of other risky behaviors and bullying!



1. Say "NO THANKS."

It seems simple, but some forget to try it. This often works when you are faced with friendly or teasing pressure.



2. Give a Reason, Fact, or Excuse.

Think about what is important to you and what your reasons would be for leaving a situation. A good friend will honor your reasons. Practice an excuse so that you won't hesitate and you will sound confident. Have a code word or emoji to share with your parents/guardian that when you text/call that they know to come pick you up.

"My mom just called. Sorry..I gotta go. Something's going on at home."

"My parents would ground me for life."

"That is dangerous!"



3. Walk Away.

You may feel obligated to stay but the safest move might be to leave. Say no, use an excuse, and walk away.



4. Change the Subject.

You can offer another alternative activity: "No. Let's go play ball instead," "Let's go get a snack at my house. I'm hungry," or "I wanted to play my new game this afternoon."



5. Use Humor.

Whether you make a joke out of the request or use sarcasm in your response, either tactic can weaken the pressure and get your message across.



6. Broken Record or Repeated Refusal.

Keep saying "no" over and over again. It will buy you some time to use another refusal technique or be an annoyance.



7. Cold Shoulder or Ignore.

This refusal skill allows you to avoid directly confronting the person. Turn your shoulder and talk to someone else or ignore them like you don't hear them.



8. Ask Questions and Avoid Situations.

You deserve information! Ask questions and get the knowledge you need that will help you avoid risky situations.



9. Strength in Numbers.

Look to surround yourself with friends that make healthy choices and want what is best for you. Work to be a friend that supports and protects others from harm and danger.

Important Points to Remember:

This is an important time to protect your growing brain and body from the damage and disease that alcohol, tobacco and other drugs can do. Your choices here affect your health and future. True friends should respect your choices to not use. True friends won't ask you to do something that could hurt you. Please reach out to a trusted adult if you have questions or concerns and get the support you deserve.