

Unit 6, Lesson 10

STANDING UP TO PRESSURE TO USE DRUGS



IN THIS LESSON

Studies show that drug use jumps significantly between grades six and seven, making it likely that your students are now or will soon be faced with pressures to use drugs. Today they have “hands-on” practice in handling inside and outside pressures to use drugs—and responding effectively and assertively. You will observe them and provide individual feedback.

You may need more than one session to observe and give feedback to students as they each demonstrate responding assertively in a drug use situation.

Lesson Purpose

To demonstrate using assertiveness skills in refusing drugs.

Performance Objectives

The student will:

1. Describe assertive approaches to communicating.
2. Practice using verbal and non-verbal assertiveness skills to resist drug use.
3. Give feedback to classmates about effective assertive responses.
4. Demonstrate responding assertively to pressure to use drugs.

Key Prevention Element: *Resistance Skills*

Materials and Preparation

- *Changes and Challenges*
 - *Speaking Up for Yourself* worksheet (from Lesson 9)
- *Mark’s Mess* teacher resource sheet
- *What Would You Do If ..?* teacher resource sheet from Lesson 9
- Optional: video camera

Today’s Quotation

“There comes a time when you have to plant your feet, stand firm, and make a point about who you are.”

—Pat Riley



DISCOVERING

05 MINUTES

Write the lesson purpose and today's quotation on the board.

Lesson purpose: To demonstrate using assertiveness skills in refusing drugs.

Quotation: *There comes a time when you have to plant your feet, stand firm, and make a point about who you are.*

—Pat Riley, professional basketball coach

Begin the session by asking students how the quotation might apply to situations involving drug use. After some discussion, summarize by saying that standing firm against drug use means protecting yourself from the problems that drugs can cause. It means being free to be your best self and not having to lie, cover-up, or deal with the problems that often result from giving in to the pressures to use drugs.

Today they will practice handling difficult situations involving drugs so they can picture themselves “planting their feet, standing firm, and making a point about who they are.”

Consider videotaping students' refusal skill demonstrations and showing them to their families at the end of the unit or at a parent meeting.



CONNECTING

15 MINUTES

1. Discuss the meaning of *assertive*.

Write the term assertive on the board and explain that it means expressing your needs in a considerate, calm, but firm way. It is effective because it does not involve insults and “put downs,” nor is it “wishy-washy.” Assertive responses convey confidence. As a result, people are more likely to take you seriously and respect your decision. They are less likely to try changing your mind.



WORDS TO LEARN

assertive: considerate and calm but firm



CONNECTING



Point out that assertive responses may not be appropriate in dealing with a parent or other adults. In some cultures young people are expected to look down or away when an adult is upset and speaking to them. For these groups, looking down shows respect while looking directly at a person in authority is considered rude or challenging.

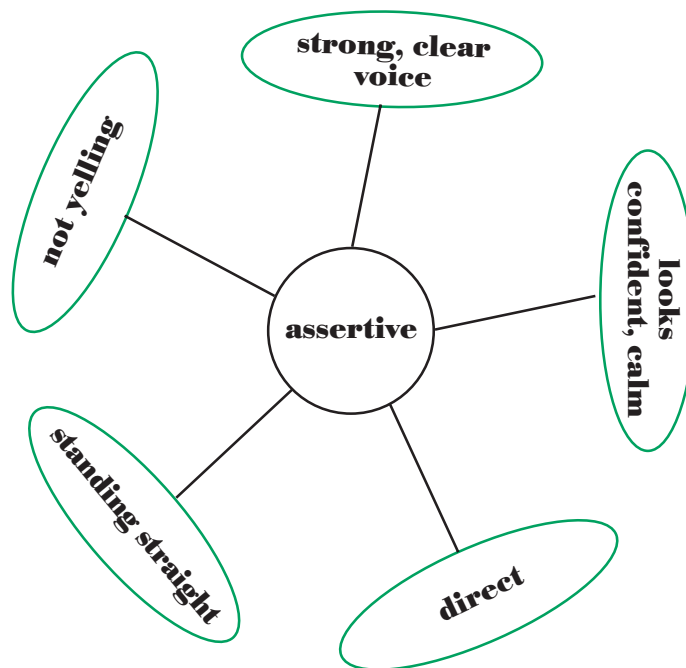
2. Have students picture themselves assertively handling pressure to use drugs.

Ask students to picture themselves in this situation: Their parents are not home, and a “friend” is pressuring them to have a party while they are gone.

Tell them to see themselves dealing first with any inside pressures they feel. What are they saying to themselves? Then tell them to picture themselves being assertive and standing firm against the negative pressure. Ask, “What are you feeling?” “How are you standing?” “What are you saying?”

3. Create a concept map for *assertive*.

Ask students each to list words and phrases that describe what they think it feels like, looks like, and sounds like to be assertive. This list should include both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. After a few minutes, have students suggest words as you create a cluster map like the following on the board:



Explain that thinking through a situation and picturing how you can handle it effectively is an approach used by athletes and others faced with a challenging situation. If you can see it and believe it—you can achieve it.



CONNECTING

4. Review the *Speaking Up for Yourself* worksheet.

Briefly review *Speaking Up for Yourself* from Lesson 9. Remind students that an assertive response means

- Standing up straight and looking confident
- Speaking firmly and clearly, without lengthy explanation or apology
- Not belittling or putting down others

5. Present a situation involving negative pressure.

Read or ask a volunteer to read aloud *Mark's Mess* teacher resource sheet. Ask students:

- What were the first signs of trouble ahead?
- What were the *outside pressures* on Mark?
- What do you think were the *inside pressures* on Mark?
- If you were in this situation, what could you have said or done to prevent what happened?

Invite a volunteer to show how Mark might have handled the situation assertively. Play the role of Rick, and increase the pressure so the volunteer has to stand firm, repeat his or her refusal, or get you to agree to do something else.

Ask the class:

- Did “Mark” handle this situation assertively? Why do you think so?
- What did “Mark” do well? (Consider both verbal and non-verbal skills.)
- Any suggestions to make the response more effective? (Add your own as well.)

Follow the same procedure with one or two other volunteers until students see several effective demonstrations of assertiveness skills.



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Speaking Up for Yourself, p. 131



PRACTICING

20 MINUTES

Adapt or add to the situations to make them as close as possible to those that your students might face. For example, if inhalants are a special concern, create situations that provide practice in refusing them.

Partners practice using assertiveness skills.

Explain that students will now demonstrate how they might handle the *What Would You Do If...?* situations they discussed in Lesson 9.

Pair students as partners A and B. Then read a situation from the *What Would You Do If...?* teacher resource sheet, and play the role of the person offering the drug. Tell the A's to first address the inside pressure with a silent personal "build-up." Then have them respond assertively to the B's, focusing on what to say and how to say it.

Call on several A's to share their personal "build-ups" and then demonstrate with you how they responded assertively to their partners. As they do, pressure them a bit with comments such as "Oh, come on, what's the problem?" so they have to hold their ground. Stress the importance of responding with a clear, confident voice. (*Do not let students practice pressuring each other to use drugs. Only an adult should play this role.*)

Read the second situation, having the B's offer an assertive refusal to the A's. Continue in this way, with partners alternating roles. After reading a situation, walk around and observe students to ensure they are using effective verbal and nonverbal assertiveness skills. Reinforce the positive and give feedback on how well they:

- Convey seriousness and confidence
- Speak clearly and firmly
- Make eye contact
- Stand straight
- Use an appropriate response

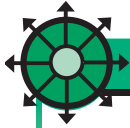
Encourage students to use their assertive skills in real-life situations in which they feel negative pressure from their peers.

Closure Questions

- What do you see as the benefits of developing assertiveness skills?
- Do you think someone can lack confidence or be shy or afraid and still be assertive? Explain.
- How might life be different at our school if more people stood up to negative pressure?

A+

You may wish to use Unit 6 Test E as an additional practice exercise after you complete the PRACTICING section.



Journal Entry

Ask students to describe in their journals a situation in which they would feel pressure to use drugs. Tell them to describe the pressure they might feel, what they might tell themselves, and what they might say or do to handle the situation in an effective and positive way.

Conversation with a Caring Adult

Tell students to talk with a parent or other caring adult about a time when the adult had to stand up for himself or herself. Students might ask:

- What did it feel like?
- What were the results?
- What did you learn from this experience?

Older Teen Presentations

Invite high school students from a drug prevention organization, such as Youth to Youth, to come to your class and perform skits showing ways to refuse to use drugs.

Notes



resistance skills

My dad asked me to stay with my little sister while he and my mom went to a movie. They usually get a baby sitter, but my dad said I was old enough to be trusted now.

After my sister went to bed, I got a little bored. Then my friend Rick called and said he'd come over and keep me company. I was sure my folks wouldn't want Rick over while they were gone—but Rick really wanted to come, so I gave in.

I knew I'd made a mistake when Rick's older brother came along with two girls I didn't know. They brought some beer—and things really got out of control fast. One girl spilled beer on the carpet. Then Rick's brother fell against the floor lamp, and it broke the front window. I got mad and everybody left. They didn't even say they were sorry!

I cleaned up the house, but I still had to tell my parents about the broken window....