

Substance Use: Addictions and Related Behaviours

Practicing refusal skills

Scenario discussion guide for educators

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS AND NOTES
<p>What might prevent someone from trying the substance?</p>	<p>Encourage students to share their ideas. Additional examples of reasons why people may not choose to use substances can be found in Action — Educator Discussion guide — question 2 of the quiz.</p>
<p>If someone chose not to use the substance, how could they share their decision? What could they say or do?</p>	<p>You may wish to review the questions used in the video to support students with decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What decision needs to be made? • What factors can help inform the decision? • What values or guidelines are important to think about in your family, culture, and community? • What will you decide? Who could help you, if you needed it? • What will you say or do to share your decision? <p>Note: planning and avoiding making decisions can be a strategy, too (e.g., not going to a party where you think there might be pressure to use substances).</p> <p>In addition to the list of refusal strategies generated by students, you may wish to share strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saying, “No, thanks” • adopting a broken-record approach and continuing to say no • say it’s not for you • explaining the reason for saying no, such as, “If my mom smells that on me I’ll be grounded for life” or “My health is really important to me.” • making up an excuse, such as, “My parents want me home soon.” • convincing the other person not to do it • walking away • using a delay tactic, such as saying, “I’ll think about it” • making a joke and changing the subject • suggesting a different activity • asking questions to get more information or share information <p>Note: as part of the discussion, engage students in a conversation about how to support or stand up for someone else who has said no to something.</p>

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<p>What could they do if they needed help?</p>	<p>Sometimes, even when we know information about substances and have refusal skills and strategies, we still need help. Students might need help for many reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have questions or need more information about substances. • Their refusal skills and strategies aren't working, and they need advice. • Substances are starting to have harmful effects on their lives. • Substances are starting to have harmful effects on someone they care about. <p>The following may be signs substance use is starting to have harmful effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to keep up with responsibilities at school or home. • Giving up activities that used to be important or enjoyable. • Changes in mood (e.g., feeling more irritable, anxious, or down than usual). • Changing friends. • Having difficulties with family members, friends, and peers. <p>No matter what substance students might be concerned about, the first step is reaching out to a trusted adult in their personal lives, school, or community. They can also call or text a help line, like Kids Help Phone. This is an opportunity to help students identify school and community resources that support mental health problems and those relating to substance use. Consider posting information in your classroom and school in a variety of ways (e.g., on the back of bathroom stall doors or electronically on a website or shared class platform so students can access them privately).</p> <p>Note: Addiction is among the most stigmatized of all health conditions. It's important to talk about substance use in ways that reduce stigma and decrease barriers to seeking help. Additional information on supporting students is available in the Educator Guide.</p> <p>Optional student resource: My Circle of Support — Student Help-Seeking Resource</p>