



LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

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Parent's Guide Week #12 Resistance Skills

This week our focus is on *resistance* to inappropriate Peer Pressure. We define *Peer Pressure* as: *a friend trying to get us to do something*. There is nothing wrong or bad with being like our friends or doing things because our friends enjoy it. The problem starts when we stop making good, appropriate and healthy decisions for ourselves because we want to fit in and we start doing things we know are wrong.

When we ask the students what to say if someone is trying to get them to use a drug the general response is ... "Say NO!". This response is absolutely correct, however what do you do when "NO" is not accepted as an answer by your friend? Our attempt is to add an awareness that just *saying NO* is a good first step, but it doesn't always work. Other techniques may need to be incorporated in a response to make one's response effective. The techniques we incorporate are nothing new to the students. In fact the techniques are exactly the same things you (parents) have taught your children since they were old enough to understand. All the P.L.U.S. officer does is have the student put his/her knowledge to use in specific "being pressured" situations.

Techniques: (11 "Ways to Resist Peer and Social Pressure")

- 1) **Saying "No Thanks":** We explain that this technique will work well when the person who is asking us *respects our opinion and right to say No*. We also use "Saying No" in combination with almost all of the other techniques because it sends a definite NO USE message.
- 2) **Tell it like it is:** This technique is very effective in getting your point across. The added benefit to this technique is we have told the person directly that we don't use. By giving a **reason**, for example ... "I just don't do that stuff!" ... you make your commitment stronger and support your beliefs.
- 3) **Use the facts:** This technique is even stronger. By using good, accurate facts we let the other person know that we are aware of the real dangers of drug use. It's hard to argue with a person who knows the facts, "No, marijuana use is dangerous and it's illegal!"
- 4) **Give an excuse:** By giving an excuse, for example ... "Look at the time. I've got to go because if I'm late I'll get in trouble." ... you are removing yourself from the area and at the same time saying some thing that all kids can relate to ... parent's rules. A trap that needs to be avoided with this technique is giving *long-term* excuses. Using an excuse like ... "I could get addicted." ... to an offer of alcohol would not work very well. However, *short-term* excuses work very well like ... "If my parents smell that on me I will be in BIG trouble."
- 5) **Use your parents as the excuse:** We mention to the children that parents make great excuses. For example: "My parents expect me home right after school." or "My mom will smell that on me, I can't hang with you guys while you're doing that." We ask the students to talk with you (mom and dad) and come up with some excuses your child can use if asked to do something wrong.

- 6) **Back at them:** This technique emphasizes one's commitment to staying drug free. We caution that this technique should only be used with friends we know well. If we use this with someone we don't know well it could start a fight. By saying: "You want ME to smoke that? No Way!" one is stating their opinion leaving no questions. *Walking Away* is a great follow-up with this technique.
- 7) **Changing the Subject:** This technique is very similar to *Giving an Excuse*. We are trying to get the other persons mind off the *drug topic* and onto something more positive.
- 8) **Find an alternative:** The basic difference between this technique and *Change the Subject* is to use this technique when the person pressuring you is your friend and you want them to not use. An *excuse* gets you out of the situation but does nothing for your friend. An *alternative* helps replace the temptation to use by replacing it with another, drug free, positive activity and you hope your friend will give up the idea to do something wrong and come with you.
- 9) **Skipping CD:** (Repeated refusal as many times as necessary): This technique works very well when we are being teased. We ask the students: What have your parents told you to do when someone is teasing you? The answer always is: "Ignore them." A person who is teasing you is trying to control your emotions. By ignoring the person you stay in control of your emotions. The *Skipping CD* approach is a verbal way of ignoring a person. We also talk about how important body language is when using this technique. We want to show that we are confident in our decision not to use while at the same time we are not paying attention to the offer.
- 10) **Walk Away:** What could be easier, right? I have found that students have a real hard time with this technique for two reasons. The first is a sense of having to defend themselves, and the second is that we have been taught to be polite. Walking away while someone is talking to you is impolite and goes against what we have learned. We explain to the students that when someone is offering (pressuring) you to use drugs or trying to get you to do something wrong that you don't need to be polite by standing and listening. This doesn't mean to get in a fight or say something nasty, it means to simply walk away. *Walking Away* is the most effective way to say no. And, if you are followed make yourself heard by getting loud and letting people around you know what's going on.
- 11) **Totally Avoid the Situation:** This technique incorporates knowledge students already have about where kids hang out and do drugs, possibly parties when parents aren't at home. If you know that kids hang around a certain place smoking/drinking/drugging/fighting don't go there. At times older kids will hang out at places students have to pass on their way home from school. We advise the students to talk to parents about alternative routes home or phone calls to police if the situation is scary or feels dangerous.

PARENTS BE AWARE the children will try out some of these techniques to see if they work **in an environment that is safe for them (that usually means at home with you)**. The student may use a perfect technique but at an *inappropriate time*. During class we talk about appropriate times to say no and that it is **NOT** appropriate to say no to parents or teachers when they tell us to do some thing. We **DO NOT** condone students talking back or disobeying their parents! Here's my suggestion if they try out a technique at an inappropriate time: Reinforce the technique..."That was a really great attempt at *changing the subject*, however now is not an *appropriate time* to use that technique." Explain to your son or daughter that it wasn't appropriate for the given situation, but with a friend it might have worked well.

Student/Parent Homework (Week 12):

Please complete the *InterNet Terms* worksheet. Students can always work on their Final Paper.