



### YOU CAN SAY NO

It's natural to want to fit in and to be "part of the crowd." This may be easy for some people, while for others it takes more effort.

Being "part of the crowd" isn't always a good thing, though. Sometimes, when the crowd is doing something you know is wrong, you may feel pressure to join in. Others might try to convince you to drink alcohol, try drugs, tobacco or have sex, even if you don't want to do any of those things. The good news is that you have the right to refuse to do those things!



### WHEN TO SAY NO

Sometimes it can be hard to tell if "no" is the right answer, especially when you're around lots of people and you want to feel included. This is when you have to be true to yourself and determine if the situation is really one you want to be part of. Does something about it make you uneasy or uncomfortable? If so, chances are that the right answer to whatever you're being asked to do is "no."



### PRACTICE YOUR REFUSAL SKILLS

Saying "no" to your friends can be hard sometimes but knowing how to assert yourself can help you take control in difficult situations and avoid getting in trouble. Knowing what to say can help give you confidence to be yourself without fear of losing your friends. Remember: if they're really your friends, they'll respect your choices. It might not always be easy but surrounding yourself with friends who make good decisions will help you make good decisions, too.

“ Don't let someone talk you into doing something you don't want to do. ”

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### CDC HEALTHY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/>

# REFUSAL SKILLS

Staying Safe by Saying "NO"



### in the know

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## HOW TO SAY NO

Turning someone down when they're trying to pressure you to do something you don't want can be tough. Read on to find some creative ways to get yourself out of a tough spot.

### • *Just say "no, thanks"*

Be polite and just tell the person you aren't interested. It might seem simple, but it's effective.

### • *Make a joke*

Using humor can be a good way to respond and ease the tension. Make a joke about needing brain cells to pass math or how you don't want to stunt your growth.

### • *Blame your Parents*

You know your parents wouldn't want you to give in to peer pressure, so go ahead and use them as an excuse not to. Something like, "My parents would kill me" or "I'd never hear the end of it from my mom and dad" might also make others think twice about using.

### • *Make an excuse*

Say you have to be somewhere, or you have an early practice, or anything you'd like. Say it and stick to it whenever you're offered drugs, tobacco or alcohol.

### • *Suggest doing something else*

By thinking of something better to do, you give yourself (and others around you) a way out of uncomfortable situations. Instead of doing something risky, suggest playing a video game or a going on a bike ride.

### • *Ignore the suggestion*

You can always just pretend you didn't hear the person and talk to someone else. If you act like you don't think it's even worth discussing, the other person should get the hint.



### • *Tell a Lie*

While lying generally isn't a good idea, a little white lie like "I've tried that before and I hated it" can be a convenient excuse for refusing to use alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

### • *Walk away*

If something is making you uncomfortable, it's perfectly okay to just leave the situation. It might even inspire others to follow your lead.

### • *Avoid the situation entirely*

If you know that a situation is likely to lead to peer pressure, just avoiding it altogether is usually the easiest way to stay out of trouble.

### • *Repeat yourself as much as necessary*

Sometimes it may take saying no more than once or on different occasions. You don't have to say yes just because someone asks you a ton of times.

### • *Power in numbers*

Agree ahead of time with your friends that you'll all avoid using drugs or alcohol and stick to that agreement. Having backup from your friends can help you have an "out" in sticky situations.



### • *Appeal to reason*

Chances are that the person offering you drugs, tobacco or alcohol knows that they shouldn't be doing those things so you can help them see reason. Saying something like "You know better than to do stuff like that" or "You're too smart to want to poison your body like that" can make the other person reconsider what they're doing.

### • *Be dismissive*

Using drugs, tobacco and alcohol is a pretty dumb idea, right? You should feel free to say so. Saying something like "that's a dumb idea" might put the other person on the defensive, but they'll probably feel embarrassed and not ask you again.

### • *Ask for something else*

If you're offered something you don't want, ask for something you do want. Saying something like "I don't really want that, but you can grab me a soda" turns the conversation away from drugs and alcohol.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

When it comes to being offered drugs, tobacco or alcohol, you can always refuse. Don't let someone talk you into doing something you don't want to do. By practicing some of these refusal skills, you can be ready for the next time someone pushes you to go against your values.



“Saying “NO” to your friends can be hard sometimes. Remember: if they’re really your friends, they’ll respect your choices.”