

Challenge the Influences

SUMMARY

Objective: To help students understand the importance of developing effective refusal skills to stay on course with personal goals and to practice and improve refusal skills to counter drug, alcohol and problem gambling.

Process: Students will participate in an activity to try and persuade one another to do various things. Students will then discuss and brainstorm ways of how we are influenced and how to challenge those influences in order to make good decisions.

This lesson is one in a series of Grade 7 lessons. If you aren't able to teach all the lessons, try pairing this lesson with the "Understanding Influences," "Protecting Ourselves from Risk," or "Decision Making" lessons.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Practise and build refusal skills
- Identify positive friendships, role models and personal support systems
- Build a broad base of positive and supportive relationships

CONTENT AND TIME (45-MINUTE LESSON)

- 1.1 Introduction: Refusal and Resistance (5 minutes)
- 1.2 Activity: Mission Influence (20 minutes)
- 1.3 Activity: Brainstorming Responses to Pressure (15 minutes)
- 1.4 Closure: Key Messages (5 minutes)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Index cards
 Flipchart paper or large sheets of paper
 Markers

Teaching about substance use and gambling can and should cross all subjects. Here are a few suggestions for use in subjects other than health.

LINKS TO OTHER SUBJECTS

- **Language Arts:** Write a short essay, poem or story about how we are influenced and ways to challenge those influences
- **Art:** Use different art media to represent influences and how we resist those influences
- **Drama:** Act out different scenarios in short skits or role plays

1.1 Introduction: Refusal / Resistance (5 minutes)

Explain to your students that the influence to use alcohol, other drugs or gamble is all around us. We are exposed to that influence in a number of ways including from media, family, peers, or even ourselves. One of the most common ways that we are “pressured” to use drugs or gamble is by our peers or people we know. It is important for us to stand up to that pressure, make healthy choices, and resist the influence to use drugs or gamble. To do this, it takes skills and the self-confidence to use those skills.

1.2 Activity: Mission – Influence (20 minutes)

Objective: To have students experiment with peer influence and its effect on how we make decisions.

Instructions: Prior to class prepare an index card for each student that will outline a ‘mission’ that they are to persuade another student to complete. These missions could include:

- Persuade another student to whistle Happy Birthday
- Persuade another student to stand on a chair and loudly introduce themselves to the class
- Persuade another student to do 10 jumping jacks

Ultimately, you want a range of harmless but silly things that students will try to compel or influence one another to participate in. Each student will need a “Mission: Influence” card, so repeat some of the tasks as necessary.

Distribute index cards to the each student, and instruct everyone to read the card silently before hiding it. Share with your students that during the activity they should follow the instructions and keep mental notes on how successful or unsuccessful they are in carrying out the instructions.

Allow your students a few minutes to mill about the classroom trying to influence one another to complete the task outlined on their Mission: Influence card. When you feel enough time has passed, call your students back together and debrief the activity using the following questions:

- Were people successful in influencing others to complete their tasks?
- What tools and tactics did you use?
- Did you notice if different tools worked better on different people than others?
- How did you influence others?
- How easy was it to get others to do your task?
- Was there a time where you completed someone else's task, where you regretted doing it?
- What should you do if you don't agree with the decision being made?
- How can we relate this activity to making decisions with our friends?
- How does this relate to being a Grade 7 student and dealing with peer pressure?
- How does this relate to being a Grade 7 student and being pressured to use drugs and alcohol?

1.3 Brainstorming Responses to Pressure

(15 minutes)

Instruct your students to work in teams and to brainstorm some ways to resist the pressure to use substance that they may experience. e.g., how would you respond to a friend who invites you to smoke a cigarette at lunch or a friend who may want you to drink alcohol when you are sleeping over at their house? These responses can be written on a large piece of paper (flipchart) and could be posted within the classroom. Alternately, the students may want to develop these into posters.

1.4 Closure: Key Messages

(5 minutes)

Influence and pressure to use substances and gamble are around us and often come from our friends or people we know.

It is important to challenge pressures, make healthy choices, and resist the influence to use drugs or gamble.

Resisting and refusing pressure takes skills and the self-confidence to use those skills.