

# REFUSAL SKILLS FOR TEENS

## Personal Credit-The Power to Refuse

Refusals are like charges against a personal credit account. Too often young people feel that a single refusal will bankrupt a relationship. Friends have a value to one another, which is why friendship is like having money in the bank. Even though a refusal costs something it draws down on the credit, but it doesn't empty the account.

### 1. **Make Your Position Clear**

The best solution to social pressure is to say "NO" clearly, distinctly, and with conviction. While this is probably the best strategy, it is one of the hardest things to do. However, the advantage of making your position clear is it usually puts an end to the pressuring.

### 2. **Adding Emphasis**

Sometimes there is a need to reinforce the word "NO" with an extra word like absolutely, never or no way.

### 3. **Stating Facts or Consequences**

"My parents will ground me for a whole month", "No way, that stuff can really mess you up", or "I've got to drive home and there's no way I'm going to risk losing my license."

### 4. **Excuses**

"The stomach flu has been going through my family and I think I've got it." "My parents are picking me up early" or "My mom just text messaged me and my sister is sick and she needs me to come home"

### 5. **Reversing The Pressure**

"Why is it so important to you that I drink? "Why do you want me to change my decision?" Why does a person have to drink to have fun?"

### 6. **Proposing an Alternative**

Let's play cards instead, or let's go to the movies.

## **7. Planning Ahead**

Anticipate what some of the issues might be, what could come up and how they'll safely get out of the situation.

have back up transportation, go with a friend who shares your values, have a prearranged change of plans that can "come up" all of a sudden, a promise from parents to come get you if you need them too, calling a friend at a specified time.

## **8. Leaving the Scene**

Have a plan ahead of time for how you could leave the situation safely

## **9. Sharing the Responsibility**

Borrow the power from a known authority such as coaches or parents.

## **10. Buying Time**

Saying something like, "Not now, maybe later" can give you a little time to figure out how to get out of the situation.

## **11. Recruiting a Friend**

Use other friends who can reinforce your position. Plan ahead.

## **12. Using Humor**

Humor can reduce the tension created by refusal.

## **13. Helping a Friend**

If you see a friend who is making or about to make a bad decision you can help them make a better decision.

## **14. Saving the Group**

The values of holding out against the group can be enormous. Providing guidance, supervision and assistance when someone is at risk of being hurt.

**Coping is how we deal with life's stressors or uncomfortable emotions. There are healthy ways to cope and unhealthy ways to cope. Examples of healthy coping are listed below. Unhealthy coping can include substance use, self-harm, avoidance, and denial.**

### **Healthy Coping Ideas:**

#### **Diversions:**

- Write, draw, paint, photography
- Play an instrument, sing, dance, act
- Take a shower or a bath
- Garden
- Take a walk, or go for a drive
- Watch television or a movie
- Watch cute or funny videos on YouTube
- Play a game
- Go shopping
- Clean or organize your environment
- Read
- Take a break
- Use relaxation and/or mindfulness skills

#### **Social/Interpersonal Coping:**

- Talk to someone you trust
- Set boundaries and say "no"
- Write a note to someone you care about
- Be assertive
- Use humor
- Spend time with friends and/or family
- Serve someone in need
- Care for or play with a pet
- Role-play challenging situations with others
- Encourage others
- Find your hobbies
- Be involved with positive activities
- Identify and express your feelings

#### **Cognitive Coping:**

- Make a gratitude list
- Brainstorm solutions
- Lower your expectations of the situation
- Keep an inspirational quote with you
- Be flexible
- Write a list of goals

- Act opposite of negative feelings
- Write a list of pros and cons for decisions
- Reward or pamper yourself when successful
- Write a list of your strengths
- Accept a challenge with a positive attitude

#### **Tension Releasers:**

- Exercise or play sports
- Catharsis (yelling in the bathroom, punching a punching bag)
- Cry
- Laugh

#### **Physical:**

- Get enough sleep
- Eat healthy foods
- Get into a good routine
- Eat a little chocolate
- Limit caffeine
- Deep/slow breathing

#### **Spiritual:**

- Pray or meditate
- Enjoy nature
- Get involved in a worthy cause

#### **Limit Setting:**

- Drop some involvement
- Prioritize important tasks
- Use assertive communication
- Schedule time for yourself