LifeSkills Training Middle School program, Level 1, Student Guide

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ISBN: 978-0-9835782-3-9

Acknowledgements
We would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following individuals at National Health Promotion Associates:

Christopher Williams, Ph.D., Senior Vice President
Craig Zettle, Vice President
Kathleen Silloway, Developmental Editor

We would also like to thank our design consultants at Papercut Studio and instructional consultant at Circa Learning, LLC.

Please visit the LifeSkills Training Middle School companion website at www.lifeskillstraining.com/msweb

For more information, please visit www.lifeskillstraining.com
Assertiveness
How to Be More Assertive

Saying “No”

1. **State your position.** Tell the other person how you feel about something, or give your answer to a request that you do something (e.g., “No, you can’t borrow my book”). Speak with a strong, confident tone of voice.

2. **State your reason.** Tell the other person the reason for your position, request, or feelings (e.g., “I need to use it myself” or “I already promised that someone else could use it”).

3. **Be understanding (if appropriate).** Let the other person know that you understand their point of view, request, or feelings (e.g., “I know you really need to use it, and I wish there was something I could do to help”).

Making Requests or Asserting Rights

1. Tell the other person the problem or situation to be changed.

2. Say how you might change the situation or solve the problem. Inform the other person what you would like them to do or what you think (asserting rights), or ask for a favor.

How to Say It

Following these tips will help you be more assertive by using the right nonverbal skills.

1. **Eye Contact:** Look directly into the person’s eyes. Don’t look away from the person you are talking to or down at the floor.

2. **Facial Expression:** Be certain that your facial expressions match what you are saying (for example, don’t smile while telling someone you’re angry).

3. **Body position/posture:** Face the person to whom you are speaking, and stand up straight. Slouching will make the person think you don’t believe what you’re saying.

4. **Distance:** Stand a comfortable distance from the person you are talking with (generally about three feet).
A. Describe a common situation where you have trouble being assertive.
B. List the reason(s) why you don’t stand up for your rights or express your true feelings to your friends.
C. Now imagine you are being pressured to smoke cigarettes by friends or classmates. Describe the situation and how you would handle it.

### Handling Difficult Situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Situation</th>
<th>B. Reasons Why</th>
<th>C. Describe the situation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How I would handle it</td>
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</table>

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Refusal Techniques: Ways of Saying “No”

Simple No: “No.” or “No, thanks.”

Tell It Like It Is: “No, thanks. I don’t smoke.”

Give an Excuse: “No, thanks. I’m in a hurry right now. I’ve got to go.”

The Big Stall: “No, thanks. Maybe later.”

Change the Subject: Say “no” and start talking about something else.
“No, thanks. Hey, did you see the game last night?”

Broken Record: Repeat “no” over and over, or do variations on your “no” response.
“No, thanks.”
“No.”
“No. I’m not interested.”

Walk Away: Say “no” and walk away.

The Cold Shoulder: Ignore the other person.

Avoiding the Situation: Stay away from any situation where you are likely to be pressured to smoke.
Here are some common situations that teenagers find themselves in. How would you handle them? What would you say or do?

### Assertive Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Your Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You are standing on a long lunch line. Someone cuts ahead of you in line.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. You are riding a train where smoking is not allowed. The person next to you lights up a cigarette.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. You are in a friend’s house and they’re drinking beer. Your friends offer you some. You don’t want any.</td>
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<td>4. Your friend wants to borrow your MP3 player. You don’t want to lend it to your friend since you’re afraid it will get broken.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. You’re at a party where marijuana is being smoked. You do not want to smoke. Someone passes you a joint.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Describe situations that you think you may have to deal with by being assertive. Write down how you plan to handle them.

### Additional Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Your Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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