

## Purpose of the Lesson

The purpose of this lesson is for students to understand verbal and nonverbal communication skills that assist in an assertive refusal skill to stay drug-free. Students will learn the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication and strategies to deliver an assertive message. Students will practice what they have learned by writing assertive refusal skill statements in response to being offered drugs.

## National Health Education Standards

**Standard 4:** Interpersonal Communication

*Performance Indicator 4.8.1:* Demonstrate the use of effective verbal and nonverbal communication to avoid misuse of prescription medication.

*Performance Indicator 4.8.2:* Demonstrate the use of effective verbal and nonverbal communication to avoid other drug use.

*Performance Indicator 4.8.4:* Demonstrate the use of effective peer resistance skills to avoid or reduce exposure to other drugs.

## Healthy Behavior Outcome (HBO)

Avoid experimentation with alcohol and other drugs.

### Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

Objective	Assessment
1. Students will be able to identify the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Passive, Assertive, Aggressive identification sheet</li></ul>
2. Students will identify the steps of the STOP strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>STOP Notes</li></ul>
3. Students will write assertive refusal messages to demonstrate skills to be drug-free.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I Will Not Use Drugs Because... practice statements and Refusal Skill Scenarios</li></ul>
4. Students will identify assertive verbal and nonverbal cues to promote a drug-free message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refusal Skill Scenarios</li></ul>

**Time:** 35 - 45 minutes

## Materials

*Assessments and Worksheets*

- Passive, Assertive, Aggressive Identification Sheet ([Attachment 1](#)); Stop Strategy Notes ([Attachment 2](#)); I Will Not Use Drugs Because... ([Attachment 3](#)); Refusal Skill Scenarios ([Attachment 4](#)).

## Introduction

Today we are going to review communication styles, reasons to say no to drugs, and practice writing refusal skills to avoid substance abuse.

## Teaching Steps

- In Lesson 1, we learned about proper use and misuse of prescription and OTC medicines. What other skills do you need to make a drug-free choice? Today we are going to review communication styles, reasons to say no to drugs, and practice writing refusal skills to avoid drug use.

### Activity 1: Aggressive, Passive or Assertive

- **Step 1:** Review the three styles of verbal communication (aggressive, passive, assertive). Give examples of each as you review.
  - **Aggressive:** Express their feelings and opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that does not consider the rights and feelings of others; puts people on the defensive; breaks down communication.
    - Example: “You don’t know what you are talking about!”
  - **Passive:** The communicator does not stand up for what they want; their feelings will not be considered.
    - Example: “Okay, I guess so.”
  - **Assertive:** Respectful and direct communication that advocates for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others.
    - Example: “No thank you. I’m good.”
  - Remind students that assertive communication is typically the best communication style to use, but there are times when aggressive and passive may be used. For example, if the person offering drugs continues to pressure after an assertive response, then an aggressive statement, “I said NO and I mean it!” might have to be used. An example of when it is okay to be passive is if the situation is dangerous and you need to walk away and leave the situation without saying anything.
- **Step 2:** Aggressive, Passive, Assertive Identification Practice Sheet ([Attachment 1](#))
  - Students will read the scenario and identify if the statement is Aggressive (AG), Passive (P), or Assertive (A)
  - Review answers with the students:
    - 1A: P
    - 1B: A
    - 1C: AG
    - 2A: A
    - 2B: P
    - 2C: AG
    - 3A: AG
    - 3B: P
    - 3C: A

- **Step 3:** Review non-verbal communication that supports an assertive refusal skill to stay drug-free. We can be aggressive, passive or assertive with our non-verbal communication also. Assertive non-verbal communication looks like:
  - o Body language
    - Stand tall and head up
    - Be aware of your gestures
  - o Tone of voice
    - Direct and a volume they can hear, but not yelling
    - Clear, calm and steady
  - o Eye contact

## Activity 2: STOP Strategy

- **Step 1:** Peer Resistance Skills: **STOP Strategy** (Attachment 2).
  - o **S**ay NO in a firm voice
    - Use assertive verbal statements and strong body language to reinforce your drug-free choice
  - o **T**ell why you will not use drugs (use *I Will Not Use Drugs Because...* statements from practice sheet. (Attachment 3)
    - Reasons to be drug-free:
      - o Students will identify reasons they are drug-free to strengthen their refusal skills.
      - o Students will write statements using the *I Will Not Use Drugs Because...* practice sheet.
      - o Possible answers:
        - ✓ I want to stay healthy
        - ✓ I don't want to hurt my relationships with the people I care about
        - ✓ I want to do well in school
        - ✓ I want to have a good career
  - o **O**ffer other alternatives to drug use if you have the opportunity
    - Fun activities: Go to the movies, ride bikes, go swimming, take a walk in the park, volunteer in the community, go to a school-sponsored event, play sports at the YMCA, etc.
    - Tell your friend you are not comfortable in this dangerous situation and you would like to change the subject.
  - o **P**romptly leave if the pressure continues
    - Text a trusted adult in your life to pick you up.
    - Walk/ride your bike if it is safe.
    - Call 911 or get the help of a trusted adult if the pressure become dangerous.

# HOPE

Health and Opioid  
Prevention Education

6th GRADE  
LESSON 2

Communication Strategies  
for Refusing Drugs

- **Step 2:** Discuss the importance of the STOP strategy, especially when they are in a situation where drugs are being offered.
- **Step 3:** Teacher demonstrate the STOP strategy. Teachers can use one of the three scenarios to demonstrate or walk through to students' understanding of the STOP strategy.
- **Step 4:** Student Practice: **Attachment 4**
  - o Have students write assertive refusal skills using the information they learned in the lesson.
  - o For example:
    - *A person offers you a cigarette.*
    - **Your response: I would look the person in the eyes and say, "No thank you. I have asthma."**
  - o Checklist

Refusal skills include:	Points Possible	Points Earned
<b>Assertive Statement</b> <i>(Say "NO" in a firm voice)</i>	2	
<b>Reason to Avoid the Drug</b> <i>(Tell why you will not use drugs)</i>	2	
<b>Offer Other Alternatives to Drug Use</b> <i>(Watch a movie, take a walk, cheer on the high school football team, etc.)</i>	2	
<b>Promptly Leave or State How You Will Exit the Situation</b> <i>(Call for a ride home, change the subject, walk away, etc.)</i>	2	

- **Step 5:** If time, students can practice their refusal skill with a partner.

## Summary of lesson

Students learned the difference between the different types of communication (passive, assertive, aggressive); identified reasons to avoid drugs; and learned how to write a refusal skill to avoid drugs including verbal and non-verbal communication.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## BE ASSERTIVE

Express what you **THINK** and **FEEL** in a positive way. Create mutual respect.

PASSIVENESS	ASSERTIVENESS	AGGRESSIVENESS
Avoiding, giving in, not expressing your feelings. This disrespects you!	Respectful and direct communication that advocates for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others.	Putdowns, yelling, physical violence. This disrespects others.

*Directions:* Identify if the statements below are passive (P), assertive (A) or aggressive (AG).

**Scenario 1:** A group of people are talking about your friend Jim.

**1A:** \_\_\_\_\_ You listen, but don't make any comments.

**1B:** \_\_\_\_\_ You say, "I don't feel comfortable talking about Jim when he's not here. Let's talk about something else."

**1C:** \_\_\_\_\_ You say, "You are a bunch of gossips!"

**Scenario 2:** Your teacher graded your test incorrectly.

**2A:** \_\_\_\_\_ You say, "I believe my paper was marked incorrectly. Would you please look at question 4?"

**2B:** \_\_\_\_\_ You don't say anything and accept the grade.

**2C:** \_\_\_\_\_ You approach the teacher and say, "You have to fix this!"

**Scenario 3:** You play basketball and have not been getting much playing time.

**3A:** \_\_\_\_\_ You approach the coach and say, "This is not fair!"

**3B:** \_\_\_\_\_ You quit the team.

**3C:** \_\_\_\_\_ You ask the coach if this is a good time to speak with them and say, "I would like to earn more playing time. Can you give me some tips to improve my performance?"



## STRATEGY NOTES

**S**ay NO in a firm voice

- o Use assertive verbal statements and strong body language to reinforce your drug-free choice

**T**ell why you will not use drugs

- o Reasons to be drug-free:
  - Identify reasons you are drug-free to strengthen your refusal skills.
  - Write statements using the *I Will Not Use Drugs Because...* practice sheet.
  - Possible answers:
    - ✓ I want to stay healthy.
    - ✓ I don't want to hurt my relationships with the people I care about.
    - ✓ I want to do well in school.
    - ✓ I want to have a good career.

**O**ffer other alternatives to drug use if you have the opportunity

- o Fun activities: Go to the movies, ride bikes, go swimming, take a walk in the park, volunteer in the community, go to a school-sponsored event, play sports at the YMCA, etc.
- o Tell your friend you are not comfortable in this dangerous situation and you would like to change the subject.

**P**romptly leave if the pressure continues

- o Text a trusted adult in your life to pick you up
- o Walk/ride your bike if it is safe
- o Call 911 or the police if the pressure become dangerous

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## I Will Not Use Drugs Because...

*Directions: Fill in the blanks with reasons you choose to stay drug-free.*

1. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

2. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

3. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

4. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

5. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

6. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

7. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

8. "I" will not use drugs because...

\_\_\_\_\_

**Circle the reason you feel you would most likely use  
if you were confronted about using drugs.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## REFUSAL SKILL SCENARIOS

*Directions: Write a refusal skill that includes what you will do **NON-VERBALLY** (eye contact, stand tall, head up, etc.) and what you would **VERBALLY** (assertive statement and reason to avoid drugs) say to avoid drug use for each scenario.*

**Scenario 1:** Your friend offers you a prescription drug. She said it's safe. Her mom got it from her doctor.

**Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **in a firm voice.**

**Tell why you will not use drugs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Offer a different alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Promptly leave or state how you will exit the situation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario 2:** You are on the bus and an older student offers you some chewing tobacco.

**Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **in a firm voice.**

**Tell why you will not use drugs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Offer a different alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Promptly leave or state how you will exit the situation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario 3:** You invited your friend to spend the night. After your parents go to bed, your friend says, "Let's check out your parent's liquor cabinet!"

**Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **in a firm voice.**

*They continue to pressure you to check out your parent's liquor cabinet.*

**Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **in a firm voice.**

**Tell why you will not use drugs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Offer a different alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Promptly leave or state how you will exit the situation:** \_\_\_\_\_