Decompression - Peer-Pressure Refusal

Rationale
As children approach adolescence, the influence of peers increases significantly, making the ability to manage peer pressure a critical protective factor. Peer-pressure refusal skills enable children to express with confidence their decisions to avoid risky behaviors. Children equipped with these skills are better able to keep themselves safe and have a positive influence on others.

Character Education
This lesson promotes these character traits:
Courage    Self-discipline    Honesty    Respect

Objectives
Following this lesson, the student will be able to:
• Define peer pressure and peer influence
• Identify the effect of peer pressure on decision making and goals
• Identify and apply nine peer-pressure refusal strategies
• Identify how to be a positive peer influence

Activities
1. Under Pressure .................................................................10 minutes
2. Strategic Planning ...........................................................15 minutes
3. Space Walk .................................................................20 minutes

Materials
In this lesson, you will need:
• Student Workbook pages 21-22
• Peer-Pressure Refusal Strategy Cards (in your kit)
• Space Walk Cards (in your kit)
• Home Workout 7, Teacher’s Manual page 86
• Space Walk Game Instructions page, Teacher’s Manual page 87

Before You Start
• Distribute the Student Workbooks at the beginning of the lesson.
• Review the game materials, game instructions, and teacher’s script on pages 83-84 prior to teaching the lesson.
• Make copies of the Space Walk Game Instructions on page 87 for each group to be distributed with the Space Walk Cards in Section 3: Space Walk.
• To reinforce the skills taught in this lesson, prepare journal activities or lesson extenders from the Looking for More? section to assign at the beginning or end of your classes throughout the week.
• Make a copy of Home Workout 7 for each student. Distribute at the end of the lesson.
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1. Under Pressure

Last week we talked about managing mistakes. In life, things don’t always go the way we expect them to. How we handle disappointment affects our feelings and our actions. Who remembers one way to manage mistakes? Use positive self-talk. That’s right; what does positive self-talk do for us when we make a mistake? Positive self-talk helps you find the brighter side of a situation or a way to do better the next time; Boosts your self-esteem; Gives you confidence; etc. Very good!

Today, we are going to talk about peer pressure. Who is a peer? Someone your own age. A peer is someone your own age. A peer could be a classmate, someone who lives in your neighborhood, or a friend. Are your teachers or your parents your peers? No. That’s right; the adults in your life are not your peers.

If someone your own age tries to get you to do something you don’t want to do or something you know you shouldn’t do, that person is using negative peer pressure to persuade you. What are some things fifth graders might be pressured to do by their peers? Cheat on a test, bully someone, lie, skip class, etc. That’s right; a peer may pressure you to do something you know is wrong.

Do you think it is possible to influence our friends or peers in positive ways? Yes. That’s right; when you encourage a peer to make a responsible decision or to do something healthy, that is positive peer pressure. Let’s take a closer look at the two different types of pressures.

Open your workbooks to page 21 to the section titled, “System Check,” to see if you can differentiate the positive peer-pressure situation from the negative one. We will start by reading each role play together, and then you will answer the questions that follow in your workbooks. For each role play, call on two student volunteers to read the roles of the characters. The student readers may read their lines from their desks.

Scenario 1:

Tyson: The new movie opens tonight. You have to come with my family and me. Everyone is going to be talking about it tomorrow.

Jason: I can’t. I’m saving money to buy my little brother a new video game for his birthday.

Tyson: I am counting on you to come with me. Buy your brother a cheaper gift. He’ll never know the difference.

Jason: I guess so. He has his heart set on this one game, and I almost have enough money to buy it.

Tyson: Who cares? Just come to the movie.

Jason: I did work hard, and it is my money. What time should I be ready?

Scenario 2:

Donna: There’s no way I can get up so early on Saturday for the cheerleading tryouts.

Sasha: But this is your goal! You’ve been working hard to get on the cheerleading squad.

Donna: I know, but Friday night is Monique’s sleepover party. We will be up all night.
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Sasha: Maybe you shouldn’t go to the party. There will always be other sleepovers.
Donna: But I will miss all of the fun.
Sasha: Stay focused on your goal. You will be proud of yourself.
Donna: You’re right. I will skip the sleepover and get enough rest for the tryouts.

Now, use the space provided in your workbook to answer the questions that follow the role plays. Be prepared to share your answers. Allow time for students to complete the activity.

Which of the two situations is an example of negative peer pressure? Situation 1. That’s right; which details from the scenario support your answer? Tyson pressured Jason to spend money on the movie instead of saving to buy his brother the video game. That’s right; Jason gives in to Tyson’s peer pressure. Should Tyson be in control of Jason’s decisions? No. Who should be in control of Jason’s decisions? Jason.

How do you think Jason’s decision affected his goal to buy the video game? He wouldn’t have enough money to buy his brother the video game. Jason let the peer pressure affect his decisions, which affected his ability to reach his goal.

Which of the situations is an example of positive peer pressure? Situation 2. That’s right; which details from the scenario support your answer? Donna didn’t want to get up to go to cheerleading tryouts, but Sasha reminded her to stay focused on her goal. Excellent! This is an example of positive peer pressure. Sasha encouraged Donna to reach her goal, leading Donna to make a good decision.

Most of the time, a good friend will support and encourage you to make good decisions, but you should be ready if someone turns up the negative pressure.

2. Strategic Planning
There are many strategies you can use to refuse negative peer pressure. What is a strategy? A plan. That’s right; a strategy is an action plan. There are nine peer-pressure refusal strategies you can use to manage a peer-pressure situation. Open your workbooks to page 22 to the section titled, “Exit Strategy.” As we discuss each of the peer-pressure refusal strategies, answer the questions that follow in your workbook.

Display the STEER CLEAR card on the board.

Steer Clear is a strategy that helps you avoid a peer-pressure situation before it even starts. If you see a group of kids that are known for causing trouble hanging out on the basketball court during recess, is it a good idea to go hang out with them? No. That’s right; instead, steer clear of those kids and find someone else to spend your time with.

Look in your workbooks at number one. In your own words, describe the strategy Steer Clear. Allow time for students to complete the activity and share their answers. Very good! Steer Clear can be used when you know pressure is likely to happen.

The rest of the strategies will help you if you are already in a peer-pressure situation.
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Display the SAY, “NO” card on the board.

The next strategy is to Say, “No.” There are several ways you can say, “No,” like “No thanks” or “No way.” Look at number two in your workbooks. Write down two ways you could say, “No.” Allow time for students to complete the activity. What are some ways you can say, “No”?

No, no thanks, not interested, etc. Very good!

Think about which communication style you should use to refuse peer pressure. Should you be passive? Should you be aggressive? Should you be assertive? Assertive. That’s right; when you refuse peer pressure, you want to be confident. Stand tall, look ‘em in the eye, and speak up to show you’re confident.

Display the WALK AWAY card on the board.

You can also Walk Away. Think of a safe place to go and start walking there, now. Don’t hang around; leave the situation quickly. Look at question number three. If you were pressured in the hallway at school, what are some safe places you could go to when you Walk Away? Write your answers on the line. Allow time for students to complete the activity. Where is a safe place you could walk if you were pressured in the hallway? A teacher’s classroom, the office, somewhere with lots of people, etc. Very good!

Display the IGNORE card on the board.

What does it mean to Ignore? To refuse to pay any attention to someone. That’s right; act as if the person pressuring you isn’t even there. Don’t even look at him. Write your answer to statement number four in your workbook. Allow time for students to complete the activity.

Display the BROKEN RECORD card on the board.

To use the Broken Record strategy, just repeat the same thing over and over again. For example, if someone pressured you to lie, you would say, “I don’t lie.” If the person started to call you names, what would you say? “I don’t lie.” If the person says, “Everyone does it,” what would you say? “I don’t lie.” Excellent! If you say it enough, the person pressuring you will know you are serious and give up. Answer question five in your workbook. Allow time for students to complete the activity and share their answers.

Display the MAKE AN EXCUSE card on the board.

To Make an Excuse, think of a real reason not to go along with your friends. You don’t have to lie. Instead, come up with a believable excuse. “I can’t. My mom told me I have to clean my room today,” or “I have to go straight home, because my mom is waiting for me.” Think of a realistic excuse you could use in a peer-pressure situation and write it in your workbook on the line provided for number six. Allow time for students to complete the activity and share their answers.

Display the REVERSE THE PRESSURE card on the board.

Reverse the Pressure means to put the pressure back on the person who is pressuring you. Say, “Why are you pressuring me?” or “If you were my friend, you wouldn’t pressure me to do something I don’t want to do.” This strategy works, because it puts the pressure back on the person pressuring you. Look at question seven. Write what you would say to “Reverse the Pressure.” Allow time for students to complete the activity and share their answers.
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The next two strategies provide you with an opportunity to refuse peer pressure and at the same time encourage your peers to make healthy decisions. You can encourage the other person to do something positive rather than something negative.

Display the STATE THE FACTS card on the board.

To State the Facts, tell the person pressuring you the possible consequences of doing what he or she wants to do. For example, if the person was pressuring you to steal, you could say, “Stealing is wrong, and we could get in big trouble.” If someone pressured you to cheat on a test, how could you State the Facts? Write your answer on the lines provided for number eight. Allow time for students to complete the activity and share their answers. Possible student answers: “If we get caught cheating, we will get zeros on the test.” “If we get caught cheating, the teacher will no longer trust us.” “If I get caught cheating, my parents will ground me.”

Display the A BETTER IDEA card on the board.

A Better Idea suggests something else to do. This strategy works best if the person pressuring you is a friend and you don’t want to lose the friendship. Say, “I have a better idea. Let’s go to the park and play basketball.” You could suggest anything positive like play video games, finish homework, or ride bikes. The possibilities are endless. Think of safe, healthy, and fun activities you and your friend could do instead. Write your answer on the lines provided for number nine. Allow time for students to complete the activity and share their answers.

When you come up with a better idea, you’ll be amazed how often your friends will follow you. By giving everyone a better idea, you can help your friends make better decisions, stay healthy, and keep out of trouble.

3. Space Walk
To practice the peer-pressure refusal strategies, we are going to play a game called “Space Walk.” The object of the game is to be the first player to match your peer-pressure scenario cards to the appropriate peer-pressure refusal strategy card.

To play the game, first, shuffle the cards. Deal five cards to each player and put the rest of the cards face down on the table. This will be the draw pile.

Review your cards to see if you have any matches in your hand. For example, if I have a Scenario Card that says, “Cole wanted Rob to steal a candy bar. Rob walked out of the store,” which Strategy Card do I need? Walk Away. That’s right. If I have a Strategy Card that says Walk Away, I have a match. If you have a match, read the match aloud and then place the matched pair on the table in front of you. Once you have paired up any matches in your starting hand, you are ready to find matches for the rest of the cards in your hand.

When play begins, the first player asks another player for a specific card to match. For example, if I have a strategy card that says Broken Record, I would ask, “(Student’s Name) do you have a Broken Record Scenario Card?” If the other player has a Broken Record Scenario Card, they have to give it to me. I will then read the scenario aloud and state the match. My turn is over, and it is the next player’s turn.

If the person I ask does not have that card, he or she says, “Take a Space Walk.” Then I will take the top card from the draw pile.
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If I draw the card I need from the draw pile, or I draw one that matches another card in my hand, I will read the match immediately to everyone, and place it on the table in front of me. It is the next player’s turn.

If a player gives me a card that doesn’t match what I asked for, I will give the card back and take a card from the draw pile.

The player who matches all of his or her cards first wins. Be sure to use the instructions sheet in your game set to help you set up the game and to take a turn. Use your workbook to help you identify the peer-pressure refusal strategies. If there is time, you may play the game again.

- Put the students into groups of 3-6 players and give each group a deck of cards and an instruction card. Have students follow the “Set Up” instructions first. Once students are set up to play the game, have one student read the instructions for “How to Play” to the group. Encourage students to keep using these instructions to help them play the game.

- Allow students time to play the game.

Time is up. You did a great job playing the game. Sometimes we make choices on our own, and sometimes our decision making is influenced by our peers. Sometimes peer pressure can be positive, but at other times peer pressure can lead to trouble. Continue to practice these refusal strategies so you are prepared to make good choices.

Next week, we will discuss the effects of alcohol and apply the peer-pressure refusal strategies in situations involving alcohol.

- Collect the game materials.
- Collect Student Workbooks.
- Distribute Home Workout 7.