



Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week

AVOIDANCE AND REFUSAL OF UNKNOWN SUBSTANCES:

A prevention activity that helps to develop avoidance or refusal skills using scenarios involving unsafe and unknown substances

Ensure that your students can correctly identify substances that can cause harm before this activity is undertaken. You could use the "RED Means Stop" exercise from the *Tough Kids & Substance Abuse* curriculum, or something similar, to ensure that students understand and can identify harmful substances -including those with a danger symbol, foods that cause allergies, and improper dosages of prescription medications. This "RED Means Stop" activity can be found on the MAAW Web site at www.afm.mb.ca/maaw/.

GRADE ONE: WHEN IN DOUBT CHECK IT OUT OR JUST SAY NO (WITH FEELING)!

SYNOPSIS

- ✓ The students role-play avoidance and/or refusal skills involving unknown substances.
- ✓ This lesson is designed to increase the level of each student's ability to avoid and or refuse unknown substances. It will prompt them to use assertive skills and make decisions on what substances might be harmful and will allow them to practice in a role-play scenario how to avoid the substance.
- ✓ In order to avoid confusion about the reasons why one substance might be avoided- such as peanuts for someone who is allergic, as compared to improper or unknown dosage of a prescribed medication, -have the students do role plays on each separate scenario at different times.

LESSON PLAN

1. This lesson may take from one to four sessions, depending upon the amount of information the students in the class have already absorbed.
2. Review or complete the lesson on things that are harmful to the body (see FASD Tough Kids and Substance Abuse - Activity 1 at www.afm.mb.ca/maaw/). Ensure students are familiar with substances that could be harmful: medications, vitamins, cough syrup, substances that can cause allergies, household products with danger symbols, tobacco products and alcohol.
3. Present the idea of role-playing, and if they are not familiar with the activity, review the simple technique of pretending to be in a situation that will allow them to freely practice effective decision-making, caution, and avoidance skills. Demonstrate a role-play for them using a simple scenario.
4. Have your students take turns role-playing the scenarios provided.
5. Check out how the students felt after resolving the scenario. Did they follow the 3 easy steps - as suggested in each scenario? (Teachers may have to review the steps and offer suggestions to reach a better solution.)

6. A variation on this activity could include puppets. The teacher, using puppets, could act out the scenario(s) and ask the students to offer solutions that would ensure caution, avoidance and refusal skills.
7. Affirm this lesson by catching your students in the act of making similar decisions throughout the school year! Give positive feedback to students who demonstrate these real life techniques and skills.

SUGGESTED SCENARIOS -each scenario should last no longer than a few minutes

1. Student A is allergic to peanuts and is offered a candy bar without the wrapper from his/her best friend - student B. Student A is to act out - using words and actions how he/she will effectively say no. Student A is to follow the 3 easy steps:
 Step 1: State clearly and assertively (but politely) why he/she can't accept the candy
 Step 2: State what expectations he/she has of the friend in order to avoid potential harm in the future
 Step 3: Politely ask if Student B understands and confirm there is understanding.
 In the end Student B is to demonstrate understanding by re-stating the reasons Student A cannot accept the candy bar and what Student B will do in the future.
2. Student A suffers from a sickness that requires daily medication. He is home alone with his older sister (student B). He (Student A) remembers that he has not taken his pills yet and tells his sister. His sister does not check the recommended dosage on his medication bottle, but offers two pills. Student A is to demonstrate how to avoid making a harmful choice by following 3 easy steps:
 Step 1: Examining the consequences of taking an improper dosage of prescribed medication and discussing it with his sister.
 Step 2: Using problem-solving techniques, decide what should be done. (Choices could include contacting parents to confirm dosage, read the prescription to ensure the proper dosage, go to bed and wait for parents to return, etc.).
 Step 3: Be prepared for the future -decide with sister what should be done in the future to make good decisions about taking prescribed medication.
3. Student A is cleaning up the living room on Saturday morning in his home. His friend (student B) is visiting and helping him. Student A finds a half empty beer bottle. He encourages his friend to taste it. Student B is to demonstrate how to make a positive choice by responding to Student A following 3 easy steps:
 Step 1: Examine the consequences of his choices (*my mom would never let me come over again - if she found out!* is a very acceptable consequence and moms don't mind being the scapegoat).
 Step 2: State your decision clearly. *No way!*
 Step 3: Offer an alternative activity that will distract from the possible harmful activity - i.e.: *let's dump these bottles; finish picking up the toys so we can go play!*

GRADE THREE: PEER PRESSURE BLUES

The grade three teacher can follow the same lesson plan but add the component of a discussion on peer pressure: how can peers be so influential? Trust, fear of losing a friend, the need to belong, not considering the options, feeling there is no choice but to follow along with everyone else are all part of why peer pressure can be so powerful. Lead the discussion to assist the grade three class in being able to identify the peer pressure situations in their own lives. The scenarios used in the role-plays could include the offer of a cigarette from an older cousin. Have students develop and role-play their own scenarios demonstrating refusal/avoidance skills.