



LESSON 5

HANDLING THE PRESSURE!

Pressure can come from lots of places. This exercise will help youth understand how to handle pressure so they can stay focused on their goals, and to make healthy choices.

🔍 OBJECTIVES:

PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Define positive and negative influences.
- Link positive influences with saying no to vaping.
- Identify and thank positive influences in one's life.

LIFE SKILLS LEARNED:

- Healthy Lifestyle Choices
- Nurturing Relationships
- Self-Responsibility

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD 8:

Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family and community health.

TIME NEEDED: 1 hour

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 4-5 filled water balloons or 1 beach ball
- White board or flipchart and markers
- Thank you notecards and pens/pencils (one for each youth)

DRUGS – Reference to drugs includes those drugs not permitted by law (illegal) and lawful drugs (prescription or over-the-counter) which are obtained or used illegally unless otherwise specified.

CONNECTING TO TOBACCO, ALCOHOL & DRUG USE

Youth need strong support systems to help them say no to vaping. They must surround themselves with positive influences. These positive influences may be family, friends, teachers, coaches, or others who will build them up instead of negatively impact them. This lesson helps youth experience how positive and negative influences make them feel and identify and thank positive influences in their lives.

EXPERIENCE THE ACTIVITY

STEP 1

Ask the group for two volunteers. If youth do not volunteer, select two youth at random. These two youth will toss a water balloon! The rest of the youth will be observers.



TEACHING TIP – This activity works best in an outdoor environment. If this is not possible, substitute a beach ball for water balloons and toss the beach ball back and forth until it is dropped.

STEP 2

Space the two water balloon throwers just a few feet apart. In between successful tosses, spread the two youth farther and farther apart until the water balloon drops to the ground or breaks. Instruct the observers to only give positive feedback as the two youth toss the water balloon back and forth. End the activity after the water balloon drops or breaks.



TEACHING TIP – Give observers examples of positive feedback, such as “good job,” “you can do it,” “nice throw,” or “good hustle.”

STEP 3

Repeat the water balloon toss with two new water balloon tossers. Instruct the rest of youth to only give negative feedback. End the activity after the water balloon drops or breaks.



TEACHING TIP – Give observers examples of negative feedback, such as “this is too hard,” “you can’t possibly catch it,” “you’re not good enough,” or “boo.”

STEP 4

Explain to youth that the positive comments can be compared to positive influences around you, while the negative comments represent negative influences. Using a whiteboard, make two columns, one for positive influences and one for negative influences. Brainstorm with youth on what can be positive and negative influences in their lives.



TEACHING TIP – Take note that some influences can be either positive or negative depending on the person. Record influences in the appropriate columns without judgement.

STEP 5

Have youth think silently about positive influences in their lives. Hand out thank-you notes to youth. Youth will then write a thank-you note to a positive person in their life who helps them make good decisions. An example of a thank-you note script is as follows:

Dear _____,

Thank you for being a positive influence in my life! I'm especially thankful that you help me _____ . Making good decisions helps me resist drugs and alcohol, so I thank you for encouraging me to stay on the right track!

Sincerely,



TEACHING TIP - Some youth may struggle to identify positive influences. Offer suggestions such as parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, coaches, etc.

STEP 6

Share:

- What is a positive influence?
- What is a negative influence?

Process:

- What did the balloon represent?
- How did it feel to toss the balloon with observers saying positive comments? What about the negative comments?
- How can a positive influence help you say no to vaping?
- How can a negative influence make it hard to say no to vaping?

Generalize and Apply:

- How can you surround yourself with positive influences?
- How can you distance yourself from negative influences?

STEP 5

Reflection:

- Who are three positive influences in your life?
- Why is it important to thank these influences?

STEP 6

Discuss the “Family Corner” and “Community Corner” with participants. Encourage them to do one or both. If they choose to work as a group, help them follow through.

- **Family Corner:** Encourage family members to write thank you notes to positive influences in their lives!
- **Community Corner:** With a group of friends, create social media posts that encourage youth to surround themselves with positive influences. Post the social media posts, with adult permission.