Session 6.6

Abstinence and Developing Refusal Skills

Session Overview:

1. Review Session 6.5.
2. Pass out blank question cards only to those students that need them.
3. Define and discuss the word abstain.
4. Use the decision-making scale to weigh reasons for not engaging in sexual activity before a faithful lifelong relationship.
5. Define and discuss the word abstinence.
6. Define and discuss the word assertiveness.
7. Distribute and discuss the It's Okay to Say NO! handout.
8. Conduct the Refusal Skills Scenarios activity.
9. Collect completed Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Forms from Session 6.5: Healthy Relationships or Alternative Inclusive version.
10. Collect completed question cards.
11. Distribute the Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Form Session 6.6: Refusal Skills.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will develop strategies for refusing to participate in unsafe behaviors or risky situations.
- Participants will demonstrate the use of refusal skills by role-playing.
- Participants will define abstinence and understand practices that promote healthy lifestyles.

Materials Needed:

- Computer, projector, and speakers
- Jar of Now and Later Candy
- Giant pad of paper, markers
- Refusal Skills Scenarios Activity Cards (6.6.5)
- It's Okay to Say NO! PowerPoint (6.6.5)
- Handouts:
  - It's Okay to Say NO! (Handout 6.6.4)
  - Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Form Session 6.6: Refusal Skills
- Question cards
- Question bag

Classroom Planning:

- Review the curriculum content for this session, specifically the instructions for establishing the rights and responsibilities.
- Make copies of handouts.

The Standards:

- See Appendix E for a list of state and national standards met in this session. Individual State Standards by Request.

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Educator states:
During Session 4, we watched a video titled Brandon & Michelle Grow Up. We looked at how to have healthy relationships with your family members and your friends.

After we went through the video, we divided you up into groups and had you come up with a **list of ways you can show your parents/guardians that you care**. What were some of the things you came up with?

We had a chance for some of you to show off your acting skills in our **scenarios.** Some scenarios showed healthy relationships and others showed unhealthy relationships.

I then read off some qualities and you told me whether it was a **healthy or unhealthy relationship.** What is one characteristic of a healthy relationship? An unhealthy one?

Remember, even though you are changing and may want to hang out with your friends more, you can still have healthy, loving relationships with your parents. And it is whose choice to have healthy relationships with your family and friends? **[Your choice]** And we know that,

The choices you make…**NOW** will affect you…**LATER!**

[Let students know that if they need a question card or an extra one to please go see an educator.]

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Educator states:
We talked last time about making choices in friendships. We mentioned what it means to choose to have friendships that are healthy. Healthy relationships are those that build up the other person and don't put the other person at risk physically or emotionally.

It Is important to go over the qualities of a healthy relationship so that you can recognize when a friendship is not healthy.

Sometimes we need to say no to our friends. It is important to know how to say no especially if your friends are pressuring you to do something that you are not comfortable with or that you feel would be inappropriate. If your friends are real, true friends, they will stop pressuring you and they will respect your decisions.

[Write the word ABSTAIN on the board.]

We are going to talk today about saying no. What does this word mean?
-To **abstain** means to **choose not to do something**.

We are going to talk about some examples of things that you should choose not to do. **What are some things that you should choose not to do/abstain from?**

Educator highlight:
At this point students will give answers such as smoking, bullying, stealing, drugs, alcohol, etc. In most cases they will not mention sex or sexual activity. The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the concept of sexual abstinence as it relates to abstaining from other high-risk behaviors.

All the things that you mentioned are things that you should abstain from at your age. Most of these are also things adults should also abstain from. (e.g. drugs).

Here is one thing that as a teenager you should abstain from. We discussed it briefly when we talked about puberty.

[Write the word SEX on the board.]

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Educator highlight:
The following discussion about sex is bound to elicit various reactions from the students, ranging from embarrassed giggles to expressions of disgust. It is important to gauge the maturity level of your audience and talk about this sensitive subject in a way that is appropriate for their maturity level. The following script is a suggested way for moving into this topic gently but with clarity. Remind students of the social norms the class developed on the first day. Remind them that they can ask to not participate or to be excused to work with the school counselor or mental health expert.

Educator states:
Some of you may not know the definition of this word. Maybe your parents/guardians haven't talked to you about this yet. **Sex** has to do with **private area touching**. When people talk about sex, they are often referring to sexual intercourse, which is when the penis is inserted into the vagina. I know that might sound funny or embarrassing right now but it's important that we talk about it so that you know how to make healthy choices about that.

There are three risks associated with sexual activity that you should know about.

Sex as a teen is a very risky behavior. There can be consequences that can have an effect on the rest of your life.

- **Pregnancy** – How could getting pregnant or becoming a father affect your life at this age?

  You would have more responsibility, need more money, and not get enough sleep. Teen parenting is very hard.

- **Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) -** STIs are infections that you can get from engaging in sexual activity which includes private area touching. Some infections can have very harmful effects on your body. Some are incurable.

- **Emotional Heartache** – When you are dating someone and you break up, it hurts. If you have become sexually active, it will hurt even more. Sex bonds people together and when you break up there are emotional problems and pain.

At Healthy Futures we believe that sexual activity only belongs in a faithful lifelong relationship. We are going to bring out our Decision-Making Scale that we used on the first day to brainstorm reasons to abstain.

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[Bring out the Decision-Making Scale poster and "sex" cards and weigh out choices with the students. Discuss reasons teens choose to have sex (to feel closer to your partner, to experience pleasure, to feel more grown up, etc.) and reasons not to have sex as a teenager (to avoid unplanned pregnancy, to protect yourself from STIs, to avoid emotional heartache, etc.).]

Educator states:

We are going to weigh out the choices about "sex" on the Decision-Making Scale poster. Clearly, we can see the reasons for abstaining from sexual activity outweigh the reasons for engaging in sexual activity outside of a healthy, faithful lifelong relationship.

What can make it hard to choose to say no?

Some things that might make it hard to choose abstinence are:

1. Using drugs or alcohol can make it harder because of the way they affect your mind.
2. If your friends are engaging in sexual activity.
3. Pressure from your boyfriend or girlfriend to be sexually active.

Believe it or not, we can also be influenced by the media. When you watch TV or listen to music, do you see people mostly making healthy choices in relationships or unhealthy ones? Are they choosing to abstain from drugs, alcohol, or sex?

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Often the media fails to show the consequences of risky behavior. They make risky behavior look very appealing. They don't show you what could happen to the people that make unwise choices.

There is a type of lifestyle or choice that you can make that will make it easier to avoid these risks. I am going to write another word up on the board.

[Write the word ABSTINENCE on the board.]

Abstinence comes from the word **abstain**. It means to choose to wait and not be involved in any sexual activity until you are in a faithful lifelong relationship. We are not saying that you will never have sex. We are saying that it is healthiest **to abstain**, or choose not to be involved in any sexual activity until you are in a **faithful lifelong relationship**. That way you will protect yourself physically from pregnancy and STIs and you will protect your heart from emotional heartache.

Remember the choice is up to you and that…

The choices you make…**NOW** will affect you…**LATER!**

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Educator states:
We have all been in situations where we are being pressured by friends to do something that we are not comfortable with or that we feel is inappropriate. Today we are going to talk about some ways to deal with that kind of situation.

What is the name for what you experience in a situation where others around you are trying to persuade you to do something? It's called peer pressure. We talked about this in an earlier lesson about decision-making. It's important to know how to best respond when we are experiencing peer pressure.

I am going to write a word on the board and I want you to tell me what it is and give me the definition.

[Write ASSERTIVENESS on board.]

What does assertiveness mean? What does it mean for someone to be assertive?

Assertiveness is the **ability to set limits and keep to them.** It's **letting others know you mean what you say**. When you are being pressured by friends, you need to know how to clearly tell them what you will and will not do.

For example: Your friend gives you the answer key to tomorrow's quiz so you can memorize the answers. You don't feel good about doing that, and you know will get you into serious trouble if you get caught.

A. You say: "I don't know, I don't think I want to do that."

-OR-

B. You can say: "No, I don't want the answer key. I'm not going to risk getting suspended for one good grade on a quiz."

Which one of these answers do you think is an assertive one? A or B?

[Give the students time to respond.]

The first answer – answer A – is actually what we might call "wishy-washy" because it gives your friend the impression that you aren't sure about what you want to do

Answer B is an **assertive** answer because it is clear and it leaves no question in your friend's mind about the fact that you are not interested in cheating on the quiz.

I am going to pass out a handout that goes over some things that you can do when you are in a high-pressure situation.

[Pass out the It's Okay to Say NO! (Handout 6.6.4) and review with students.]

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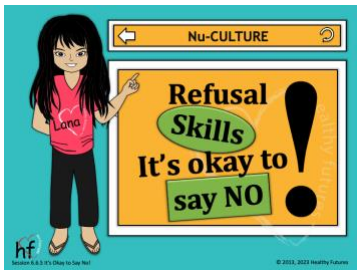
Educator highlight:
It's important to learn nice ways to say "NO." Let's review some of those ideas. Have students write down those ideas on a sheet of paper and pair share the ideas with a friend. There is an **It's Okay to Say NO! PowerPoint** that accompanies the handout. The PowerPoint should be used if time permits.

PPT Slides: It's Okay to Say NO!



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PPT Slides: It's Okay to Say NO!

[Slide 7]

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Educator states:
Now we are going to divide you up into groups of 3 or 4 students and we will give to each group a refusal skills scenario card. You are going to read it together and come up with ideas of how the person should respond in that situation. Then we are going to have some of you act out your answers in front of the class. Remember the suggestions that we read on our handout as you think of how to respond in these scenarios.

Alternate option if time does not permit:
I will need a few volunteers to come up and act out the scenario in front of the class. Remember the suggestions that we read on our handout as you think of how to respond in these scenarios.

Remember our guidelines for small group work as well.

Educator highlight:
These specific scenarios are designed to have students put in to practice what they have learned. Here is another time to remind students that they need to **work quietly**, being respectful of those around them. They also need to remember to **be considerate** of those that are sharing, making sure they are **not talking** while others in the front are presenting their skit.

[Do the Refusal Skills Scenarios Activity cards. Give each group one of the five scenario cards. Have them create endings that demonstrate refusal skills for each one. Ask each group to act it out for the class. Give positive feedback.]

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Refusal Skills Scenarios

SCENARIO 1

A bunch of guys at school have been picking on the new kid, Mario. **Zach** hasn't ever been around when they've done it before, but he's heard about it. One day during lunch, they start at it again, and Zach is right there. His friends notice he's not joining in, and try to get him to say something mean about Mario.

How can Zach assertively say "no"?

SCENARIO 2

Sophie and Tania are out shopping for swimsuits. Sophie finds the perfect suit, but the price is way out of her range. Tanya tells her how easy it is to sneak out of the store wearing the suit under her street clothes. The suit looks terrific on Sophie, and she knows quite a few girls who have gotten away with this kind of thing already. And Tanya keeps pressuring her.

How can Sophie assertively say "no"?

SCENARIO 3

Nika has been going out with Junior for a while and knows he wants to kiss her. She does not feel comfortable with that. One day after school lets out, they are talking and Junior asks for a kiss.

How can Nika assertively say "no"?

SCENARIO 4

Molly is at a sleepover and the girls are going to watch a movie. They put in a movie that is Rated 'R'. Molly's parents don't let her see Rated 'R' movies.

How can Molly assertively say "no"?

SCENARIO 5

Marcus goes to a party with his older brother. There is alcohol at the party. All of the guys are excited and begin passing the drinks around. Marcus wants to fit in, but he does not want to drink.

How can Marcus assertively say "no"?

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Educator states:
Everyone did a great job with that activity! Remember that developing refusal skills now will help you throughout your life. Understanding how to resist peer pressures in these situations will help you to be able to refuse when you are faced with other high-pressure situations. Knowing that it is OK to say NO and practicing refusal skills helps you to avoid getting into high risk behaviors like drinking, smoking, fighting. Being able to assertively say no also relates to what we talked about earlier—choosing not to be involved in sexual activity.

Learning how to respond to pressure will help you make healthy choices. And you know what we say about choices,

The choices you make…**NOW** will affect you…**LATER!**

[Pass out Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Form Session 6.6: Refusal Skills.]

Notes:

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