



## Being Assertive Like a Girl

### Objectives:

- Girls will be able to define and compare assertive, passive, and aggressive behavior
- Girls will be able to identify possible pressure situations and the consequences of negative behavior
- Girls will know their worth and the importance of saying “no” to negative pressure in an assertive way
- Girls will be able to list and demonstrate the effective verbal and nonverbal skills of assertive behavior

### Lesson Plan:

- Review previous session (Making Decisions Like a Girl) (5 minutes)
- Introduction: What is Pressure? (10 minutes)
- Lesson: Being Assertive to Peer Pressure (10 minutes)
- Activity: Activity: Brainstorming Assertive Responses (10 minutes)
- BREAK (5 minutes)
- Lesson: How to Say “No” and Keep Your Friends (10 minutes)
- Activity: Preparing to Say No in Your Life (5 minutes)

### Review Previous Materials: (5 minutes)

- Facilitator asks Girls the following discussion questions to begin the meeting
  - How have you started integrating the material from last week about values and decision making into your life?
  - What is a value that you are trying to put more into practice?

### Introduction: What is Pressure? (10 minutes)

- Facilitator explains that in today's society teens are put in situations they may not know how to deal with positively. A teen experiences negative peer pressure when they are being influenced to do things that are not aligned with their values.

- Facilitator shares that we will discuss and practice ways to deal with negative peer pressure using effective refusal skills. The goal is to help increase skills and confidence in saying no and to stand up for what you feel is right (values and beliefs).
- Facilitator explains that the need to be accepted by peers is normal and understandable, but this is the root of many negative decisions.
- Facilitator opens a discussion about pressure situations and how they may be handled with the following examples:
  1. At a party many people are consuming alcohol underage and they offer you a drink. You have never had it before but want to fit in. People continue to encourage you to say yes, despite your lack of understanding of what will happen if you say yes.
  2. A group of friends at school is gossiping about another person. You do not respond and they ask your opinion or look for confirmation. You are then put in a position where you feel like you must go against your friends and make the situation potentially uncomfortable or go against your values and chime into the conversation negatively.
- Facilitator opens the discussion with the question: *What are the consequences of participating negatively in situations?* Give the examples below to add or prompt further discussion.
  - a. Making negativity, gossip, and toxicity a habit, which can be hard to get rid of
  - b. Participating encourages this negative behavior from friends and family who are already practicing these behaviors
  3. Why do people do things that they know they know do not align with their values?
    - a. To feel “cool”
    - b. To feel accepted
    - c. To relate to others
      - i. Mention here that relating to others over things that are mutually hated will foster a relationship based on complaining or speaking negatively about things or people. It is difficult then to speak with this person about things you like for fear that they will hate what you like and end the friendship.

### **Lesson: Being Assertive to Peer Pressure (10 minutes)**

- What Does it Mean to be Assertive:
  1. **Assertive:** being confident and direct in dealing with others; being sure of yourself.

2. **Passive:** going along with the crowd and allowing others to strongly influence behavior and speech
  3. **Aggressive:** sharing their opinion in a mean or hostile manner
- Facilitator hands out the **Assertive, Passive, and Aggressive Behavior Handout**.
  - Facilitator emphasizes the components of assertive communication using the handout, highlighting:
    1. Eye contact.
    2. Facial Expressions.
    3. Body posture/proximity.
    4. Hand gestures.
    5. Tone of voice.

**Activity: Brainstorming Assertive Responses:** (10 minutes)

The facilitator revisits the peer pressure situations from the first activity and *breaks the group up into groups of 2-3*. The facilitator asks each group to choose one of the peer pressure situations and devise an assertive response to the situation. After they are finished, choose one member to share the response with the group.

- Example: Say “I don’t drink, but I’m having a great time.” Then divert the conversation elsewhere.
- Example: Say with confidence “ I wouldn’t want anyone talking about any of us that way. We should all be able to live our lives without people judging. We never really know what is going on with someone. Let’s give them some grace.”

## BREAK

**Lesson: How to Say “No” and Keep Your Friends** (10 minutes)

- Facilitator explains that there is a positive process to saying “no” to peer pressure:
  - Step #1- Uncover your “yes”. Go back to your values and find something positive. Understand what your ideal outcome looks like and protect it. Your “no” can be for your needs and not against the other persons. You’re not rejecting the other person by saying “no,” but rather standing by your own values and anyone that cares for you will respect that.
  - Step #2- Ask yourself three questions:
    - Do I have the interest in saying no (will saying no protect or advance a key interest of yours worth the time of the potentially difficult conversation with the other person?)

- Does the “no” have power? (Can I sustain this no through a variety of conditions)
  - Do I have the right? (Am I allowed to say no in this situation?)
- Step #3- Empower your “no” by taking the emotion out of it. You should never feel bad for saying no and in saying no you can come to a conclusion that is clear and secure for both parties. *Take the drama out!*
  - Explain your no. This is a chance to show the other person your motives for saying No and that you are *not rejecting them as a person but simply trying to protect what is important to you.*
  - Use “The” statements and do not point fingers. Rather than say “you always are rude to me” say “the conversations we have had recently have felt tense and I don’t know why. Can we talk about it?”
  - Stick to the facts because each of our realities are slightly different, and the differences can lead to unproductive conflict.
  - Avoid:
    - Saying someone “should or shouldn’t” do something
    - Using judgemental or subjective language (define subjective if necessary)
    - Categorical statements “always,” “never,” “everything”
  - Use I statements
    - Describe the facts: “when x situation happens...”
    - Express your feelings: “I feel Y...”
    - Describe your interests: “Because I want or need Z”
  - Express your Yes without saying “yes”
    - Share your ideal situation going into the future with that person and show them what works well for you. Offer alternatives to what you are saying no to if possible.
    - That being said, it is not always necessary to give reasons for saying no. Sometimes you can just simply say “I’m sorry you are upset, I’m not comfortable doing it”
      - Example: When refusing an alcoholic drink, a simple “no thanks” is sufficient. Remember, keep it emotion free and have confidence in your yes!<sup>1</sup>
- Step #3- Stand by your no. You made your choice for a reason so live in that reason!
  - Be assertive and do not let people guide when you draw the line on certain behaviors or situations that oppose your values.

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<sup>1</sup> Ury, W. (2008). *The power of a positive no: How to say no and still get to yes* ;. New York: Bantam Books.

**Activity: Preparing to Say No in Your Life: (5 minutes)**

Facilitator instructs the girls to think about a situation in their lives where their values could be challenged or a situation where someone in their life would require them to say No. Considering the conversation you have had today, have them write out how they would respond in that situation. When the girls finish ask them if any feel motivated to share but do not pressure to share

**Parent Email**

*The parent email section serves to engage parents or caretakers of the material the girls are learning each week and gives them a guide to further the conversation outside of Project Like a Girl. If the facilitator desires, they should send a "summary" of the lesson the day the lesson is taught.*

**Today's Objectives**

- *Girls will be able to define and compare assertive, passive, and aggressive behavior*
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**Discussion Questions**

- *How do you say no in challenging situations?*
- *What are situations in your life where you have had trouble saying no?*
- *What are some ways to say no and keep the relationships in your life?*

## Activity Handout: What Does it Mean to be Assertive?

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Being ASSERTIVE means:

- You speak up
- You voice your beliefs, opinions and rights
- You are accepting of other people, though you may not have the same opinions
- You voice your opinions in a way that is not offensive to others or intended to put them down

It means you are NOT PASSIVE:

- You do not sit back while others voice their opinions and just "follow the crowd" when you have different opinions.
- You do not let others tell you what to do; especially when you feel what they want to do is wrong.
- You do not keep your wants and needs to yourself.

It means you are NOT AGGRESSIVE:

- You do not get loud, pushy or sarcastic in voicing your opinions.
- You are not offensive or disrespectful to others.

When ASSERTING yourself..

1. Speak Up.
2. Be Confident.
3. Show Respect.

You are taking care of yourself while being considerate of others at the same time.

## Activity Handout It Is Smart to Be Assertive

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### ASSERTIVE, PASSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

#### ASSERTIVE

Speech and Voice	Honest statements; direct and to the point. Smooth, flowing speech pattern. Clear, firm, relaxed voice that is loud enough to hear, but not too loud. Voice not monotonous.
Eyes	Open with direct comfortable eye contact, but not staring.
Posture	Well balanced, straight-on, "good" posture, relaxed.
Hands	Relaxed motions; gestures are appropriate
Examples of Behavior	Giving compliments; accepting compliments; asking for what you want; saying "no" to requests; controlling temper when people get angry and yell; starting, continuing and stopping conversations; receiving criticism without getting angry.

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#### PASSIVE

Speech and Voice	Lots of apologies and "ums," "ers," and "I means." Not coming to the point or "beating around the bush." Lots of throat clearing, Soft, watery voice.
Eyes	Downcast or looking away. Pleading.
Posture	Leaning for support, stooped, excessive head-nodding, holding on to oneself.

Hands	Fidgety; fluttery, hand wringing; picking at fingernails.
Examples of Behavior	Denying compliments; saying "yes" when you want to say "no;" going along with others when you don't want to; apologizing for something you didn't do; deciding you can't do something before you've tried.

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AGGRESSIVE

Speech and Voice	"Loaded" words that start fights. "You" messages. Superior or put down words. Sarcastic or smart aleck speech. Tense, loud voice or cold, deadly quiet voice.
Eyes	Narrowed, cold, staring, not really "seeing" you.
Posture	Hands on hips; feet apart; back turned; stiff and rigid.
Hands	Clenched; fist pounding; finger pointing; abrupt gestures.
Examples of Behavior	Yelling; put downs; name-calling; interrupting; demanding; giving orders; ignoring people; hanging up the phone on people; walking away when someone is talking.