

## ***BIG DECISIONS™***



### **LESSON 9. OUTLINE** **DEALING WITH SEXUAL PRESSURE: The Power to Say "No"**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Learn that it is never OK to pressure someone for sex, and that everyone has the right to say "no"
- Consider how to avoid getting into pressure situations
- Consider effective ways to say "no" when pressured for sex
- Practice saying "no" in pressure situations

#### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Chalkboard, or Newsprint tablet, Markers, and Easel
- FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.2: PRESSURE SITUATION: Jasmine and Michael
- FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.3: PRESSURE SITUATION SCRIPTS
- STUDENT HANDOUT for ACTIVITY 9.4: PRESSURE SITUATION ROLE-PLAY
- FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.5: ANOTHER PRESSURE SITUATION: Andre and Keira
- Ground Rules Newsprint Sheet from LESSON 1
- "KEY MESSAGES" Poster from LESSON 1

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

- 9.1 -- Learning the Rules about Sexual Pressure - 5 to 10 minutes
- 9.2 -- PRESSURE SITUATION – 10 minutes
- 9.3 -- ROLE-PLAY DEMONSTRATION – 10 minutes
- 9.4 -- PRESSURE SITUATION ROLE-PLAY— 15 minutes
- 9.5 -- ANOTHER PRESSURE SITUATION and Wrap-up - 5 minutes

#### **MATERIALS & RESOURCES INCLUDED:**

- FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.2: PRESSURE SITUATION: Jasmine and Michael
- FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.3: PRESSURE SITUATION SCRIPTS
- STUDENT HANDOUT for ACTIVITY 9.4: PRESSURE SITUATION ROLE-PLAY
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*[Note to Facilitators:* This session may bring up difficult and upsetting feelings among young people who have experienced sexual abuse or coercion. It is important to acknowledge the existence of abuse early in the session. The Facilitator should make it clear that abused people are not at fault for what happened to them, and that there is help for young people who have been abused. Be prepared to refer young people to appropriate services. It is also essential to report sexual abuse in accordance with the law.<sup>1</sup> ]

### ACTIVITY 9.1 -- Learning the Rules about Sexual Pressure - 5 to 10 minutes

Let the class know that learning to say “no” effectively is really important, especially when it comes to sex and sexual situations.

We know that many young people are not able to say “no” when they want to. Most teens who have had sex (60%) say they wish they had waited longer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Texas, the Texas Family Code, Chapter 261 requires that suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, be reported immediately. This can be done by calling the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400, or by contacting local law enforcement.

<sup>2</sup> Albert B. With One Voice 2007: America’s Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2007.

Many (especially girls) report that they didn't really plan to have sex. Some young people are actually forced to have sex against their will.

Tell the class that when someone is pressured to have sex, that is coercion. When someone is forced to have sex, that is sexual abuse, which is a crime. Let the class know that there is help for young people who have been abused. Abused people are not at fault for what happened to them—the fault is with the abuser. Still, it is good to know as much as possible to be able to avoid sexual pressure, coercion, and even abuse.

Tell class that, in this lesson, they will consider:

- What the rules are about pressure and sexual decisions
- Situations where they might be pressured about sex
- How they have the power to say “no”

Write the rules on the board or newsprint as you introduce them. Solicit questions and examples from the students to help them understand the rules.

- **Rule #1: Everyone has the right to say “no”.**  
Let the class know that each person, whether male or female, has the right to decide for himself or herself how far they will go. Each person gets to set their own limits about what they will do sexually, and what they won't do. Having sex is a BIG DECISION—and it is not a decision for someone else to make, or to pressure you into.

Tell the class that this means you have the power to say “no”. And you can say “no”, even if:

- You have said “yes” before
- You have had sex before
- You have been “making out” (kissing and touching)
- You love the other person
- The other person has spent money on you

Explain that people who have been sexually active also have the right and the power to say “no”. They can (and should) say “no” to sex if they don't want it. In fact, abstinence is the healthiest choice, even for teens who have already had sex.

Also, teens who have sex have the right to say “no” to sex without a condom. (Teens who have sex must take action, including using a condom every time they have sex.)

- **Rule #2: It is NEVER OK to pressure someone for sex.**  
It is OK to tell someone what you want, or to ask someone for what you want. But it is NEVER OK to insist, or to put pressure on someone, or to manipulate them into having sex.

Ask the class for feedback about this second Rule. Some students might be skeptical about this rule. Do they disagree? Do they think it is really OK to pressure someone to have sex?

Sometimes the images in movies or TV make it seem like it is expected for one person to pressure another person to have sex. Sometimes the media might influence people to think that, even when a person says “no”, he or she might not really *mean* “no”. In real life, some people do pressure other people. This does not mean that they are bad people; but it does mean that their behavior is not appropriate—not OK.

Help the class to distinguish between expressing a desire to do something (i.e., *asking* someone) and pressuring someone. The key difference is that it is not OK when one person does not respect another person’s “no”—i.e., not respecting the other person’s boundaries.

It is OK to ask, and it is OK even to give reasons for them to change their mind. However, it is not OK to insist, or to threaten someone, even with emotional threats. For example, it is not OK to threaten to break up with someone if they won’t do what a person wants. It is not OK to belittle someone, or to make fun of someone, if they say “no” to what you want.

### ACTIVITY 9.2 -- PRESSURE SITUATION- 10 minutes

Let the class know that they will now consider an imaginary pressure situation. The situation you are going to read has a male (Michael) pressuring a female (Jasmine), but sometimes females pressure males, too.<sup>3</sup> In fact, in any relationship, one person might try to pressure the other.

Read **SITUATION 1: Jasmine and Michael** out loud to the class (see FACILITATOR RESOURCE). After the situation is read, point out that, in the story, Michael seems to be pressuring Jasmine for sex, and that is NEVER OK. Still, some people might try to do it.

Ask the class to help answer some questions as you read them out loud. Read **Question #1**, and write “**Why is it hard to say ‘no’?**” on the board or newsprint. Help the class to come up with several appropriate answers, including perhaps:

- It would not seem cool to say “no”
- She does not want to disappoint him
- She may feel “turned on” or sexually aroused
- She doesn’t know what to say or do

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<sup>3</sup> Facilitators should point out that these scenarios are not about actual students. Even if there is a student with the same name as a scenario character, the story is not about them.

- She may feel helpless, like there is nothing she could do
- She likes the attention and closeness

Summarize by noting that there are lots of reasons that it might be hard for a person to say “no” when pressured.

Now ask the class to tell you **what it would take for Jasmine to resist the pressure Michael is putting on her**. Help the class come up with important elements, including perhaps:

- Knowing ahead of time where her boundaries are (a DECISION)
- A commitment to protecting herself (and her family) from too-early pregnancy and STDs
- Courage and determination
- Having some “ammunition”—some TOOLS she can use to resist pressure
- Knowing what to say and how to say it

Summarize by noting that it takes a DECISION, and it takes standing up for herself.

Let the class know that it also takes knowing what to do or say, and that is why we will outline some ways to say “no” effectively, and we will do some practice. That way, they can feel experienced and empowered to say “no” to anything they don’t want to do.

Now read **Question #2** and ask the class how they would answer. Write “**How to Avoid Pressure Situations**” on the board or newsprint. Help the class to come up with several appropriate answers, including:

- Avoid being alone with Michael
- Ask about the situation before she agrees to go
- Avoid alcohol and drugs, since they reduce resistance to pressure
- Talk with him about her limits ahead of time
- She should not date someone who is a lot older

Read **Question #3**, and write “**The POWER to Say No**” on the board or newsprint. Help the class to come up with the following TOOLS, and write them on the board or newsprint, so the students can refer to them for the rest of the Lesson.

Help the class to include the following TOOLS:

- Say the word: use the word “no”
- Use your voice: say it strong and be clear that you mean it
- Use body language: stand up, move away, lean back, move his or her hand
- Repeat it: say “no” again

- Say, “I don’t....” This lets the person know it is your DECISION not to do something
- Use “I just don’t want to”: you don’t have to convince the person or argue
- Blame the parents: say “my parents will kill me”
- Suggest an alternative: let’s do something else instead
- Preserve the relationship with “I like you, but I am not going against what I think is right”
- Turn the tables: ask why the other person is pressuring you
- Leave the area if necessary

Point out that the class can use this list of TOOLS and TIPS to evaluate how well they and other students are able to say “no” in a practice. Leave the “The POWER to Say No” list on the board during the ROLE-PLAY activity.

### ACTIVITY 9.3 - ROLE-PLAY DEMONSTRATION - 10 minutes

In this ACTIVITY, the Facilitator demonstrates both weak and powerful ways to say “no”—to resist sexual pressure. Ask a co-facilitator, a teacher, an aide, or a student volunteer to play the part of Michael, by reading his “pressure lines”.

Let the class know that you and “Michael” will go through the situation twice. The first time, you will use only weak techniques and ways of saying “no”. The second time, you will use the TOOLS the class developed to say “no” in a powerful way—a way that will be effective.

Ask the students to watch carefully to see which of the TOOLS for a powerful “no” you use.

Using the FACILITATOR RESOURCE, read through the first attempt to say “no”. Use timid and unsure body language, and don’t look “Michael” in the eye. Ask the students for feedback about how well you did. Help the class to see that:

- Jasmine did not use the key TOOLS.
- Jasmine seemed unsure, and “Michael” kept trying.
- Jasmine did not say the word “no”.
- She did not use strong body language.
- She did not use a strong voice.
- She did not say “I don’t” or let Michael know what her DECISION was.
- She did not suggest another thing to do.

Now, using the FACILITATOR RESOURCE, read through the second, more powerful way of saying “no”. When you are finished, ask the students for feedback about how powerful your “no” was this time. Help the class to see the TOOLS that were used:

- Jasmine seemed sure of herself, even when “Michael” kept trying.
- Jasmine said the word “no”.

- She used strong body language.
- She used a strong voice.
- She said “I don’t want to”, and this let Michael know what her DECISION was.
- She suggested another thing to do.
- This was powerful and effective—Michael stopped pressuring her.

Ask the class what Jasmine could have done if none of the things she tried worked. Help the class remember that she could have “turned the tables” and asked what was wrong with HIM (Michael) that he was pressuring her like this. Or, she could have left the area and walked away.

Thank “Michael” for “his” great performance, and the students for all their observations.

#### **ACTIVITY 9.4 - PRESSURE SITUATION ROLE-PLAY- 15 minutes**

[Note to Facilitators: This is the most essential exercise in this lesson. The Facilitator should strive to ensure that each student actively practices saying “no” effectively.]

Pass out the Student HANDOUTS. Let the class know that filling in this worksheet will help them be ready to play the role of someone who has the power to say “no”. In this activity, they will write the “lines” to say no in this situation, and then they will practice saying no.

Read aloud the SITUATION in the Student HANDOUT, with the students reading the SITUATION along silently. Then ask the students to read silently the “lines” that their date says. Ask the students to write on the lines what they could say to say “no”. Remind them to use the TOOLS on the board to say “no” in a powerful and effective way.

Once all the students have written their “lines”, ask them to work in pairs, with a student sitting near them. Have the students take turns playing out the scene, with one student playing “Your Date”, and the student who wrote the lines playing “You”. Have the student playing “Your Date” give feedback about how effective “You” was in saying “no”.

Walk around the class to assure that the student pairs are on task, and offer praise and suggestions on their ways of saying “no”.

Then, ask the students to switch roles and repeat the exercise, this time the other student plays “You” and uses the lines that he or she wrote. When the role-play is finished, the student playing “Your Date” gives feedback about how effective “You” was in saying “no”.

When each student has had a chance to role-play his or her ways of saying “no”, ask the class for feedback. What do they think was the most effective TOOL to use to say a POWERFUL “no”? What things did not work so well?

Congratulate the students on their acting ability, and their feedback to each other.

### **ACTIVITY 9.5 - ANOTHER PRESSURE SITUATION and Wrap-up - 5 to 10 minutes**

If there is time, have the class consider another imaginary pressure situation. Read the situation out loud to the class (see the FACILITATOR RESOURCE: ANOTHER PRESSURE SITUATION: Andre and Keira). Point out that Keira seems to be pressuring Andre, and that is never OK. Still, some people do pressure others.

Ask the class to help answer the questions as you read them out loud. For **Question #1**, help the class to identify **why it might be hard for Andre to say “no”** in this situation. Males may have some reasons that are similar to females, such as the reasons identified for Jasmine’s situation with Michael in ACTIVITY 9.2. There may also be some issues that are different or harder for males.

Now ask the class **what they think it would take for Andre to resist the pressure** Keira is putting on him. Some elements they may suggest might be:

- Knowing ahead of time where his boundaries are (a DECISION)
- A commitment to protecting himself (and his family) from too-early pregnancy and STDs
- Courage and determination
- Using the TOOLS the class developed

Now read **Question #2** and ask the class **how Andre could have avoided this pressure situation**. Help the class to come up with several appropriate answers, including:

- Not go with Keira to her sister’s house
- Not go with Keira into her room
- Talk to Keira about his limits ahead of time

Read **Question #3**, and ask the class which of the TOOLS outlined on the board they think Andre could use to say “no” effectively in this situation.

In wrapping up the LESSON, let the students know that practicing saying “no” (like they did in writing and reading their lines) is really important. Even many adults find that they have trouble saying “no” unless they learn how to do it and unless they practice it.

Let the students know that being able to say “no” is about power—the power to make your own DECISIONS, and not let someone else make them for you.

Review the two rules about sexual pressure from the beginning of the LESSON.

**FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.2**  
**PRESSURE SITUATION: Jasmine and Michael**

Jasmine has had a crush on Michael for a long time, and she was really happy that he asked her out. This is their first time out together, and they have fun. Michael is smart and funny, and Jasmine really likes him. After they saw a movie, Michael brought her to his mothers' house. When they got there, it was clear that nobody was home, and Jasmine and Michael were alone. They sit on the couch and kiss, and then Michael starts to undo Jasmine's jeans. Jasmine is feeling very uncomfortable and confused. She likes Michael, and she likes feeling close to him, but she does not want to have sex. She starts to pull away, and Michael says, "What's the matter? Don't you love me?"

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think it might be hard for Jasmine to tell Michael she does not want to have sex?
2. How could Jasmine have avoided this pressure situation?
3. How would you advise Jasmine to say "no" to Michael?

**FACILITATOR RESOURCE for ACTIVITY 9.3  
PRESSURE SITUATION SCRIPTS**

**I. WEAK (Ineffective) Attempts to Say “No”**

- Michael (Assistant): “What’s the matter? Don’t you love me?”
- Jasmine (Facilitator): (*shyly, looking down*) Well, yeah. But I don’t know about this...
- Michael (Assistant): I just want to be close to you.
- Jasmine (Facilitator): I want to be close to you too. But I am not sure.
- Michael (Assistant): Come on. Everybody does it.
- Jasmine (Facilitator): Yeah, but I don’t want to get in trouble.
- Michael (Assistant): Is there something wrong with you?
- Jasmine (Facilitator): I’m nervous. I am scared I would get pregnant.

**II. POWERFUL Ways to Say “No”**

- Michael (Assistant): “What’s the matter? Don’t you love me?”
- Jasmine (Facilitator): (*standing with hands on hips, and firm voice*) I like you, but I don’t want to go any farther.
- Michael (Assistant): I just want to be close to you.
- Jasmine (Facilitator): NO. I don’t want to have sex.
- Michael (Assistant): Come on. Everybody does it.
- Jasmine (Facilitator): NO, not me. I don’t want to.
- Michael (Assistant): Is there something wrong with you?
- Jasmine (Facilitator): I am fine. Let’s go over to my house instead. We could play video games with my brother.
- Michael (Assistant): OK. That sounds good.

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**STUDENT HANDOUT for ACTIVITY 9.4  
PRESSURE SITUATION ROLE-PLAY**

**SITUATION:** On Saturday night, you go to a party with someone that you really like. There are no adults at the party, and everyone is drinking. You and your date dance and have a beer. Your date leads you into a bedroom, locks the door, and kisses you. Your date starts to lie down on the bed. You feel a little dizzy from the beer, and you are uncomfortable with the situation. You do not want to have sex.

**DIRECTIONS:** Fill in the blanks with what you would say or do to say “no”:

Your Date: What’s the matter? Come lie down.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Date: Come on, it will feel good.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Date: Don’t you love me?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Date: I just want to get closer. What’s wrong with you?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Date: OK, OK, sorry. I didn’t mean to pressure you like that.

