

Come Back with Courage: Role Play

The lesson focuses on using courage to make good choices even when it feels hard to do so. Additionally, students have an opportunity to develop assertive skills in saying “no” to negative peer pressure. These skills are built through brainstorming and role-play with follow-up discussion and possible extensions of discussion and reflection questions.

Kindness Sub-Concept(s)

Vulnerability, Humility

Lesson Timeframe

35-40 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ Come Back with Courage Role-Play scenarios (see below)

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Practice respectful ways of saying “no” when they experience peer pressure.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

It takes courage to be kind first, and without notice. This week, try to spread some kindness to your colleagues in small ways. A kind note, taking on recess duty, giving them a bathroom break- your choice.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Pre-select groups if there are strong personalities that should not (or should!) be in the same role-play group.



Share

5-7 minutes

It takes courage to be our best selves and to try new things. Did any of you try something new recently? What was it?

Invite student responses.

For this activity, we are going to think about the ways that our peers influence us. First of all, what does the word “peer” mean?

Invite student response.

Good! How do you think our peers and friends can influence us in positive ways?

Invite student response.

Okay, how about how peers and friends can influence in negative ways?

Invite student response.

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Inspire

7-10 minutes

Sometimes our peers can pressure us to do things that we don't want to do. Staying emotionally and mentally healthy means knowing when to listen to our peers and when to listen to our hearts and brains. Why do you think it takes courage to say no? Invite student responses.

What are some ways that you can say "no" when someone is pressuring you to do something that you don't want to do?

Allow students to brainstorm ways that they can say "no" when someone is pressuring them. Write their responses on the board or chart paper.

Examples:

1. Use a strong "No" statement, such as "No thanks," or, "No, I am not interested".
2. Look the other person in the eye.
3. Cross your arms; your body language shows you are not interested.
4. Show you are confident. Don't smile, giggle, or laugh nervously!
5. Walk away!

Do a 30-second practice by having students stand in a big circle and, one student at a time, take turns around the circle saying "no" to the person on their left using the 5 strategies. "Walk away" back to their desk after each student has said "no". The final student left in the circle will say "no" to you and you both "walk away" to your desks.



Empower

15-20 minutes

We are now going to act out role-plays that focus on what we can do when people pressure us to do things that we don't want to do.

Instructions:

Divide the students into four to six groups and hand each group a role-play. You will need to determine the following roles:

- One group member will read the situation to the class.
- One group member will represent "Peer Pressure" and will attempt to pressure the others to do something wrong.
- Every other member of the group will need to say "no" to the pressuring friends using one of the skills that we discussed and is written on the board.

Have students spend a few minutes figuring out how they are going to act out the role-play. Then have them perform the role-plays for the class.



Reflect

7-10 minutes

After all the role-plays, ask the following questions:

- Which of those situations do you think would take the most courage to stand up and do the right thing? Why?
- Which of the techniques we've practiced today would work best for you? What are some other ways you can say "no"?
- How do we use courage and self-respect in these situations?

It is important to remember that when other people see you courageously make good choices, even when it feels hard to say "no" or to do the right thing, you are positively influencing others. You are taking a situation of negative peer pressure and turning it into a situation of positive peer pressure! How amazing is that?!



Extension Ideas

- Have students write their own role-plays.
- To reinforce concepts later (perhaps as an exit ticket activity), you can have students use one of the strategies to leave the room at the end of the day or have them journal about the following:
 - What is peer pressure?
 - What are some respectful ways you can say "no"?
 - What is integrity?
 - Write about a time when you were pressured to do something that you didn't want to do. What did you do? How did you feel?
 - After learning some techniques to say "no" today, which one do you think would be easiest for you to use?
 - Is it hard to have integrity when faced with peer pressure?



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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

Come Back with Courage Role-Play

Role-Play Scenarios	How do you 'come back with courage'?
Smoking You are visiting your grandparents for the summer and have met a group of friends who dare you to smoke cigarettes with them. You know that smoking is harmful. Your uncle has lung cancer and the doctors think that smoking was the cause.	
Stealing You are in a store and you see a CD that you want to buy, but you don't have enough money. Your friends tell you they will keep watch for store employees & cameras so you can put the CD in your backpack. You really want the CD, but you know stealing is wrong.	
Bullying You and a group of friends are on the playground when a student who has a hard time controlling his behavior in class walks toward you. Most kids make fun of him and don't want to be around him. Your best friend says: "Did you see how he was acting in class today? Threw a fit because he didn't want to do the math problem. What a loser!"	
Stranger You are walking home from school with your friend and it is pouring rain. Someone pulls up in a new, bright red sports car and asks if you want a ride. The person looks really nice, but you have never seen the driver before. Your friend wants to get in the car, but you don't think it is a good idea.	
Standing Up Your friend has a new shirt that you really like, but a group of girls are teasing her and telling her that it is ugly. These girls say that you need to tell your friend how silly she looks in the shirt.	
Skiping School It is a beautiful spring day and your friend asks you if you want to go to the park and ditch school. You have never skipped school before, but you don't want your friend to make fun of you.	