

## RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Social & Physical Environments
- Student Engagement

## RESOURCES:

- Microwave Popcorn (1 pre-popped bag per group)
- Bowls/napkins/cups for each group
- Hand sanitizer

## Popcorn Pressure Game

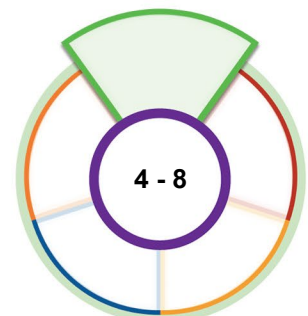
**ACTIVITY GOAL:** To allow students to practice dealing with peer pressure in a controlled environment so that students are better prepared to use refusal skills in other situations.

### ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Create a set of strips for each group from the ‘Direction Strips’ found below. Ensure there are enough direction strips for everyone.
2. Divide students into small groups and provide each student with their own direction strip ensuring they do not look at them. Each group should have 1 to 2 “Do not eat” strips.
3. Have students read their direction strip silently and remind them not to share what is on their strip with their group members.
4. Provide hand sanitizer for students to use prior to starting the activity.
5. Give each person their own cup of popcorn and tell students to begin their “party”. Remind them to do exactly what the direction on their strip tells them.
6. Give students 5-8 minutes to interact. Roam the room and encourage conversation.
7. Finally, stop the “party” and have students who got the “do not eat” strips to come to the front of the room. Ask them to describe how they felt during the activity.
  - Did any of them eat the popcorn? Why or why not?
  - What did they do to avoid the pressure of their classmates?
  - If they gave in, what might be the consequences of bending to peer pressure?
8. Ask the rest of the class what methods they used to apply pressure and write out a list (see “Discussion Points” below for more messaging).
  - Which methods were the most effective in making students eat?
  - Which responses from the non-eaters were most effective?
  - Was there a difference in groups that had more than one non-eater?
9. Ask the class to discuss the best way to handle the peer pressure tactics listed.
  - a. What if you experienced peer pressure in a different setting?
  - b. How could you respond to the pressure and stay loyal to your values?

### Curriculum Connections

- Grade 4: D1.4 Tobacco and vaping, D2.3 Decisions about smoking and vaping
- Grade 5: D1.2 Short-and long-term effects of alcohol use
- Grade 6: D1.2 Effects of cannabis, drugs
- Grade 7: D3.2 Implications of substance use, addictions, and related behaviours
- Grade 8: D1.3 Warning signs, consequences



## Popcorn Pressure Game

*\*Direction Strips on Next Page\**

Other Discussion Points:

Why is it so hard for people to resist peer pressure?

- Afraid of being rejected by others
- Want to be liked and don't want to lose a friend
- Want to appear grown up
- Don't want to be made fun of
- Don't want to hurt someone's feelings
- Aren't sure of what you really want
- Don't know how to get out of the situation
- When you face pressure you can stand your ground. Sometimes resisting isn't easy, but you can do it with practice and a little know-how. What are some things you can do?

Break up into pairs or groups of three to practice some of the refusal techniques discussed.

Bring the group back together and discuss positive peer pressure

- *Peer pressure isn't all bad.*
- *You and your friends can influence each other into making good choices that will improve your health and social life and make you feel good about your decisions.*
- *You and your friends can also use good peer pressure to help each other resist bad peer pressure.*
- *What are some examples of positive peer pressure?*

Key Messages to share with Students:

- Know the facts on drugs and alcohol – make an informed choice
- Say no assertively – stand up straight, make and hold eye contact, speak in a firm voice, use a quick and polite tone. “No, I don't want to.” “No thanks.” “No.”
- Repeat as often as necessary – Don't argue; just keep repeating the same answer over and over. (e.g., “No, I don't want to try anything that is unhealthy for my body,” repeat as needed.)
- **Reverse the Pressure** - Come up with a response that puts the pressure on the other person. (e.g., “Why are you bothering me with something that is not good for me or you?”)
- Plan with a good friend beforehand and stick to decisions.
- Leave. Find something else to do with other friends.
- Change the subject – “Let's go throw the football around!” or “No, I like my lungs healthy so I can play sports”
- Use humour. Provide a witty response that ends the conversation. (e.g., “Yellow teeth and wrinkles...no thanks!”)
- Give an excuse – “No I don't want to smell like an ash tray.”
- Stand up for others

## Direction Strips

(Cut these apart and provide a set to each group.)

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The following is your one direction for this activity. Do not share your directions with anyone else:

**Do NOT eat!**

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**Do NOT eat!**

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The following is your one direction for this activity. Do not share your directions with anyone else:

**While you enjoy some snacks, strongly encourage everyone to eat.**

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