

# Booster Lesson 2

Resisting External and Internal Pressures



**PROJECT**  
**ALERT**



# Lesson Overview

## Lesson Goals

1. Increase resistance self-efficacy by reviewing external and internal pressures and helping students understand them
2. Provide students with opportunities to practice resisting external and internal pressures

## Scope and Sequence with Pacing Guidance

1. Introduce Lesson and Review Saying “No” (2 min.)
2. Begin Video: *Paul’s Fix* (5 min.)
3. Discuss Video (6 min.)
4. Write Ways of Saying “No” (5 min.)
5. Complete Video: *Paul’s Fix* (6 min.)
6. Review Internal Pressures (3 min.)
7. Prepare Internal Pressure Skits (10 min.)
8. Act Out Internal Pressure Skits (6 min.)
9. Wrap-up (2 min.)

## Brief Lesson Description

This lesson reviews the concept of external and internal pressures. The video, *Paul’s Fix*, is used to illustrate a situation for students and spark discussion. Then students will write out ways they might react if they were in the same situation as Paul. The video continues and a discussion about internal pressures follows. Finally, students prepare and act out internal pressure skits, gaining valuable experience, and practice resisting external and internal pressures.

## Background Knowledge: Pre-Reading

Internal pressure is addressed in the curriculum because students often say, “*No one pressures me,*” yet they may still feel pressure to get involved with substances.

The concept of internal pressures is important precisely because young people may not recognize or understand them. Although internal pressures are felt as coming from inside ourselves, they are not something we make up. They are a result of external experience and are felt by everyone at one time or another.

Internal pressures have three components:

- They are generated by an environment created by other teens, teen culture and social media, the advertising media, and a society that uses substances.
- They are nonverbal (teens feel these pressures without anyone saying anything).
- They are powerful (the pressures we put on ourselves are subtle, but they are very real and very strong).

In helping students learn how to say “no”, Project ALERT:

- validates their feelings that it’s sometimes hard to resist the pressure to use drugs;
- demonstrates that students have the right to say “no;”
- helps them believe they can say “no” without suffering rejection or embarrassment; and
- gives them several ways of saying “no”.

Below are six different ways to say “no”, and example responses for each of those ways. Most of these are demonstrated in the videos and represented on the *Ways to Say No* poster.

**1. Simply say “no”.** Often the easiest of the six resistance strategies, simply saying “no” helps avoid arguments. Students frequently believe that such a brief reply won’t work, and they will continue to receive pressure. Thus, it’s very important to help them see the viability of this response.

- No, I’d rather not.
- No, thanks.
- Not today/tonight.

**2. Give a reason.** This technique uses “I” statements to emphasize your decision and making the decision for yourself. “I” statements are a neutral way to refuse a substance use offer, like saying “I don’t like the taste” rather than “How can you stand the way you smell?” Giving a reason may also include excuses, like “I’m getting picked up soon”.

- I don’t feel like it.
- I’ll get red eyes and my parents will find out.
- I’m an athlete so I don’t (vape, smoke, drink).

**3. Give an alternative.** The approach of giving an alternative can be particularly effective when the person offering is trying to make conversation, be friendly, or avoid excluding someone. The person extending an offer often don't care if it is accepted or not. Others, particularly experimenters, may offer drugs to look cool. They may be relieved when the other person says "no." The alternatives listed below make it clear that the drug is being rejected, not the person who offered it. Hence, the alternatives are less likely to generate hostility.

- No. Let's go do something else.
- No, let's get something to eat instead.
- No, I need to practice (sport/activity).

**4. Stand up to pressure.** Students' concerns that a friend or acquaintance might really pressure them with taunts need to be validated. They also need help thinking about why a friend might be taunting them (e.g., insecurity). To deal with this kind of pressure, students need to know that they don't have to give a reason if they don't want to. They may just repeat "no," or use any of the other saying "no" strategies.

- I already said no.
- I just don't feel like it.
- I really meant it.

**5. Leave the scene.** Sometimes the pressure is very difficult to resist. If so, it may be easier to leave the scene. This doesn't necessarily mean leaving something entirely, it might mean leaving a room or space. Other times it may be easier to get away from the whole scene even though it might feel lonely or isolating. It helps to know who to call or rely on if a leave the scene situation arises.

- I've got to go now.
- My ride will here soon.
- I need to be home in 15 minutes.

**6. Avoid the scene.** Sometimes the wisest strategy is to avoid situations in which resistance is likely to be needed. Young people almost always know which places to avoid (e.g., hang out spots, parties, or online platforms). Avoiding such places or taking a break from social media interactions can save them from pressures. However, such a strategy could bring feelings of isolation that should be acknowledged. These negative feelings may be countered to some extent by reminding students that:

- resistance can make you feel good because you demonstrate internal strength;
- people who reject you because you don't use are not very good friends.

### **Tips for Class Activity Preparing and Acting Out Skits**

Project ALERT uses role play skits to model and give students practice in ways to say "no." Lessons 5, 7, and 9, and Booster Lesson 2, use this method, and the lesson plans give clear instructions on how to set up an effective role play. Here are a few extra tips when students are preparing and acting out skits.

#### Role play tips

- Float among groups during skit preparation to help groups focus, and listen to group discussion before intervening with help.
- Encourage those who do not like to participate by suggesting they play a non-speaking role at first.

- The same students should not always play the pressuring roles.
- Motivate any reluctant students with enthusiasm (“You’ll be great,” “I’ve seen some terrific skits in other classes, and I’m sure you can come up with some great ideas, too.”).
- Simple speaking lines are fine! Skits are often very short; a simple “no thanks” may be the solution because students should be encouraged to be as realistic as possible.
- Remind students to put “themselves” (language, community) into skits.
- Consider choosing a group that will set a good example to act their skit first.

### Critique tips

- The skit should be short and to the point. Its purpose is to highlight and reinforce the solution.
- If the solution is hostile, say, “You’re saying ‘no’ to a drug, not necessarily to a friend. Could you try another take that isn’t hostile to the person?”
- Using movie theme phrases can help keep it light. By saying “Take two!” teachers can ask the group to re-do a skit that had an inappropriate solution.
- Every skit should be generously praised, because even if it is simple, students need reinforcement and chances to build self-efficacy in resistance skills.

## Materials and Supplies to Prepare

- **Visual** – Ground Rules: (from Lesson 1)
  - **Visual** – Create two-column chart *Why It Is Hard/Not Hard to Say “No.”*
- | Hard | Not Hard |
|------|----------|
|      |          |
- **Visual** – Poster: *Ways to Say “No”*
  - **Visual** – Poster: *Pressures from Inside Yourself*
  - **Materials** – Video: *Paul’s Fix*

## Legend

We use the icons below to indicate what to say during the lesson, what to keep in mind as you facilitate the lesson, and what to display in the classroom throughout the lesson.

What to say	What to keep in mind	What to display
		

# Lesson Plan

## 1. Introduce Lesson and Review Saying “No”



Display visual *Ground Rules*



**If you remember, last year in Project ALERT you practiced saying ‘no’ to drugs and sometimes to other things, like cheating and shoplifting.**

**Today we will practice and get better at resisting pressures from others and pressures from inside ourselves. By practicing saying ‘no’ in class, you will find it easier to say ‘no’ in your own life.**

## 2. Begin Video: *Paul’s Fix*



Display video *Paul’s Fix*



**Now we’ll see a video called Paul’s Fix. It’s like the videos you saw last year in Project ALERT. This video is about a teen named Paul who seeks help from some older teens and encounters pressure. Be aware, after part one you will think of possible ways for Paul to deal with the pressure and still get some help.**

**This is a two-part video. We’ll watch the first part of the video, have a class discussion, complete an activity, then watch the rest of the video.**

State any other expectations while students watch the video.

Begin the video.

Pause the video when the Solutions screen appears.

### 3. Discuss Video



Display partial visual *Why It Is Hard/Not Hard to Say “No.”*



In a few minutes you'll have a chance to help Paul say 'no,' but first I want to ask you about how you think Paul was feeling.

1. Why might it be hard for Paul to say 'no'?
2. Why might it not be hard for Paul to say 'no'?
3. Is the pressure that Paul is feeling coming from inside or outside himself?

### 4. Write Ways of Saying “No”



Display poster *Ways to Say “No.”*



Paul wants help to get out of the fix he's in, but he doesn't want to get use pot. You can help by thinking of two ways he can say 'no.'

Each of you needs to think of two ways to say 'no.' You will need two pieces of paper for this activity. Imagine that you are Paul and think of two ways that you might really say 'no' in that situation. Write one way on each piece of paper. When you have written down your way turn the paper over.

Remember, Paul really wants help and Andy is someone he looks up to, but he doesn't want to use pot.

Give students two minutes to write their responses.

**Who would like to volunteer to share one of the ways Paul can say 'no'?**

Then have a few students share with the class.

**Do you think you could say 'no' in about the same way to beer?**

How many of you have answers that would work if Andy had offered Paul a beer? You may need to change the words 'smoke' or 'cigarettes' to 'drink' or 'beer.' Raise your hands.

**People can say 'no' pretty much the same way in many different pressure situations....**

Note how students' solutions align with the poster.



## 5. Complete Video: *Paul's Fix*



Now we'll see the solutions on the video and compare them with the ones we came up with.



Resume video



**What are the three ways Paul said 'No'?**



1. "No, thanks." (Simply say "no")
2. "No, if I start, I'll never stop." (Give a reason)
3. "No, thanks, man." After Andy pressures him and says "I thought you were cool," Paul says, "Yeah, well, I thought *you* were cool." (Stand up to pressure)



**Raise your hand if you wrote similar ways for saying 'no.'**

**Great. You're thinking of good, practical ways to say 'no.'**

**Which solution did you like best? Why?**

**What were the different reactions when Paul said 'no'?**

**Were they angry? Were they less likely to help out?**

It may not always happen, but in all the solutions, it looked like Paul would get help with his problem. Even though Andy pressured Paul more in the third solution, he backed off when Paul gave a reason and remained firm. In the first two solutions, Andy was pretty casual about Paul's refusal. Maybe he was just being polite when he made the offer to Paul.

## 6. Review Internal Pressures



Display visual *Pressures from Inside Yourself*



**Let's talk about pressure.**

**In Paul's first two solutions, much of the pressure to accept the offer from Andy came from inside himself -- his own need to be accepted and desire to get help.**

**Sometimes we feel pressures from inside ourselves when we're alone. Sometimes we feel them when we're with a group, as Paul was.**

We're going to talk more about pressures from inside ourselves because these pressures are often the hardest to recognize and the hardest to resist.

Think about this example of an internal pressure situation: Sarah is at a party where some people were drinking. No one was pressuring her, but she thought she might fit in better if she had a drink, too. In reality, no one really knew or seemed to care whether Sarah was drinking or not. They were doing what they wanted to do and didn't feel the need to pressure Sarah. So, Sarah said to herself, 'I can't drink and drive safely. I'll go and talk to someone who's not drinking alcohol.'

## 7. Prepare Skits



Refer to visuals *Ways to Say "No" and Pressures from Inside Yourself*



**Now we'll be doing skits about ways to say "no."**

In a minute we'll divide into groups to develop the skits that show a person feeling pressure from inside and how to say 'no' to that pressure.

Remember, the ways to say "no" on this poster are just a few ways, and you can use them in your skits, or think of other ways that feel authentic to your group.

Pick realistic solutions; solutions you would really use. You should try a few different ways before you write the final script.

There are a few roles in your group:

- Director who will assign parts and be responsible for getting people to work together.
- Actors who will assume the roles of the characters in your skit.
- Recorder who will write down the final version of the script and provide it for review. Everyone might want to have their own script for acting purposes.

When you meet with your group, please take the appropriate script writing supplies with you.

Break students into groups and distribute one skit preparation sheet per group to the groups' chosen Recorder.



Circulate as students work in groups. If a group is not making progress, suggest that they do the following:

- Assign parts
- Try out different solutions
- Decide on one solution and rehearse it



When students have been working for about 8 minutes, give them an alert about time.

**You have two more minutes to complete your scripts.**

After the next 2 minutes

**Time is up – let's see the solutions you came up with for this problem!**

## 8. Act Out Skits



Optional to create a visual to write brief summaries of the solutions presented in group skits



**Let's start with expectations for this activity:**

1. **Actors should speak up so that everyone can hear you.**
2. **Face the class while you are acting.**
3. **Introduce characters. Director, this is your responsibility.**
4. **Attentive audience; quiet and focused on the actors. No more planning.**

**After each skit, there will be brief applause. As an audience, you will try to come up with a brief summary of the skit solution.** (Optional: I'll write the solution for each skit for reference.)

**Volunteer for the first group of actors?**



Praise students after each performance and, if necessary, lead applause.

Solutions can be displayed in some way that is most convenient in the visual. The goal is for students to see the different solutions they generate for the remainder of the lesson.

Use students' words where possible for the written solution; if the solution is complex, try to capture some of the complexity in your summary.



**Everyone should be proud of each other's work.**

**Let's do a quick share out of our solutions to the problem, or the ways that we said no.**

Choose students to give responses to summarize common themes in how students said no; point out variation in solutions where appropriate.

**Here's what I observed about how our actor's said "no":**

Comment on how actors appeared when saying "no." Give some examples of how there are many ways of saying "no;" for example, if no group offered an alternative, make sure to highlight that as an option and give an example. Note the importance of body language and voice tone in communicating resistance.

**Looking back at the Ways to Say "No" poster, I saw our groups...**

Note how students' solutions align with the poster.

## 8. Wrap-up Lesson



**Today, we practiced resisting pressures from others and from inside ourselves. The more you practice saying 'no,' the easier it will be to say 'no' when you encounter pressures in your day-to-day life.**

**In the next lesson, we'll have a chance to see how it feels to be pressured by someone else. Then we'll talk about some good things you get from resisting pressures and not using drugs.**