

# **22: Negotiation & Refusal Skills**

Words of Wisdom

Assertive, Aggressive & Passive Communication  
Styles

Three Refusal Techniques

Pressure Lines

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**Those who know how  
to play can easily leap  
over the adversaries  
of life.**

*Iglulik Proverb*

# Assertive, Aggressive & Passive Communication Styles

## Assertive Speech and Behavior

- **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; sitting or standing tall but relaxed
  - Hands relaxed motions; appropriate gestures
- **Examples of Assertive Behavior**
  - Giving compliments; accepting compliments
  - Asking for what you want; being willing and able to take “no” for an answer
  - Saying “yes” or “no” to requests, according to what *you* have decided is best
  - Controlling your temper when people get angry. . . so that you might yell, but you wouldn’t use putdowns, threats, or violence to get your way



## Aggressive Speech and Behavior

- **Speech and Voice**
  - Loaded words and generalizations that start fights (such as “always” and “never”)
  - You messages (such as “You are so... “)
  - Superior or putdown words (such as “prude”, “wimp” or slut” etc.)
  - Sarcasm (such as “I guess *you* never stole anything! “)
  - Tense, loud voice or cold, deadly quiet voice
  - Eyes narrowed, cold, staring, not really seeing you
  - Rolling the eyes, refusing to look at you
- **Posture**
  - Hands on hips; feet apart; back turned; stiff and rigid
  - Hands clenched; fist pounding; finger pointing; abrupt gestures
  - Violent (shoving, grabbing, poking. etc.)
- **Examples of Aggressive Behavior**
  - Putdowns; name calling; interrupting; demanding; giving orders
  - Just taking things (touch, etc.) without asking; violence
  - Ignoring you; hanging up the phone on you; walking away when you’re talking

## Passive Speech and Behavior

- **Speech and Voice**
  - Hesitant speech
  - Indirect speech
  - Avoidance of eye contact (NOTE: Avoiding direct eye contact is considered a sign of respect and deference in many cultures.)
  - A reluctance to value one's own feelings or desires
- **Posture**
  - Slumped posture
  - Arms folded
  - Slouching
- **Examples of Passive Behavior**
  - Just letting things happen
  - Not speaking up for oneself
  - Saying that you did not care about something, even if you really did



# Three Refusal Techniques<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Broken Record—say “NO” and just keep repeating it

My mom’s not home, Wanna come over?

*No.*

C’mon, we won’t get another chance like this for a long time.

*No, I’m not going to come.*

But I really, really want you to. It means a lot to me.

*No.*

- If you keep saying “no” firmly enough, and clearly enough, the other person will usually get the message. Whatever you do, don’t get tricked into giving a list of reasons, and don’t give into threats.

## 2. Take the Offensive/Reverse the Pressure—tell the other person clearly what you think or how you feel

My mom’s not home. Wanna come over?

*Uh...no.*

Please . . .

*No. I don’t want to put myself in a position where I’ll be tempted to do something I’ll regret later. So I am not coming over.*

- If they continue to pressure you, you can also simply tell the other person clearly how their continuous pressure makes you feel.

*When you keep asking me to come over—after I already said no—it makes me feel like you don’t care about how I feel, just about what you want.*

**But I really want you to come over.**

*When you keep pressuring me like this, I get really angry with you. You’re asking me to do something I don’t want to do. I already told you ‘no’ and you’re making me feel like you don’t respect my right to say ‘no’.*

<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from the Postponing Sexual Involvement Curriculum

- You can reverse the pressure by questioning them about why they continue to pressure you after you have told them what you think or how you feel.

**But if you really cared about me, you'd come over.**

*You know, if you really cared about me, you'd stop pressuring me. I already told you 'no'. What are we really talking about here? Whether I care about you or whether I'll give in to what you want?*

### **3. Walk Away—simply refuse to discuss the matter any further**

**You keep saying "no." Please come.**

*Look, I'm not going to talk about it anymore.*

**But ...**

*I've already told you I'm not going to come over. That's all there is to it.*

- If necessary, you may just remove yourself from the situation. Just simply walk away.

### **Putting It All Together**

**My mom's not home. Wanna come over?**

*No, I don't want to.*

**Oh, come on, please.**

*No.*

**Just for a little while.**

*This pressure is really making me uncomfortable.*

**If you really cared about me, you'd come over.**

*If you really cared about me you'd back off. What are we talking about? Whether I care about you or whether I will give in to you?*

**Relax, don't be so uptight.**

*Look, I'm not going to talk about this anymore. I told you 'no' and that's all there is to it.*

# Pressure Lines

1. Line: C'mon . . . everybody's doing it.

*Reply:*

2. Line: If you love me, you'll have sex with me.

*Reply:*

3. Line: If you won't have sex with me, then I don't want to see you anymore.

*Reply:*

4. Line: I know you want to do it, you're just afraid of what people will say.

*Reply:*

5. Line: I just want to see how it feels without a condom on. Don't worry, I'll pull out.

*Reply:*

6. Line: I want to marry you someday.

*Reply:*

7. Line: We had sex before, so what's the problem now?

*Reply:*

8. Line: You don't want people to think you're not a man (woman), do you?

*Reply:*

9. Line: Don't you want to try it to see what it's like?

*Reply:*

10. Line: But since you are on the pill, we really don't need to use a condom too.

*Reply:*

11. Line: If you want to be popular with the kids at school... you'll do it.

*Reply:*

12. Line: Don't worry, if there is a pregnancy then we'll get married.

*Reply:*

13. Line: By saying you want to use a condom, are you suggesting that I have been with someone else?

*Reply:*

14. Line: You've gotten me all excited, if you really trust me, we don't need a condom.

*Reply:*

15. Line: You're really looking good today. Let me show you how to feel good too.

*Reply:*

16. Line: Come on, take a drink, it will get you in the mood.

*Reply:*

17. Line: But I don't want to go and buy condoms right now. Come on, we can do it just this one time without, okay?

*Reply:*

18. Line: A lot of your friends are doing it without a condom. It'll be okay, I promise.

*Reply:*

19. Line: I know you're feeling a little down right now. Let me make you feel better.

*Reply:*

20. Line: But I love you and I want to show you that you're special to me.

*Reply:*



# Pressure Lines With Assertive Responses

1. Line: Everybody's doing it.

Reply: Well, I'm not everybody, I'm me. Besides, I don't really believe everybody is doing it.

2. Line: If you love me, you'll have sex with me.

Reply: If you love me, you'll respect my feelings and not push me into doing something I'm not ready for.

3. Line: If you won't have sex with me, then I don't want to see you anymore.

Reply: Well, if that's the way you feel, I'm going to miss seeing you, but that's the way it's going to be.

4. Line: I know you want to do it, you're just afraid of what people will say.

Reply: If I wanted to, I wouldn't have said no.

5. Line: I just want to see how it feels without a condom on. Don't worry, I'll pull out.

Reply: I'm uncomfortable with that. I want to use a condom.

6. Line: I want to marry you someday.

Reply: Marriage is a long way off for me. There is a lot I want to see and do. I want to wait until I'm older to have sex.

7. Line: We had sex before, so what's the problem now?

Reply: I have the right to change my mind. I want to wait until I am older to have sex.

8. Line: You don't want people to think you're not a man (woman), do you?

Reply: Having sex does not prove that you are a man (woman). It's not for me right now.

9. Line: Don't you want to try it to see what it's like?

Reply: I think that is a pretty poor reason to have sex, pretending to care, just so that you can see what it is like. No thanks.

10. Line: But since you are on the pill, we really don't need to use a condom too.

Reply: I want to have the safest sex possible and for me that means using two types of contraception.

11. Line: If you want to be popular with the kids at school... you'll do it.

Reply: I don't have to depend on sex to try to be popular. I have more to offer than that. People like you because of the kind of person you are, the kind of character you have.

12. Line: Don't worry, if there is a pregnancy then we'll get married.

Reply: I don't want to risk getting involved in a pregnancy. I'm not ready for the responsibilities of either being married or being a parent.

13. Line: By saying you want to use a condom, are you suggesting that I have been with someone else and might have a disease or something?

Reply: I promised myself in Native STAND that I would not have sex without a condom. That is my choice and it doesn't have anything to do with you or anyone else.

14. Line: You've gotten me all excited, if you really trust me, we don't need a condom.

Reply: If you really respect me, you will respect my desire to have safer sex.

15. Line: You're really looking good today. Let me show you how to feel good too.

Reply: Thanks for the compliment, but my answer is still no.

16. Line: Come on, take a drink, it will get you in the mood.

Reply: No thanks! I don't want to get drunk and not know what I am doing.

17. Line: But I don't want to go and buy condoms right now. Come on, we can do it just this one time without, okay?

Reply: All it takes is one time and I am saying no to doing it without a condom.

18. Line: A lot of your friends are doing it without a condom. It'll be okay, I promise.

Reply: What my friends decide to do is their business. I make my own decisions.

19. Line: I know you're feeling a little down right now. Let me make you feel better.

Reply: No, having sex with you right now is not going to make the problem go away, and it might make me have a bigger one.

20. Line: But I love you and I want to show you that you're special to me.

Reply: If you really want to show me that I am special to you, then don't pressure me into something I am not ready for.

# Condom Negotiation Scenarios

## Hot Babe

It's Friday night and you are at a party at your friend's house. You've been flirting with Hot Babe all night. Everyone is drinking and getting crazy. You are dancing up close with the Hot Babe and the temperature is starting to rise. The two of you decide to step outside and get some fresh air. You start to make out and before you know it, you are starting to get down to business. You have a condom in your pocket. How will you talk to Hot Babe about this?

## Snookems

You have been with your partner, Snookems, for four months. You've been having sex for the past two months. You are in madly in love with each other, so you really don't think there are other sex partners involved on the side. You haven't been using condoms, but now you learned in Native STAND that there are lots of STDs you can get from the other person without them even knowing they gave anything to you. You don't want to get an incurable STD or HIV, so you think you should start using condoms. How will you talk to Snookems about this?

## Nice Guy

You are just starting to date this Nice Guy you met at school. You've gone to the movies a few times and held hands. He kissed you goodnight once. He seems like a really Nice Guy and everything is going nice and slow. Now he's asked you to go camping this weekend. You are excited, but nervous that something more might happen between you. You are very serious about protecting yourself and always use condoms. How will you talk to Nice Guy about this?

## Overly Friendly

You got high at a party and ended up in the back seat of your car with Overly Friendly. Overly Friendly wants to give you oral sex. You tell Overly Friendly that you need a condom (or a dental dam) for that, but Overly Friendly insists you can't catch anything from oral sex. What will you tell Overly Friendly?

