

What Makes Sense?

Introduction

We all make choices throughout the day—some are easy and some are difficult. This first activity presents some situations that involve choices and risk. The situations deal with substance use and violence. We make choices based on many different influences. One of the influences that we need to consider is how risky the choice is that we are making. We need to ask ourselves if this is a reasonable risk to take? What are the “risks” we are talking about? Is our safety or others’ safety at risk? Can someone get hurt physically? Is our health at risk? Is there a risk of feelings being hurt? Are we risking our relationships with family, friends, teachers or coaches? Are we risking breaking the law? Some decisions have very low risk and some are high risk. Some risks are reasonable and good to take and some are unreasonable and very dangerous.

Remember, what parents and other significant adults say has a real effect on the choices children make about the use and nonuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Many parents and adults don’t know what to tell young people about alcohol and other drug use. Some fear that if they talk with their children about alcohol it will somehow encourage them to drink. Other parents feel that if they drink alcohol it is impossible for them to tell their children to abstain. Even when their own use of alcohol is within guidelines for safe, appropriate use, many adults simply do not know what to say. The result is that many simply say nothing or limit their comments to “Don’t Drink, it’s against the law.” By saying nothing, parents risk that their children will think that they approve of their drinking or that they don’t care. We need to communicate our concern directly, clearly and frequently from preschool through adulthood. At least two messages should come through loud and clear:

- Abstinence, or not using alcohol, is a safe and acceptable lifelong decision that many people are choosing.
- We do not want you to use alcohol before you are legally allowed to do so, and we do not want you to use tobacco and illegal drugs at all.

These messages are clear and direct.

Have a good discussion with this first activity.



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Directions:

Here are some situations where people have made a decision about alcohol, tobacco, other drug use and violence. Does the situation involve risk? What is meant by risk? The D.A.R.E. program defines risk as taking a chance. Each of you place an X on the line showing the amount of risk you think is involved. Then talk about why you put the X where you did.

1. Every day after school Vicky hurries home and smokes a cigarette before her parents arrive home.

Low _____ High
Risk _____ Risk

2. Nick's parents had a high school graduation party for him and served beer to all of Nick's friends at the party.

Low _____ High
Risk _____ Risk

3. When some of Bob's friends started smoking marijuana he did not want to feel left out, but he decided not to be with them when they used marijuana.

Low _____ High
Risk _____ Risk

4. Brian's parents, Lucy and Dave, have a beer after working in the yard on Saturday afternoon.

Low _____ High
Risk _____ Risk

5. Jane, a fifth grader, attends a wedding dance with her parents. Alcohol is available and no one is checking, so Jane decides to sneak a drink.

Low _____ High
Risk _____ Risk

6. Jason graduated from D.A.R.E. last year. His best friend told him that he is going to bring a knife to school to scare another student who has been pushing him around. Jason decides to not tell anyone.

Low _____ High
Risk _____ Risk



Please sign and return this portion of the activity to school before the next D.A.R.E. class. Thank you for your involvement!

D.A.R.E. Student

D.A.R.E. Parent

Comments: _____
