

**LIVING SKILLS**

Personal Growth

# REFUSAL SKILLS

FACILITATOR GUIDE



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**SPEAKING POINTS:** Whenever you see this icon in this guide, it means that the corresponding bolded text is meant to be spoken aloud to participants.



**HANDOUTS:** Whenever you see this icon in this guide, there is a copy of the handout at the end of the session. The number on the icon corresponds to the handout number.





# INTRODUCTION TO THE LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM

## What Is the Living Skills Program?

The Living Skills program is designed to provide basic education and application of key living skills that all people need to live healthy lives. Personal growth skills focus on those internal skills that shape how one responds to the world, such as values and responsibilities, decision making, etc. Practical guidance skills focus on those external skills that help people live fulfilling lives, such as education, money management, etc. For many participants this may be the first time they have ever learned these living skills.

Using best practices in the field, the exercises, discussions, and role plays in the Living Skills program address the underlying emotional, behavioral, and cognitive barriers that might otherwise prevent continued progress toward a healthy and fulfilling life.

## What Are the Components of the Program?

### *Facilitator Guides*

The information and exercises in the facilitator guides introduce topics to learners who may be unfamiliar with basic living skills. The exercises help learners to begin to apply the concepts to their lives. The guides are designed to be used in conjunction with the corresponding workbooks and videos in the Living Skills program. The read-aloud sections, role plays, and other exercises with group discussions found in these guides are designed to be conducted in a group setting, but could be adapted for individual use.

### *Videos*

The videos are meant to complement the facilitator guides and include interviews with subject matter experts, offering practical information to motivate viewers to change their behaviors. By teaching knowledge and demonstrating skills, these videos help learners begin to see how acquiring these skills can change their lives.

### **Workbooks**

The exercises and information found in the workbooks help individual participants revisit what they learned during the facilitated sessions, while also diving deeper to apply the concepts to their own lives. The learners complete the workbook on their own, either in session or as take-home work.

### **What Topics Are Covered in This Program?**

The *Personal Growth* component of Living Skills covers the internal skills needed to be a positive and productive member of a community. Topics include Values and Responsibilities, Interpersonal Skills, Refusal Skills, Making Decisions, Setting and Attaining Goals, and Parenting and Child Development.

The *Practical Guidance* component of Living Skills provides information on the day-to-day external skills needed to live a healthy life. Topics include Hygiene and Self-Care, Sexual Health, Managing Money, Education, Looking for Work, and Securing Housing.

Each topic includes a four-session facilitator guide with reproducible handouts, a workbook, and four videos (one for each session) that provide more in-depth information and show each skill in action.

### **Who Is the Intended Audience?**

The Living Skills program is designed for use with a wide variety of audiences, including but not limited to adults in recovery, correctional settings, or mental health settings. This program provides tools to help participants live healthy, fulfilling lives.

### **How Could These Resources Be Used in a Group Setting?**

For each topic, the facilitator can use the facilitator guide and video for delivery of material with the workbook to be completed at home. The facilitator guide, handouts from the facilitator guide, and participant workbook are downloadable from the online subscription page.

A group setting helps participants become more comfortable with the dynamics of group interaction, while also providing opportunities for peer support.

### **How Could These Resources Be Used in an Individual Setting?**

For each topic, the facilitator can use the facilitator guide and video for one-on-one delivery of material with the workbook to be completed at home. If there is time, the facilitator could talk through the participant's responses in the workbook at the next individual session. Each facilitator guide contains the handouts for that topic, and participant workbooks are downloadable from the online subscription page.



# AN OVERVIEW OF REFUSAL SKILLS

## What Are the Key Topics Covered in Refusal Skills?

The ability to establish strong boundaries and protect them—to say no and mean it—is essential in developing a healthy life. Like any other acquired skill, refusal skills become better with practice. This topic is divided into four sessions:

**SESSION 1** introduces the concept that saying no assertively and respectfully is an essential skill in taking care of oneself and maintaining healthy relationships.

**SESSION 2** focuses on the concept of boundaries and assertiveness in maintaining boundaries.

**SESSION 3** teaches a specific refusal skills process.

**SESSION 4** looks at how refusal skills help people maintain healthy relationships.

## Why Are Refusal Skills So Important?

People may be unwilling or afraid to say no for a myriad of reasons. Some common reasons for this are fear of disapproval, fear of hurting others' feelings or being hurt themselves, fear of being left out or not liked, and believing other people's needs and feelings are more important. When people are unable to say no, they can become resentful and feel they are the victim.

It is much easier to say no if people have skills that allow them to refuse in ways that do not harm relationships. People who are armed with good refusal skills and know they have the right to say no are much more able to set appropriate boundaries and live healthier lives.





## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

SESSIONS	LEARNER OUTCOMES
<b>Session 1.</b> <b>Introduction to Refusal Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe why it is important to learn how to say no.</li><li>• Describe the negative consequences of saying yes when they want to say no.</li><li>• Apply the skill of saying no.</li></ul>
<b>Session 2.</b> <b>Boundaries and Assertiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain the concept of a personal boundary.</li><li>• Describe the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive ways to maintain boundaries.</li><li>• Describe how to say no assertively.</li></ul>
<b>Session 3.</b> <b>Refusal Skills Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the steps in the refusal skills process.</li><li>• Demonstrate how to use the refusal skills process.</li><li>• Apply this process to their lives.</li></ul>
<b>Session 4.</b> <b>After You Say No</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe some basic tips to help when they are being pressured to say yes.</li><li>• Explain how refusal skills build healthy relationships.</li><li>• Apply the refusal skills process and additional tips to situations in their lives.</li></ul>





## SESSION 1.

# Introduction to Refusal Skills

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### Goal

The goal of this session is to introduce the concept that saying no assertively and respectfully is an essential skill in taking care of oneself and maintaining healthy relationships.

### Learner Outcomes

- Describe why it is important to learn how to say no.
- Describe the negative consequences of saying yes when they want to say no.
- Apply the skill of saying no.

### Time Needed

50 minutes

### Materials Needed

- whiteboard or flipchart paper
- dry-erase markers
- Refusal Skills session 1 video segment
- computer monitor or some way to display the video segment
- video clips that demonstrate someone saying no

### Preparation Needed

- Preview the video segment so you are familiar with the information that is covered.
- Find one or two video clips from current movies that demonstrate very good refusal skills or very poor refusal skills. You can find a clip by typing “saying no” into YouTube. Cue up the clip(s) so it is ready to play.

## SESSION OUTLINE

### *Getting Started (7 minutes)*



1. Introduce the session by saying: **We get asked to do things all the time. Sometimes we want to do these things, and sometimes we don't. But even when we want to say no, sometimes we say yes. This may be because we are worried about hurting someone's feelings or worried that someone will get mad at us. Perhaps we don't feel like we have a right to say no, that other peoples' desires, needs, and opinions are more important than ours.**

**Learning how to say no in a firm, respectful way is essential to building a healthy life. It is only when we realize we have the right to our own feelings and wishes—the right to make our own decisions—that we can have the confidence to respectfully, but firmly, say no when we need to. This Refusal Skills program is about learning how to say no in respectful ways that do not harm relationships, but rather, make relationships stronger.**



2. Ask participants to think about a recent situation when they had to say no. Then ask for volunteers to briefly share what the situation was and how they said no. Ask: **Was it easy or difficult to say no?**
3. Explain to participants that they will now watch a short video and you will discuss the video afterward.

### *Playing the Video (6 minutes)*

Make sure everyone can see and hear the Refusal Skills session 1 video segment. Stay in the room while the video segment is being played.

### *Discussing the Video (9 minutes)*

Lead a discussion about the video segment. Ask group members the following questions:



- **Why is it important to learn to say no?**
- **Why is it hard for people to say no when they need to or want to—particularly with people they care about?**
- **What are some ways to say no in a respectful way?**

**NOTE:** *Emphasize that, just like any other skill, they can learn how to refuse respectfully.*

**Going Deeper (20 minutes)**

1. Say: **Think about another time when you wanted to say no but just couldn't bring yourself to do so. What was it that kept you from saying no? What were the consequences of not saying no?**



Ask participants if they are willing to share with the group the situation and the feelings that kept them from honoring their no.

***NOTE:** Assure them that sharing aloud is voluntary and remind them that we have all said yes when we should have said no and experienced negative consequences as a result. You may want to start the discussion by sharing a time when you failed to say no and then experienced negative consequences.*

2. Tell participants that you are going to show them a couple of movie clips that show people saying no in positive ways, and not-so-positive ways.
3. After each video clip, lead a discussion about the clip using the following questions:

- **Was this an example of a positive way to say no?**
- **Why or why not?**
- **If not, what happened because the character did not say no or said no in a negative way?**
- **What could the character have done or said differently?**

**Wrapping It Up (8 minutes)**

1. Explain: **We have all said no at some point in our lives.** Ask participants to share a time when they felt good about saying no.
2. Explain: **Our goal is to help you learn how to use your refusal skills in a healthy way.** Ask each person to think about his or her personal goal for the program. Encourage participants to share the goal aloud if they feel comfortable.



*(Goals might include setting healthy boundaries, saying no to people or things that are not good for you, trusting yourself, not second-guessing your no.)*

**CHALLENGE**

Encourage participants to identify one person they feel safe with and identify one situation in which they know that person will accept their no. Challenge participants to practice saying no respectfully with this person.





## SESSION 2.

# Boundaries and Assertiveness

---

### Goal

To focus on the concept of boundaries and assertiveness in maintaining boundaries.

### Learner Outcomes

- Explain the concept of a personal boundary.
- Describe the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive ways to maintain boundaries.
- Describe how to say no assertively.

### Time Needed

50 minutes

### Materials Needed

- whiteboard or flipchart paper
- dry-erase markers
- Refusal Skills session 2 video segment
- computer monitor or some way to display the video segment
- chart paper
- markers

### Preparation Needed

Preview the video segment so you are familiar with the information that is covered.

## SESSION OUTLINE

### *Getting Started (7 minutes)*



1. Review the basics of refusal skills:
  - **Saying no is essential to being healthy.**
  - **Saying no is essential to having healthy relationships.**
  - **If we say yes when we mean no, it hurts us and others.**
  - **Saying yes means a lot more when saying no is an option.**
  - **You can learn good refusal skills.**



2. Say: **Today we're going to be talking about personal boundaries. Personal boundaries help us define what is and is not okay in how people treat us and what they say to us. Let's explore this idea of personal boundaries a little.**

**When I make each of the following statements, think to yourself if this action is okay or not okay with you. You don't need to say anything aloud.**

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- a. **A person steals some money from you. Is that okay or not okay?**
  - b. **A person asks to borrow some money, and you know he or she will pay you back. Is that okay or not okay?**
- 

- a. **A stranger tries to hug you. Is that okay or not okay?**
  - b. **Your significant other tries to hug you. Is that okay or not okay?**
- 

- a. **You are yelled at by another employee for making a mistake at work. Is that okay or not okay?**
  - b. **Your boss tells you of a mistake you made at work and coaches you on how to do it right the next time. Is that okay or not okay?**
-

- 
- a. **Your significant other decides to accept a job in another state without asking if it is okay with you. Is that okay or not okay?**
  - b. **Your significant other decides what restaurant to take you to for your birthday without asking you, so it will be a surprise. Is that okay or not okay?**
- 
- a. **A friend borrows your car without asking, just to drive around. Is that okay or not okay?**
  - b. **A friend borrows your car without asking, to take her child to the emergency room. Is that okay or not okay?**
- 
3. **Say: All of us have different personal boundaries. What is okay for one person may not be okay for another. Today we're going to talk about personal boundaries, how to keep our own boundaries, and how to respect others' boundaries.**
  4. Tell participants that they will now watch a short video, and you will discuss the video afterward.



***Playing the Video (7 minutes)***

Make sure everyone can see and hear the Refusal Skills session 2 video segment. Stay in the room while the video segment is being played.

***Discussing the Video (13 minutes)***

Lead a discussion about the video segment. Ask group members the following questions:

- **Can you describe what a personal boundary is?**
- **Why are personal boundaries important?**
- **Should your personal boundary be the same as your friend's?**
- **What are some examples of healthy boundaries?**



*(Answers might include owning your own feelings, expecting others to treat you with respect, treating others with respect, knowing you have a right to make decisions about yourself and your body. Emphasize that everyone deserves to have personal boundaries and to protect and value themselves.)*

**Going Deeper (20 minutes)**



1. Write the words *passive*, *aggressive*, and *assertive* on the whiteboard or flip chart. Ask: **What is the difference between being passive, aggressive, and assertive?** Write people's answers on the whiteboard or flip chart and discuss them.

**NOTE:** Here is a possible explanation of each:

**Passive:** When you keep your feelings to yourself and don't say anything, even when you are upset by something somebody did to you. You don't let the other person know what your feelings are and pretend that nothing is wrong. You might even hide your feelings from yourself. You allow your boundaries to be violated.

**Aggressive:** This is when you express your feelings directly but negatively, such as through insults, put-downs, sarcasm, or even violence. It violates other people's boundaries.

**Assertive:** This is when you express your feelings directly, honestly, and respectfully to another person. It lets you stand up for yourself without violating the rights of someone else. You don't violate your boundaries or the boundaries of the other person.

2. Ask participants to split into three small groups. Tell them you will read a scenario and ask the members of one group to write down on a piece of flipchart paper how they would respond if they were passive. Ask the members of a second group to write down how they would respond if they were aggressive. Ask the members of the third group to write down how they would respond if they were assertive.
3. Read the following scenario aloud:



**Rosa has a car. Karen frequently asks Rosa for rides. It's common when they go somewhere together that Karen will ask Rosa to go out of her way so Karen can do an errand. This sometimes causes Rosa to arrive home late, so she is very rushed as she tries to get supper ready for her children or get them ready for bed. Rosa is growing increasingly frustrated by these requests from Karen. In addition, Karen never gives Rosa any money for gas. Rosa finds herself feeling resentful, and then guilty for feeling resentful.**

**Late one afternoon, when Karen had gone to the grocery store with Rosa, Karen asked if Rosa would run by the library, so she could pick up a book. Rosa gritted her teeth, smiled, and said yes. Karen took a long time finding her book. When she got back to the car, she asked Rosa for “one more tiny favor.” Could she please stop by the hardware store? Not only was Rosa exhausted by now, but she knew if she didn’t get home soon, the children would be very cranky because of a late supper.**

4. **Ask: How would Rosa respond to this situation if she was passive, aggressive, or assertive? Write your answers on your paper, depending on which word your group was given.**
5. Allow the groups about five minutes to discuss possible answers. Then have each group share what they wrote. Lead a discussion on why each response was passive, aggressive, or assertive.



Here are some possible answers the groups may come up with:

A passive response may be: Rosa grits her teeth, smiles again, and agrees. Inside she may feel really angry and resentful and never want to do Karen a favor again, but she doesn’t say anything.

An aggressive response may be: Rosa tells Karen she is fed up with her constant begging for favors. She should quit being a freeloader and run her own errands. And she could give her a little money for gas too. She may even yell at her.

An assertive response may be: When Karen first asks her to stop by the library, Rosa tells her that she is sorry, but she will not do that because she is very tired and she needs to get home to start dinner for her children.

6. **Ask: What type of communication do you think you use most often—passive, aggressive, or assertive? What are some things you could do to be more assertive?**



***Wrapping It Up (3 minutes)***

1. Summarize the key points learned about personal boundaries and assertive communication:



- **A personal boundary is knowing and setting limits. It is knowing what your feelings, values, wishes, and needs are and knowing you have a right to them.**
- **Everyone deserves to have personal boundaries and to protect and value themselves.**
- **Your boundaries will be different from those of other people.**
- **Knowing how to say no helps protect your personal boundaries.**
- **There are three ways of responding to other people: being passive, aggressive, or assertive.**
- **The healthy way is to be assertive, which is honest, direct, and respectful.**

**CHALLENGE**

Choose a situation in which you have had trouble setting boundaries in the past. Practice setting boundaries assertively in this situation now.



## SESSION 3.

# Refusal Skills Process

---

### Goal

The goal of this session is to teach a specific refusal skills process.

### Learner Outcomes

- Describe the steps in the refusal skills process.
- Demonstrate how to use the refusal skills process.
- Apply this process to their lives.

### Time Needed

50 minutes

### Materials Needed

- whiteboard or flipchart paper
- dry-erase markers
- Refusal Skills session 3 video segment
- computer monitor or some way to display the video segment
- Refusal Skills Process Role Plays handout, found on page 21 of this guide
- scissors
- Refusal Skills Process handout, found on page 23 of this guide

### Preparation Needed

- Photocopy and cut out the role plays on the Refusal Skills Process Role Plays handout (make enough copies so each pair of participants will have a role play).
- Photocopy the Refusal Skills Process handout (one per participant).
- Preview the video segment so you are familiar with the information that is covered.

## SESSION OUTLINE

### *Getting Started (7 minutes)*



1. Review the concept of personal boundaries and how to maintain them:
  - **A personal boundary is about knowing and setting limits. It is knowing what your feelings, values, wishes, and needs are and knowing you have a right to them.**
  - **Everyone deserves to have personal boundaries and to protect and value themselves.**
  - **Your boundaries will be different from those of other people.**
  - **Knowing how to say no helps protect your personal boundaries.**
  - **There are three ways of responding to other people: being passive, aggressive, or assertive.**
  - **The healthy way is to be assertive, which is honest, direct, and respectful.**
2. Ask participants to think of a time when a person said no to them in a respectful way. Ask them to think about what the person said and how it made them feel. Have people share their examples and the resulting feelings.
3. Tell participants that they will now watch a short video about refusal skills, and that you will discuss the video afterward.

### *Playing the Video (4 minutes)*

Make sure everyone can see and hear the Refusal Skills session 3 video segment. Stay in the room while the video segment is being played.

### *Discussing the Video (16 minutes)*

Lead a discussion about the video segment. Give each participant a copy of the Refusal Skills Process handout. Talk through the handout, using the demonstration in the video as your guide. Use these questions as prompts:



- **What questions should you ask before you say yes to something?**
- **How did the person in the video “name the trouble”?**  
**What did that person say?**
- **Why is it important to think about and talk about the consequences of a choice?**

- **What was the realistic alternative suggested by the person in the video? What are some realistic alternatives you could use?**
- **How did the person in the video say no respectfully?**
- **What do you do if someone will not take no for an answer?**
- **What words might you use to say no respectfully?**

**NOTE:** Examples might include “No thanks,” or “I’m sorry, but I am not interested,” or “If I had endless resources I would, but I cannot afford to give you any more money.”

**Going Deeper (20 minutes)**

1. Ask participants to divide themselves into pairs. Hand them one of the two role-play exercises. Tell them you would like them to act out the role play using the steps in the Refusal Skills Process. They should refer to their handout as they plan out the role play. One person should ask for something from the other person, who then refuses. The requestor should press the request a couple of times.

Here are the role plays:

**Role Play 1:** Angie has been on the cleaning crew for an office building for three weeks. She is still on probation. She is cleaning an executive’s desk and notices an expensive wristwatch that the executive left on the desk. She slips it in her pocket; the executive probably won’t know where she lost it. But the next day Angie hears rumors that the cleaning crew is under suspicion. She panics. She knows she could lose her job and wonders why she did something so stupid. She asks her friend on the crew, Jared, to say he was the one who cleaned the executive’s office and he never saw a watch. Jared has worked there for years. No one is going to question his word.

**Role Play 2:** Bianca’s boyfriend asks her to text him a suggestive photo of herself. Bianca is very uncomfortable with this idea. She loves her boyfriend. She’s afraid that if she says no, he is going to be annoyed with her, but she really does not want to do it. She knows if she texts the photo, he could show it to others.

2. When participants have had time to practice, ask for volunteers to demonstrate their role play for the group.



3. Ask participants to give feedback after each demonstration.  
Ask the following questions:



- **Did the refuser ask questions to be sure he or she knew what the requestor wanted?**
- **Did the refuser name the trouble and say why he or she did not want to do it?**
- **Did the refuser name the consequences?**
- **Did the refuser suggest a realistic alternative?**
- **Was the refusal given in an assertive manner?**
- **What makes you say it was (or was not) assertive?**
- **Did the refuser convey the refusal with body language?**
- **Do you have ideas for anything that might have been done differently?**

#### ***Wrapping It Up (3 minutes)***



1. Ask participants: **Can you think of a situation that will probably come up in the next week in which you will need to say no?** Tell them that the situations can be either easy or challenging. Ask a couple of people to share their situation and how they will handle it.
2. Encourage participants to practice using the refusal skills they learned in today's session during the coming week. Tell them they will understand the skills and feel more comfortable with them as they practice using them. Tell them you will ask them at the next session to talk about their experiences with these skills.
3. Also encourage them to post the Refusal Skills Process handout in a place where they will see it often, such as on their bedroom mirror or refrigerator, or in their purse or wallet.

## **CHALLENGE**

Now that participants have practiced using refusal skills, challenge them to try refusing a person whose response they are unsure of. Advise participants to prepare in advance as to how they will respond if the person continues to push. Caution participants to be sure to choose a safe situation.

## HANDOUT 1: REFUSAL SKILLS PROCESS ROLE PLAYS

### ROLE PLAY 1

Angie has been on the cleaning crew for an office building for three weeks. She is still on probation. She is cleaning an executive's desk and notices an expensive wristwatch that the executive left on the desk. She slips it in her pocket; the executive probably won't know where she lost it. But the next day Angie hears rumors that the cleaning crew is under suspicion. She panics. She knows she could lose her job and wonders why she did something so stupid. She asks her friend on the crew, Jared, to say he was the one who cleaned the executive's office and he never saw a watch. Jared has worked there for years. No one is going to question his word.

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### ROLE PLAY 2

Bianca's boyfriend asks her to text him a suggestive photo of herself. Bianca is very uncomfortable with this idea. She loves her boyfriend. She's afraid that if she says no, he is going to be annoyed with her, but she really does not want to do it. She knows if she texts the photo, he could show it to others.

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## HANDOUT 2: REFUSAL SKILLS PROCESS

Below are some basic steps to take when faced with a situation when you need to say no and the other person continues to pressure you to say yes.

- 1** Ask questions. Be sure you know what someone wants you to do.

---
- 2** Name the trouble. Tell the person that this is something you do not want to do and why.

---
- 3** Name the consequences. Name what could happen if you went against your better judgment.

---
- 4** Suggest realistic alternatives. Suggest something safe and fun to do instead.

---
- 5** Say no firmly and respectfully.

---
- 6** Repeat the refusal if the other person continues to ask you.

---
- 7** Use body language that says no. A serious look on your face, gestures that emphasize your point, the way you sit or stand all reinforce the no you say with your voice.

---
- 8** Build the relationship (if appropriate). Give an answer that tells the other person you want to maintain the relationship and that refusing the request is not rejecting the person. Do this only if it is a person who will not undermine the healthy choices you are making.





## SESSION 4.

# After You Say No

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### Goal

The goal of this session is to look at how refusal skills help people maintain healthy relationships.

### Learner Outcomes

- Describe some basic tips to help when they are being pressured to say yes.
- Explain how refusal skills build healthy relationships.
- Apply the refusal skills process and additional tips to situations in their lives.

### Time Needed

50 minutes

### Materials Needed

- whiteboard or flipchart paper
- dry-erase markers
- Refusal Skills session 4 video segment
- computer monitor or some way to display the video segment

### Preparation Needed

- Preview the video segment so you are familiar with the information that is covered.
- Write the following tips on the whiteboard or flipchart paper before the session:

*Tips for putting no into action are:*

- *Avoid pressure whenever possible.*
- *You may have to repeat yourself.*
- *Think about the words you will use to say no.*
- *Practice the words ahead of time.*
- *Plan alternative strategies.*

## SESSION OUTLINE

### *Getting Started (7 minutes)*



1. Review the Refusal Skills Process:
  - **Ask questions. Be sure you know what someone wants you to do.**
  - **Name the trouble. Tell the person that this is something you do not want to do and why.**
  - **Name the consequences. Name what could happen if you went against your better judgment.**
  - **Suggest realistic alternatives. Suggest something safe and fun to do instead.**
  - **Say no firmly and respectfully.**
  - **Repeat the refusal if the other person continues to ask you.**
  - **Use body language that says no. A serious look on your face, gestures that emphasize your point, the way you sit or stand all reinforce the no you say with your voice.**
  - **Build the relationship (if appropriate). Give an answer that tells the other person you want to maintain the relationship and that refusing the request is not rejecting the person. Do this only if it is a person who will not undermine the healthy choices you are making.**
2. Ask participants to share their experiences with using the Refusal Skills Process since the last session. Ask them to briefly explain the situation, what they said or did, and how it worked out.
3. Tell participants that they will now watch a short video, and you will discuss the video afterward.

### *Playing the Video (5 minutes)*

Make sure everyone can see and hear the Refusal Skills session 4 video segment. Stay in the room while the video segment is being played.

**Discussing the Video (15 minutes)**

Lead a discussion about the video segment. Ask group members the following questions:

- **Is it ever okay to lose a relationship because you say no?**
- **In what way might a relationship improve when you have the courage to say no?**



**NOTE:** *Emphasize that maintaining an unhealthy relationship will keep them from getting healthy. Standing up for what they want may actually help the other person grow along with them.*

**Going Deeper (20 minutes)**

1. Show the tips on the whiteboard or flip chart. Read each tip and discuss its meaning. Give concrete examples of what the tip means. Ask participants to give examples of how they will apply each tip to their lives.

*The tips for putting no into action are:*

- *Avoid pressure whenever possible.*
- *You may have to repeat yourself.*
- *Think about the words you will use to say no.*
- *Practice the words ahead of time.*
- *Plan alternative strategies.*

2. Ask: **How do refusal skills help build healthy relationships?**

*(Possible answers: the other person will know the real you, the relationship will be based on honesty, you will know by the other person's response whether or not he or she is someone you want to get closer to.)*

3. Tell participants that when they feel free to say no, it will mean more to them and to others when they say yes. That's because everyone, including themselves, will know their yes really means yes.



***Wrapping It Up (3 minutes)***

1. Review the Refusal Skills Process that participants learned during the last session.

**NOTE:** *It is listed in this session's introduction.*



2. Ask participants: **Is there one step you are particularly good at?**  
**Is there one step you forget to do or find hard to do?**
3. Have participants identify one thing they can do to improve how they say no.

## **CHALLENGE**

Challenge participants to identify one situation in the past when it was particularly hard to say no. If this is a situation that might come up again, encourage participants to try to think of ways they could approach the person in an assertive way.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Websites

#### **The Cool Spot**

*[thecoolspot.gov](http://thecoolspot.gov)*

This government online resource has an introduction to refusal skills, including sections on resisting spoken pressure, knowing your no's, picking your no's, and resisting unspoken pressure. It is designed for teens but could be helpful for particular populations of adults.

#### **Building Your Drink Refusal Skills Module**

*<http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/toolsresources/drinkrefusalskills.asp>*

This module on the Rethinking Drinking website provides guidance on how to develop refusal skills around the use of alcohol.

### **Resources Available through Hazelden Publishing (800-328-9000, [hazelden.org/bookstore](http://hazelden.org/bookstore))**

#### *The Complete Art of Assertiveness Program Collection*

Sheila Hermes, M.Ed., L.A.C. (Order No. 1167)

This program, which includes a facilitator's guide, participant workbooks, assertiveness cards, and DVD, helps clients learn a positive formula for effective communication. The program covers the four basic communication styles with an emphasis on assertiveness.

***Boundaries: Where You End and I Begin***

Anne Katherine, M.A. (Order No. 7803, E-book Order No. EB7803)

Boundaries bring order to our lives, strengthen our relationships with others and ourselves, and are essential to our mental and physical health. For those of us who have walked away from a conversation, meeting, or visit feeling violated and not understanding why, this book helps us recognize and set healthy boundaries.

***Setting Boundaries***

Veronica Ray (Order No. 5101)

This booklet is part of Hazelden’s inspirational series for Twelve Step living and contains thirty topical affirmations to guide readers as they work to improve relationships.



# LIVING SKILLS: GROUP FACILITATOR SESSION RECORD

## Refusal Skills Sessions

## Date

**SESSION 1.** Introduction to Refusal Skills

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**SESSION 2.** Boundaries and Assertiveness

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**SESSION 3.** Refusal Skills Process

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**SESSION 4.** After You Say No

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