



Frenchtown Community Coalition

Working to create a healthy, engaged, and unified community for the youth of Frenchtown

REFUSAL SKILLS

What do you do if someone offers you a drink, a vape, or a pill? What if someone asks you something that makes you uncomfortable? Here are four steps to help you handle the situation in a way that keeps you safe and in control.

STEP 1
REFUSE Start with a clear and confident “No.” Say it in a way that shows you mean it.

STEP 2
EXPLAIN Explain why you’re saying no. Be honest or make up a reason. Stay calm and respectful.

STEP 3
AVOID Try to avoid situations where you know drugs & alcohol might be around. Skip the party or stay in public spaces where you feel safer.

STEP 4
LEAVE If people are pressuring you to do something you don’t want to do, or alcohol & drugs appear, leave.

If you didn’t drive, or if you drove but don’t feel safe getting behind the wheel, it’s important to have a backup plan. That’s where a CODEWORD comes in. Scan to learn more:



Does Your Teen Have a CODEWORD?

What is a CODEWORD?

A CODEWORD is a private signal between a teen and their parent(s)/guardian(s) that means they are in an uncomfortable situation and need to leave - no questions asked right now.

Your CODEWORD can be a single word, a phrase, or even an emoji. Something simple like:

- "Caterpillar"
- "Banana bread"
- "Green backpack"

Why it works:

Teens are more likely to ask for help if they know they won’t get in trouble or be forced to explain everything right away. A CODEWORD gives them a safe exit and reassures them that you're always on their side.

What you can do today:

- Sit down with your teen(s) and create a CODEWORD. Be creative and use a word/phrase/emoji that you wouldn’t normally use. If your CODEWORD is “banana bread,” your teen could text, “I need to make **banana bread** tomorrow.” That’s your cue to pick them up immediately. Your response might be, “Got it. I’ll pick up the ingredients. Leaving now.”
- Let them know it can be used anytime, without judgment.
- Use this as an opportunity to talk about alcohol, drugs, and safety. Let them know that even if they’ve made a risky choice, you still want them to get home safely and encourage them to use their CODEWORD.
- Most importantly: follow through. If they use the CODEWORD, pick them up, no questions asked in that moment. One word could be the bridge between a risky situation and safety.

Start the conversation today and make this school year the best one yet! Welcome back, Frenchtown!



If you have questions or would like to join the Frenchtown Community Coalition Please contact FTCC@ftsd.org or call 626-2772

