



# IDEAS for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

## 35. RESISTANCE SKILLS

Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.



### What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

**Resistance skills** is one of five social-competencies assets.

41% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.\*

\*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.



skills out of the theoretical and ground it firmly in reality.

In order to guide students toward resisting peer pressure, we need to understand the underlying reasons why students make bad choices. We need to understand the insecurity, isolation, and instability that most students feel at one time or another. We also need to understand what students need to help them avoid dangerous situations.

It's important to give students a support network: often they are reaching out to someone even when they make a decision that is ultimately harmful. Most often what helps students are candid, honest discussions with adults who are willing to share experiences where a tough decision was made. Also, students need to be leading a healthy lifestyle in other ways: enough sleep, proper nutrition, and exercise. When they feel like they are worth something, they are less likely to risk anything that will seriously interrupt their lifestyle.

- Address the causes behind making the “wrong decision.”
- Consider the role of stability and support in resistance.
- Try not to oversimplify or underestimate the gravity of a child's resistance.

### Making Resistance Real

Resistance can't be reduced to the simple phrase “just say no,” or brushed off as something that should be “easy.” And even adults consistently cave to negative peer pressure and make dangerous decisions, so it's not just a matter of growing up. Instead we need to take the idea of resistance

### Peer Pressure: It's Not Just for Kids

Peer pressure isn't always a bad thing. Our peers can pressure us to perform better or to look after

ourselves in a healthier way. But as with our students, we can also experience pressure from peers that might not be healthy or productive. That's where your own resistance skills will be put to the test.

Reflect on these questions:

- When colleagues are complaining, are you able to listen without joining in, or are you able to offer positive suggestions to the problems?
- When the tone or tenor of a given setting is negative, are you able to remain positive and hopeful?
- When a situation seems harmful emotionally or professionally, are you able to remove yourself?

If you find yourself succumbing to peer influence that is ultimately unhelpful or unhealthy, then it's important for you to resist. As adults, however, it might not be enough just to resist or insulate yourself from others. Instead, if there are negative aspects to peer relationships and behavior, we should commit to trying to positively influence our peers. Simply put: It's not enough to simply avoid the negative. We must increase the positive.

