

Resistance and Refusal Training

Specific resistance and refusal skills help at-risk students resist negative social influences (Herrmann & J.J. McWhirter, 1997). Resistance training focuses on helping young people:

- a. identify and label social influences and pressure situations.
- b. develop behavioral skills to resist such influence.

Skills are needed to resist various types of pressures, from those exerted by the entertainment media and advertising to those of peers. Students are taught to identify and label various forms of pressure. Peer pressure, for instance, can take the form of teasing, friendly pressure, tricks, dares, lies, physical threats, social threats, or silence. Typical examples of each kind of pressure are demonstrated.

Students are taught strategies for resisting pressure and for refusing to succumb to it. Particular techniques are described, demonstrated, and modeled. Students practice and observe others practicing each resistance or refusal strategy. They engage in role-playing to develop competence in each technique. All should be given opportunities to rehearse and refine their performances so that in real-life situations they are able to respond with confidence.

