Skill 4

REFUSING DRUGS OFFERED BY A FRIEND OR RELATIVE

OVERVIEW

In many ways, saying no to a friend or relative is very different from saying no to a dealer. One difference is that the patient may need to maintain the relationship even though there is some risk that the friend or relative will offer drugs again. This is especially true of people with schizophrenia who may be unable to work and must depend on others for basic needs. That's why the steps in this skill are designed to accomplish three things: (1) successfully refuse drugs, (2) maintain any healthy aspects of the relationship, and (3) get the friend or relative not to offer drugs in the future. However, if the friend or relative responds in a way that suggests he'll continue to offer drugs, then the skill allows the patient to leave the situation without using drugs.

SAMPLE THERAPIST SCRIPT

Introduce the goal (flip chart 63).

"It's good to see you all here today! Welcome to skills training. In the next few classes, you'll learn and practice how to refuse drugs offered by a friend or relative. The steps for refusing drugs from someone you know well are different steps than those for refusing drugs from a dealer. Let's take a look!"

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SESSION SUMMARY*

1. Introduce the goal (flip chart 63).
2. Make sure patients can repeat the goal.
3. Review the term "high-risk situation."
4. Develop the skill steps.
5. View the video illustration.
6. Choose a person to role-play.
7. Describe the role-play and demonstrate the steps (flip chart 64).
8. Conduct the role-play (set up, conduct, review, positive feedback, corrective feedback, repeat).
9. Challenge participants.

**Usually requires 2–4 sessions (see p. 73).*

Make sure patients can repeat the goal.

"What is the goal of today's class?"

To learn and practice how to refuse drugs from a friend or relative.

"What is the main goal of the module?"

To say no to drugs and yes to healthy pleasures.

Review the term "high-risk situation."

"We've been learning how to handle high-risk situations. What is a **high-risk situation?** *(Pause for responses.)* That's right, a high-risk situation is any situation that makes it really hard not to use drugs. You've learned how to escape from a pushy dealer. Now, let's consider some other types of high-risk situations. Can you give me a couple of examples? *(Pause for responses.)* Those are good examples. Another example of a high-risk situation is when you're approached by a relative or a friend who offers you drugs. This is a particularly difficult situation because you may be concerned that he or she will be offended if you decline the offer. Has anyone ever been in a situation like this? *(Pause for responses; encourage group members to briefly describe the circumstances and the emotions they were feeling at the time.)* You can see from these examples that these are difficult situations to get out of. But, would you agree with me that a true friend or a relative, one who really cares about you, will understand when you say that you don't want to use drugs anymore? *(Pause for responses.)* People who really care about you don't try to force you to do things

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against your will. Drug-refusal skills will help you escape if you find yourself in this type of high-risk situation. So, today, we're going to learn some more drug-refusal techniques. You have already learned how to get away from a pushy drug dealer. Now, we'll concentrate on how to decline drugs when they are offered by a friend or family member."

Develop the skill steps.

"Let's think about techniques we can use to escape from a high-risk situation in which a friend or relative offers you drugs. *(Ask co-trainer to write suggestions on the board as you elicit them from group members.)* Let's think about what it would take to refuse a drug offer without offending a person who cares about you. What are some things to do?" *(Shape responses into the following list.)*

Techniques for Refusing a Drug Offer from a Friend or Relative

1. Be direct. Make eye contact and use a firm, sincere voice tone. Tell the person that you're not interested.
2. Use the broken record technique. Repeat yourself if necessary.
3. Level with the person. Tell him or her that drugs were causing you problems and it's better for you to leave drugs alone.
4. Suggest an alternative. Request to do something other than use drugs.
5. Express your feelings directly. Tell the other person how you feel about being pressured.
6. Leave the situation. Tell the person that you are serious about sobriety.

View the video illustration.

Introduce the video. Be sure that the videotape is wound to the beginning of the scene before starting the session. Briefly describe the video scene, emphasizing the steps involved in refusing drugs from friends or family members.

"The techniques for refusing drugs from a friend or family member are different from the techniques used to refuse drugs from a dealer. In the video scene that I'm about to show you, you'll see Raymond decline an offer to share a joint with his friend Donnie. Raymond and Donnie have been good friends since high school. They also served together in the Army. They enjoy getting together when they have some free time. Raymond is fighting an addiction to marijuana and crack. Donnie uses marijuana from time to time but does not consider himself to have a drug problem. He invites Raymond out on the patio to smoke a cigarette but when he opens the pack, he pulls out a joint and proceeds to light it. Watch how Raymond handles the situation. See if he does all of the things that you suggested for refusing drugs from a friend."

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Critique the model's performance. "Well, what do you think? How did Raymond do? *(Encourage discussion of the model's performance.)* Did he follow all of the steps? *(Focus comments on specific behaviors enumerated in the steps related to refusing drugs from a friend or family member.)* Did he leave anything out?"

Elicit suggestions for improvement. "Can you think of anything that he might do to make his way of handling this situation more effective? What could he do differently?" *(Guide participants' remarks to contrast behaviors exhibited by the model with the requisite steps for refusing drugs from a friend or family member. Politely interrupt digressions from the criterion behaviors.)*

Choose a person to role-play. Select a group member who you believe will be successful in the role-play. Encourage cooperation by modeling the role-play scenario with the co-trainer. If a co-trainer is not available, select a person who will effectively demonstrate the skills.

Describe the role-play and demonstrate the steps (flip chart 64).

"In this role-play, you will play yourself and *(co-trainer or group member)* will play the role of a friend or relative who offers you drugs. Use the steps on the board to get out of this high-risk situation. Practicing these techniques will help you to stay in control without offending your friend or relative.

"Let's review the techniques so that you don't leave any of them out." *(Point to items listed on flip chart 64. Provide the rationale for each item.)*

1. Use direct refusal. Remember to look the person right in the eye. Politely but firmly say, "No thank you. I don't care to use drugs anymore." This shows that you mean business.
2. Use the broken record technique. Repeat yourself more firmly by saying in a louder, firmer voice. "No thank you! I really don't want any." This makes it harder for the person to insist that you take some. Most people probably won't go beyond this point with you.
3. Level with the person. Tell him that using drugs caused serious problems in your life. Let them know that staying sober is a struggle for you and that your struggle is made harder when people you care about offer you drugs.
4. Suggest an alternative. Ask the person to do something else with you instead of using drugs. This shows that you want to be with the other person, but you don't want to do drugs. It also shifts the topic away from drugs.
5. Express your feelings directly. Tell the person how you feel—angry, frustrated, pressured—about being pushed to do something you don't care to do. This is the

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most difficult step, but it almost always gets results. Expressing your feelings directly makes it hard for the other person to continue pushing drugs on you.

6. Leave the high-risk situation immediately. If you are still being pressured after attempting to use the previous steps, leave by saying politely, "I can see that you won't take no for an answer, so I'd better be on my way." This shows that you're determined to stay clean.

Conduct the role-play.

The following is a sample role-play. The group member's responses are in italic. Use it as a guideline to conduct a role-play with each group member. Instruct group members to read the steps listed on the board as they engage in the role-play if they have difficulty remembering what to say.

Set up the role-play. "Imagine a situation in which a friend or relative offers you drugs. It's best to think of a situation that is quite likely to happen in the future or one that has happened in the past. Now, who would be involved? Are you likely to be with others or alone with your friend? *(Remember, group members are often reluctant to mention specific names for fear of causing problems for others. Suggest that the group member make up a name to use in place of the person's actual name if need be.)* Where might such an encounter take place in your case? *(Elicit a specific site.)* What emotions might you be feeling as your friend or relative offers you drugs? *(Pause for response.)* Is there anything else I should know about the situation to make it as realistic as possible?"

"What is *(co-trainer's)* role in this situation?"

To play the role of a friend or relative who wants me to use drugs.

"What is your role in this situation?"

To be myself.

"What is your task in this situation?"

To use the steps on the board to refuse drugs.

"Okay, let's see how it might go."

Sample Role-Play Dialogue

"Hi _____. It's good to see you today. Look what I have.

Yeah, what is it?

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"I ran into Joe and he sold me some great crack. Let's try it."

Oh, that's risky for me. No thanks.

"Ah, come on. I've never known you to refuse crack."

No, thanks. I don't use anymore.

"Come on, man. I've got plenty."

Look, I said that I don't use anymore. Drugs were causing serious problems in my life. It's really hard for me to stay sober. Please don't make it impossible for me.

"What are you talking about? Come on, let's get high. You can't tell me that you don't want any of this."

I mean what I said. I don't use anymore. I want to stay clean. I'd rather do something else. How about if we go to a movie or go to shoot some pool?

"You want to go out when we can stay here and have a great time? Come on, let's get high!"

That's right, I would. Please stop pressuring me. I'm starting to get angry because you're trying to get me to do something that I don't want to do.

"Hey, I don't mean to pressure you. If you don't want to use that just means more for me. We can play some pool after I smoke this crack."

Nope. Like I said, I don't use anymore. I've got something else I would rather do. I don't have any intentions of using with you ever again. I'm leaving.

Review the role-play: Elicit positive feedback from group members. Provide positive feedback with respect to specific behaviors that were effective. Elicit positive comments from group members by asking them to comment on specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors that increased the effectiveness of the performance. Politely interrupt or reframe negative comments. Follow these steps when reviewing the role-play:

1. First, ask the role-player what he or she thought was most effective about the performance. Embellish the group member's responses, emphasizing the criterion behaviors listed on the board.
2. Elicit positive feedback from group members. Guide the process by eliciting remarks about specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors that enhanced the performance.
3. Ask the other player to give specific feedback to the role-player.
4. Summarize effective behaviors and reinforce the role-player with group applause.

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Provide corrective feedback and repeat the role-play. Make constructive suggestions that will enhance the role-player's performance. Model skills (specific behaviors), annotating each suggestion as it is demonstrated. Repeat the role-play, giving constructive feedback as described above. Practice the role-play as many times as necessary to achieve an effective response. Practice with each group member until all have mastered this drug-refusal technique.

Challenge participants.

When participants have demonstrated an acceptable level of mastery, challenge them further by throwing them a curve. That is, repeat the role-play scenario with each participant, but this time introduce an obstacle that requires extending the responses described above. Having participants respond to a range of situations revolving around encounters with friends or family members who offer them drugs will help promote generalization of the skills learned and increase self-efficacy.

Challenges can be made more realistic by asking participants for suggestions about circumstances that are likely to overwhelm drug-refusal skills. Remember, learning is optimized by creating realistic, meaningful scenarios and finding ways to personalize them for each group member.

Suggest challenge scenarios if participants are unable to pinpoint useful examples. Try repeating the role-play above with a slight modification. For example, have the person playing the role of the friend or family member suggest that the group member use alcohol as an alternative to cocaine. Alternatively, set up a situation that would be particularly difficult to leave. For example, the transaction could take place in an automobile. Or, have the friend or family member ask if it is all right to use with the understanding that the participant doesn't want any.

Elicit challenge scenarios. "You all seem to be getting comfortable handling friends and family members who offer drugs. Now I want to challenge you by making things a little more difficult. What do you think would make it hard for you to stick to the techniques that you've learned for refusing drugs from a friend or family member?"

1. List suggestions on the board.
2. Ask what it is about each situation mentioned that makes it difficult for participants.
3. Identify a situation that the majority agree is likely to occur.
4. Determine whether the skill steps outlined above apply as they are or whether some modification is required.

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5. Choose a person to role-play. Select a group member who you believe will be successful.
6. Conduct the role-play.
7. Review the role-play and elicit feedback from group members.
8. Provide corrective feedback.

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