



Refusing Offers to Drink or Use Drugs

My Progress

- What steps have you taken toward your goal(s) this week?
- How were you able to achieve the steps?
- If not, what got in your way? How will you overcome that barrier?

Let's Discuss

- Over the last week, what situations were you in where you were offered alcohol or drugs?
- Did you use in those situations? What motivated you to accept or refuse?
- If you did use, what made it challenging for you to refuse?
- If you refused alcohol or drugs, how did you do it? What did you say?
- What was the outcome of the situation? Would you have done anything differently?
- How do alcohol or drugs impact your problems or symptoms?



Dominick's Story

"I grew up believing that the needs of people around me were more important than my own, and so I have always had a tough time saying "no" to people, even when saying "yes" wasn't good for me. But once I got more serious about cutting down on my drug use, it became really important for me to practice refusing drugs from people who didn't take mine or their recovery seriously. The more I practiced saying "no," the more confident I felt, and my relationships improved because I was able to see who was willing to respect my new healthier boundaries and keep those people in my life."

— Dominick, a person in recovery from major depressive disorder and opiate use disorder

Good to Know

- Although it can be helpful to spend more time with people who do not use substances when you decide to stop using, **it's not always possible to avoid people who drink or use drugs**. So one option is being able to confidently turn down drugs and alcohol.
- It can be hard to say "no" when people offer us drugs or alcohol, often because we don't have the words, **we feel social pressure**, or we may have some mixed feelings about cutting down our use. Practicing saying, "no," however, can be helpful in **preparing us for actual social situations**.
- Saying "no" is an example of **boundary setting** which is important for getting our needs met and improving our well-being.

My Experiences

Dominick benefitted from first exploring the pros and cons of refusing offers for alcohol and drugs. This helped him to have a written reminder of his motivations for practicing saying "no" and ultimately doing it in real situations.



Short Meeting
Guide Video
Tutorial

Use the table below to list the pros and cons of refusing alcohol and drugs for you.

PROS OF REFUSING	CONS OF REFUSING
It increases my recovery goal.	It's hard to do and takes energy.
It increases my self-respect.	People will judge me.

Let's Practice Refusing Offers to Drink or Use Drugs

One of the ways you can become more comfortable saying "no" is to practice. Practice saying "no" can make you feel more confident and help you to be more effective. Use the steps below to develop your skills:

1. Review the steps of refusing alcohol and drugs.

With a stranger/dealer:

- Decline in a firm voice.
- Avoid making excuses for saying no.
- Repeat the refusal if needed.
- Leave the situation as soon as possible.

With friends/family:

- Decline in a firm voice.
- Tell them about the importance of your sobriety and ask them to respect it.
- Suggest an alternative activity.
- If they keep insisting, explain that you find the situation stressful and that you need to leave.

2. Watch your practitioner demonstrate the steps of the skill.

3. Discuss how it went with your practitioner. Did they follow the steps? How effective do you think they were?

4. Now try the skill out for yourself with your practitioner.

5. Discuss with your practitioner how the practice felt to you, what you did well, and how you might do it differently in the future.

6. Continue to practice and discuss with your practitioner.

7. Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill further on your own.

Next Steps

- What did you find helpful about our meeting today?
- What would you like to do for your next step toward your goal(s)?
- Practice refusing alcohol or drugs
- I'd like to do something else _____.