

Drug and Alcohol Prevention

Lesson Title: Warning Signs

Grade Level: 3-5



Essential Question:

Why is it important to warn people of the dangers of tobacco?

Materials:

- Copies of Warning Sign Worksheet
- Space for movement

Procedure:

Introduction:

1. Explain that you are going to make a statement and students will agree or disagree with the statement without saying a word. Designate one side of the room as "Agree," and the other side of the room as "Disagree." The space between the two sides of the room can be "sort of" spaces, depending on how strongly they feel about the statement.
2. After students move to the side of the room that best describe their sentiments, individuals will be asked to discuss their reasons for choosing a side. Extra information about each statement is provided to enhance the discussion. Students should be allowed to change sides after each discussion.
3. Explain that the information behind these statements comes from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and the American Lung Association and the statements have been designed to make you think about using tobacco products in any form: cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, hookahs, and smokeless (chewing) tobacco.
4. After the exercise, gather class back together and ask students if any of this information feels like a warning to stay away from tobacco. Why or why not?

Statements to Read Aloud:

- **Licking the tar off the road is one of the tastiest treats in the world!**
(Tar is one of the chemicals found in cigarettes, the same tar that is used to pave roads.)
- **You should never put ammonia in your body.**
(Ammonia is a household cleaner; it is found in tobacco products.)
- **Breathing feels good.**
(Smokers and tobacco chewers suffer from restricted breathing even when not exercising.)
- **I hope that someday people will know me as the person with bad breath, rotten teeth, and gum disease.**
(All of these are effects of smoking and/or chewing tobacco.)
- **The only reason you would ever need methanol is to go to the moon because it is rocket fuel.**
(Methanol is a chemical found in tobacco products.)
- **If you want to smell a good perfume, you should inhale the exhaust from a car or a bus.**
(Car fumes include carbon monoxide, another chemical found in tobacco.)
- **When you're thirsty, the most refreshing drink is a tall glass of formaldehyde.**
(Formaldehyde is used to embalm dead people—and in cigarettes.)
- **People should avoid rat poison.**
(Rat poison has arsenic in it; arsenic is found in tobacco products.)

Direct Instruction (I do)

1. Explain that there are warning labels on the sides of every package of cigarettes. The labels warn that smoking can cause cancer and other diseases and can be harmful to your health.
2. Show the sample warning label on the top of the worksheet and analyze what the words mean and why the label is there.
3. The good news is that fewer Americans now smoke. Many states do not allow people to smoke inside at work and in public places like restaurants. (NOTE: Teachers can research what has been enacted in their states to add to the discussion.)
4. Ask students why it is so important to warn people of the dangers of cigarette smoking.

Guided Exploration (We do)

1. Talk about the warning and warning signs you experience as an adult every day. (Driver warning signs, no lifeguard signs at pools, danger, food warning signs for things like peanuts, no trespassing signs, etc.)
2. Discuss other types of warnings, such as listening to your body, listening to your friends' advice, listening to the rules.
3. Ask students about the many warnings children hear from grown-ups.
4. Ask, what are some warnings your teacher, your parents, or caregivers give you? (No running in the hall, no dessert before dinner, no computer time until homework is done.)
5. Ask students about the warning signs they see in their communities. Why are those warning signs there? Ask students if they pay attention to those warnings. Why or why not?

Independent Practice (You do)

1. Explain that there is a top official in our government called the U.S. Surgeon General, who makes sure the warnings are placed on tobacco products. On December 15, 2014, Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy was confirmed as the 19th United States Surgeon General. Some people call him “America’s Doctor.”
2. Let’s pretend that you have been appointed “America’s Doctor.” Your first assignment is to create a warning label to help American children lead a healthy life. Use the following worksheet to draw/write a warning that kids will pay attention to.

Conclusion and Additional Discussion Questions

Have students share their warning labels and post them in the classroom or around the school. Further explore the topic with these additional discussion questions:

- Experts agree that smoking tobacco is very bad for our health. If people know this, why do some people still do it? Why do kids try it?
- Everybody knows somebody who DOES NOT smoke—maybe it’s you! What are some of the reasons kids have for not smoking? What are some reasons teens have for not smoking? What are some reasons adults have for not smoking?
- Which are better: reasons to smoke or NOT to smoke? Why?

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Lesson Title: Stand by Me (Social Problem Solving)

My Warning:

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, and May Complicate Pregnancy.