How to Empower Teens and Young Adults with Refusal Skills.

Young people are pretty good at coming up with excuses, but even the best excuse-maker needs help sometimes. When the pressure is on, they may need to have prepared come-backs. You can help them prepare.

(Give a reason)

— Can’t do that. Addiction runs in my family.

(Make an excuse)

— My dad would take my phone away if he found out I did that.

(Leave the situation. Text a code to a family member or friend to call for an emergency.)

— Sorry, I have to go.

(Make a joke)

— No thank you. I need all the brain cells that I can get.

(Offer an alternative that shows you value the person)

— Maybe we can just head to the movies instead.

(Just say no, plainly and firmly; repeat if necessary)

— No thank you, I’d prefer not to.

What else could you suggest?

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