

Too Far Too Fast TEACHER'S GUIDE

What teachers need to know:

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), accidental injury is the leading cause of death among kids. Often, these injuries are caused by risky behavior—not only due to sports, falls and burns, but also drinking, smoking and having unprotected sex. Teenagers in particular tend to make risky decisions because they want to impress their friends, because they are impulsive or thrill-seekers by nature, and because they do not have the maturity to think through to the consequences. Consider the following statistics:

- 25% of all middle school students have been medically treated for accidental injuries; 75 percent of the injuries are NOT due to sports
- The leading causes of fatal injuries are: car and motorcycle accidents, fires and burns, drowning, falls, and poisoning.

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Brainstorm and discuss risky situations and decision-making options
- Work with partners to create a risky situation/solutions skit; present skits to the class

Materials:

- Paper, pens/pencils; black/white board or overhead projector
- Appropriate props for skits

Project and Purpose:

Students will prepare skits based on the question, "What would I do in a risky situation?"

1. Begin a class discussion by asking students to define "risk," and why people take risks, and how risks present themselves.
2. Write two columns on the board; label one "Healthy Risks" and the other "Unhealthy Risks." Have students provide risks of both kinds that people their age might take or be presented with. Briefly discuss each. Some unhealthy risks include: cheating, lying, smoking, getting a tattoo, speeding; healthy risks might include: trying out for a school play or a sports team; trying a new skateboard move, taking a new kind of class such as dance or voice lessons, getting a job, etc.
3. Break students into groups of four and explain that each group will create a short skit based on one of the risks from the list.
4. The skit must be a realistic situation and everyone in the group must be involved in the role-play. Not all characters must speak, but all must be part of the situation.
5. Give the groups 15 minutes to work on their role-play. Ask students to switch roles within the group to see if somebody comes up with a different idea they can use. At the end of the 15 minutes, give the groups two minutes to "polish" their skit for class presentation.
6. After each group performs its piece, ask the class, *Was this scene realistic? Did the person taking the risk have a choice? Was the person pressured into taking the risk? What were some other possible outcomes?* .

Class Discussion Questions:

1. After watching the video and the skits, has your definition of risky behavior changed? If so, in what way?
2. How are making decisions and peer pressure related? Can you think of situations in which peer pressure can influence someone to make a bad decision? How about a good decision?
3. What are some important things to remember when considering the advice of other people? How can you maintain your independence while still listening to the advice of those who are older and wiser?

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. Can you think of any situations where your decisions could affect the lives of others? Does that thought change your decision-making process? If so, how?
2. Who do you ask for advice when you have a serious decision to make? What qualities does that person have that make you go to him or her? Do you see those qualities in yourself?

3. In what situations is a person more likely to make a bad decision? What does that say about the places you choose to go and the people with whom you hang out?

Evaluation:

- Can the students explain the difference between a healthy risk and a dangerous risk?
- Can students come up with a variety of choices in risky situations?
- Did students participate in the class discussions and the role-playing?