

Lessons From D.A.R.E

By: Patton



Did you know that 400,000 people die each year from tobacco related reasons? This is just one fact I learned from Officer Markley in D.A.R.E. Class. D.A.R.E is a program that teaches students how to handle situations with drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.

Because of alcohol and tobacco related deaths, D.A.R.E officers like Officer Markley teach us how to handle situations where we will need to make tough decisions so that we can be prepared to say no.

One important lesson I learned from Officer Markley is that it is better to not follow the crowd than to do something bad like take drugs. I learned how to define the problem that I'm in, assess what my choices are for handling problems like being asked to drink alcohol or take drugs, respond with a good choice, and finally to evaluate my choice to make sure I made a good one. Learning this process now helps me think about good choices in other things besides drugs. I should think before I act.

Another important lesson I learned were the resistance strategies. Avoiding the situation strategy taught me that if I avoid places where drugs are used, then I will be drug free. The second strategy is having a group of friends around you that don't drink or smoke. This taught me the importance of making good friend choices. Another good strategy is walking away. This taught me that I can just say no and walk away. Saying no while giving an excuse is also a good strategy to use so I can resist negative influences and refuse drugs. The last resistance strategy is to change the subject. If someone asked me to use drugs I could say no and then change the subject and avoid using drugs and alcohol.

I also learned valuable lessons about the signs of stress so I can learn how to control it and not turn to drugs and alcohol for comfort. When I'm stressed, I get a headache, sweaty palms, and I start to blush. I start acting grumpy and get mad sometimes. Officer Markley taught me that there are ways to cope with stress to help me feel better. One thing I learned I could do is put my head on my desk, take deep breaths, and count to five. I also go away from everybody and calm down.

D.A.R.E. taught me a lot of valuable lessons that I can use in my

everyday life. I will never forget the harmful effects that drug and alcohol use can do to me. The strategies and lessons I learned for avoiding harmful situations will continue to help me make good choices. D.A.R.E was an awesome learning experience, and I am so glad that I got a chance to learn about drug awareness.