

**Unit 2, Session 5****Negative to Positive**

Rationale	Generally, thinking positively about oneself and one's life while making decisions is an element of a positive identity, making decisions, social competencies, and assets in participant's development. Participants who can think positively or turn a negative into a positive are more likely to engage in positive, constructive behaviors and avoid negative, destructive behaviors.
Target Audience	Out-of-school participants who have completed at least a secondary education.
Facilitator Expertise	Construction Industry Class leaders and local counterparts who have been trained in how to use and adapt the Life Skills and Leadership Manual
Time	120 minutes
Pre-requisites	Unit 2, Session 4
Version	Nov – 2014

**Materials:**

<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ball or other object suitable for tossing</li> <li>• Paper, markers, or crayons</li> <li>• Blank flip chart paper</li> </ul>
<b>Prepared flip charts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip chart 1: Get Creative (from Session 4) Flip chart 2: Consider ...</li> </ul>
<b>Handouts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout 1: Ways to Say No</li> </ul>
<b>Trainer materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainer Material 1: Abandoned Cars</li> </ul>

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Working in teams, participants will demonstrate at least one strategy to access resources, investigate, research, or learn more about a personal or community priority.
2. Working in groups of four to five and using participants-generated scenarios, participants will identify at least one strategy for turning a problem into an opportunity.
3. By examining common participants-oriented situations, participants will demonstrate at least two methods of negotiation skills, including “how to say no” and resisting peer pressure.

**Instructional Sequence****Motivation (15 minutes)**

Materials: (None)

**Pass the Quack**

Participants practice the creativity technique of spontaneity.

Ask participants to stand or sit in a circle. If the group is larger than 20, divide into two smaller groups and run parallel activities.

Say:

**“Last time we talked about using PAUSE to make decisions. You’ll remember that in two of the steps, Ask and Understand, it was really important to think creatively in order to come up with lots of options and to think about their possible consequences. This activity is intended to help you be more creative as we continue with the remainder of the lesson.**

**“We are going to use the language of animals to communicate across the circle. One person will make the sound of an animal and (point, nod, smile, or other culturally appropriate indication) to someone across the circle. That second person will answer with the same animal sound, then indicate a different person across the circle and talk to that person with a different animal sound. The game continues with each indicated person answering with one sound and making a different sound to someone else. I’ll begin ...”**

Indicate someone across the circle and send them an animal sound. Play the game for about five minutes so everyone has at least one chance to catch and pass an animal sound, then get some reactions from the group.

Say:

**“Let’s think about how creative we are as individuals and as a group.”**

Choose from among the following questions, as appropriate:

**To what extent have you been planning the sound you will make? (Encourage participants to “think quickly” or “not think too much.”)**

**To what extent are you worried about whether your sound is “good enough?” (There is no right or wrong way to make a particular animal sound. It does not even need to be the sound of a real animal.)**

**To what extent are you concerned about looking silly or foolish? (No one cares and no one will remember who made which sounds. Sometimes a silly sound is more fun. Sometimes being more realistic is more desired.)**

**To what degree are you influenced by the sounds other people have made?**

Play the game again with the following coaching tips: Make any animal sound that comes to mind.

**You don’t have to make the sound of a real animal.**

**Don’t evaluate yourself or decide whether your sound will be good enough.**

**Try not to think or plan ahead.**

**Take your turn as quickly as possible. Make sure everyone is included.**

After playing for a few more minutes, ask some of the following discussion questions, as appropriate:

**How did this time playing the game compare to the first time? To what degree did you think about your sound ahead of time?**

**How much did you evaluate or judge whether your sound would be good enough?**

**What did you do to be more creative?**

**Did other people’s sounds make you think of different animals or animals that are similar?**

**Was the group more creative or less creative the second time?**

**What are some ideas about being creative that you can use in other situations?**

## Summary

Summarize by saying:

**“When we are trying to be creative, it’s important to invent lots of ideas before we try to evaluate which will work best. It helps to think quickly, not judge whether an idea is good or bad, and have some fun!”**

### Information (30 minutes)

#### Materials:

- Trainer Material 1: Abandoned Cars
- Flip chart 1: Get Creative

## A Surprisingly Creative Solution

Participants use creativity to think differently about a community issue or priority.

Describe the connection between creativity, making decisions, and solving problems.

Say:

**Note: You can also introduce this activity by talking about a person, group, or organization of the culture or country who dared to be different by introducing a novel solution to a problem. You are likely to find good examples if you look for people who used non-violent, cooperative, or collaborative methods to address a community concern.**

**“The next time we meet we will focus on ways to solve problems and we’ll see that good solutions, just like making good decisions, start with being creative. So let’s learn more about creative thinking as it relates to some of the issues you might face either personally or in your community.**

**“I’d like to share a story about an issue in a community to show how it was helpful for people to be creative. The problem in this story is a big issue in many American cities. You may not have exactly the same problem here, but as I read the story, I’d like you to listen for lessons that we might be able to use here if we changed them a little bit. Also, listen for examples of the ways we can think more creatively that we learned last time we met.”**

- Show Flip chart 1: Get Creative, which was used in Session 4.

Read the story “Abandoned Cars” (Trainer Material 1), then lead a discussion with these questions:

**What were some of the initial ideas the group had to deal with the abandoned cars? (Possible answers: Petition to the city [letter signed by many community members]; organizing neighbors)**

**What helped the participants to change the way they thought about the cars? (Possible answers: Frustration; Resignation to the problem; Increased desire to improve the neighborhood)**

**The solution involved more than just painting the cars. What else did the participants do? (Possible answers: Invite neighbors to participate; notify the city; notify the news media)**

**What were some unexpected outcomes of the solution? (Possible answers: The cars were removed very quickly; the participants gained notoriety and respect in the community; The participants were encouraged to try to solve other problems)**

**What do you think made the solution successful? (Possible answers: The city was embarrassed; the media and public were impressed that a group of young people took action)**

**How did the participants use creative thinking to get resources to solve the problem of abandoned cars? (Possible answers: They asked neighbors and businesses to contribute money for supplies; they notified the media)**

**What were some creative ways the participants learned more about the issue and possible solutions? (Possible answers: They talked to neighbors; they learned about the laws and rules of the city)**

Ask participants to summarize the creative strategies that the participants used to address the issue.

Encourage participants to refer to Flip chart 1: Get Creative. Supplement the ideas that participants identify with items and examples from the following list:

**Become More Creative:**

Think of as many ideas as you can (More ideas mean more choices) Ask “What if?” (What if the cars were never moved?)

Don’t limit or be critical your own ideas (All ideas are good – especially at the beginning) Turn an idea upside down; try the opposite (If the cars are ugly, how could they become beautiful?)

Expand an idea (If we can paint cars, could we also paint a mural on an abandoned building?)  
Combine ideas (Neighbors helped us by signing petitions, maybe they will help by donating money for paint)

Substitute (The participants did not just use regular car paint. They designed each car to be a work of art.)

### Summary

Summarize by saying:

**“In this story, you can see how some people were able to address an issue in a very unusual way and their ability to do that began with their willingness to use some of the strategies for creativity that we have listed here and that we talked about in our last session.”**

### Practice (30 minutes)

#### Materials:

Flip chart 2: Consider ...

### From Bad to Better

Participants use creative thinking strategies to redefine problems as opportunities.

Point out how the participants in Chicago were able to turn a problem or negative issue into an opportunity.

Say:

**“One of the interesting things about the Abandoned Cars story is that the participants were able to turn what was a problem into an opportunity. Even if the city had not removed the cars, the participants would have been successful because they had made a small, temporary improvement in their neighborhood. At least the cars looked better than before they were painted.**

**“I’d like you to have a similar opportunity to use the techniques of creative thinking to turn a problem into an opportunity for change. To begin, let’s think about some issues or priorities either in your community, your school, or in the lives of participants that we might practice thinking creatively about.**

**Note: Be prepared to suggest some potential issues that you already know about in the community, such as the need for more desks in the school, a lack of computers in the participants center, no place for participants to hang out, rubbish on the street or on the beach, neighborhood gangs, etc., or, something that is simply a desired change.**

Write the participants’ ideas on a flip chart and label it “Become More Creative.”

Then divide people into groups of four or five.

Share Flip chart 2: Consider ... and say:

**“Use the suggestions we just made on the flip chart ‘Become More Creative’ and put your creative thinking abilities to the test. Your group should use creative thinking to figure out what opportunities might be hidden within each issue. You can begin by thinking about these questions:**

**Who is hurt by this issue now?**

**Who benefits from this issue now?**

**Who might benefit later if this issue changes?”**

Assign one issue for each group to begin with. When a group finishes their issue, encourage them to move on to another issue. This way you can make sure each issue is considered by at least one group.

Give each group an opportunity to share their issue and how they thought creatively about it. Invite the rest of the group to ask questions and further embellish the thinking about the issue. Discuss some of the following questions:

**How satisfied are you with your group’s ability to discover opportunities in these issues?**

**Which issues were most difficult and why?**

**How did your thinking about your group’s issue change after sharing it with the whole group?**

**Among the work of all the groups, which ideas from “Being More Creative” were used most often?**

**Which ideas from “Being More Creative” would you like to try in other situations?**

**What surprised you about doing this activity?**

**What are some of the resources that are available in the community to address these issues?**

**Note: You should be familiar with these resources and ready to inform participants about them and explain how they can learn more.**

**Some people say, “Every cloud has a silver lining,” or, “Every problem can be turned into an opportunity.” To what extent do you agree that there is something positive hidden behind every problem?**

**Note: The discussion questions in Step 4 of “From Bad to Better” are an assessment of Learning Objective 1.**

### **Summary**

Conclude the exercise by saying:

**“Of course, it’s not always easy to see positive opportunities in the middle of a challenging situation, but often, if we can think creatively, we can at least discover a more helpful way of understanding the issue.”**

**Note: If you sense that the group needs more time on the above activity (examining a community problem); or, if you would like to plan for more time for the following activity (applying creative thinking to personal issues dealing with peer pressure) this would be a good place to break up the session. Explain that the group will continue to practice applying decision-making and creative-thinking skills to more personal issues the next time you meet.**



**Application (30 minutes)****Materials:**

- Handout 1: Ways to Say No
- Ball or other object that is safe to toss among participants

**The Language of “No”**

Participants apply ways to think creatively to the problem of resisting peer pressure.

Explain the connection between thinking creatively and resisting peer pressure.

Say:

**“Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of being an adolescent is balancing what is right for you and what your friends think is right for you. We have talked before about how we each have our own values and we have been learning how to make our own decisions and do what is best for our own future. But we also want to be accepted by our friends and be included in activities with them. When our friends insist that we do what they want – especially when it doesn’t fit with our own values – we call this peer pressure. A peer is someone who is your own age, or close to it, and is a friend, a schoolmate, a classmate, or someone from your social group.”**

Invite participants to take a moment in silence to recall at least one of their values from Unit 1: Character Building and Positive Values and to think to themselves about a time someone pressured them to go against their own values or what they think is right.

Say:

**“It’s very difficult to resist peer pressure because we want to be liked and accepted. And the pressure from friends can make it even harder to make good decisions using the steps of PAUSE. So I’d like to help you think creatively about how to say ‘no’ when you don’t want to do something your friends are pressuring you to do.”**

Remind participants that some individuals and cultures tend to be either more direct or more indirect in their communication style. Ask for their help in modifying a series of ‘no’ statements that would be comfortable for the participants and other people of the local culture.

Begin by distributing Handout 1: Ways to Say No.

Say:

**“There are many ways to say No. Some are more direct; some are more indirect. This handout lists several methods you can use to say No. The examples for each are more direct but there also are ways to get the same messages across in a more indirect way. For example, the simple ‘No’ can also be said as, ‘I’d rather not.’ Or, ‘I’m more of a quiet-type of person.’ Each of these is a more indirect way of saying the simple ‘No.’**

**“What I’d like is for you to become more comfortable saying ‘No.’ It doesn’t matter whether you say no directly or indirectly, as long as you are able to get the message across that you are not going to do something that is against your values.”**

Divide participants into five groups and assign one method of saying “No” to each group.

Say:

**“With your group, you have five minutes to write as many different ways of saying ‘No’ as you can think of for your method. This is a chance to use some of the strategies for being creative that we have already talked about. If it helps, you can invent a situation so your method of saying ‘No’ is more specific. Use the other side of your paper if you need to.”**

After five minutes, say:

**“Now I would like you to get ideas for different ways of saying no that fit with the other methods on your handout. When I give the signal, I want you to talk to people individually from different groups to get suggestions for how to say no. Try to talk to four other people. Share an idea from your method and write down another idea that the person has for you from their method of saying no. You have five minutes. Go!”**

After five minutes, ask people to return to their original group.

Say:

**“Please take a few moments to share your notes with the other members of your group. If you hear of a way to say ‘No’ that you like, be sure to add it to your handout.”**

Invite people to share ways of saying no that they think would be especially effective. Make sure everyone has more than one alternative for each method of saying no. Supplement participants’ lists with suggestions from below. (Often simply dropping the word ‘No’ makes the statement more indirect.)

## More Ways to Say No

### The simple No – be firm but polite.

No, I don't want to. I'd rather not.

I don't think so right now.

That's not for me.

### No with a reason – keep it short.

No, that would be stealing.

I don't want to get into trouble.

I know too many people with a drinking problem.

That sounds really dangerous to me.

### No with an alternative – suggest something else to do.

No, why don't we go play football instead?

Let's go see what the other girls are doing.

I think it would be more fun to listen to music.

Let's use the time to work on the participant's leadership project.

### Walk away – leave but invite the person to come with you.

I'm just going to leave. If you want to come, you can.

I'll catch up with you later.

I'm taking off. See you around.

Got to go. Call me.

### No with an excuse – explain why you can't.

No, my dad would be extremely angry with me.

No, I've got to be getting home. I'd die if my family found out.

Sorry, I need to run an errand for my mother. It's getting late and I promised I'd help my sister.

Announce that you'd like participants to become more at ease in saying "No." Arrange participants in a circle, either sitting or standing.

Say:

**"If you've ever learned a foreign language, you know that it can feel very uncomfortable to use that new language in public. But, as you speak it more, it becomes easier and easier. It's the same with saying 'No.' The more practice you have, the easier it becomes, and the more confident you will feel about yourself.**

**Note:** This might be an opportune time to connect with the participants. You might talk briefly about your own experiences as a Construction Industry Class leader new to the culture and adjustments you had to make. Perhaps there were some ways you said “No” to your peers to become a Construction Industry Class leader. Or you might talk about your own challenges in learning the local language: Improvement came with confidence, which came with practice.

**“So now I’d like you to practice with me. I’ll make a ‘No’ statement and I want everyone to repeat it in unison.”**

Read six to eight statements that people have written on Handout 1: Ways to Say No. Pause after each statement so participants can respond.

Then say:

**“Great! Let’s make this a bit more challenging. I’ll share a situation that a young adult might run into where they might want to say no. I’ll toss a ball to one of you and that person will respond with a ‘No’ statement. You can use your handout if you wish. Then toss the ball to someone else who will take the next turn.”**

Share the first situation, let the person answer, and have that person toss the ball to a new person. Use situations from Unit 2, Session 3, and Handout 3: Practice with PAUSE. Make sure all participants have a turn. You can repeat situations if you don’t have enough or you can get suggestions for situations from the group as you go along.

**Note:** You can either describe a situation (“What if your friend wanted you to skip school. How would you say No?”) or you can play the role of a friend (“I’m your friend: ‘Hey, Magda, let’s skip school.’”). In either case, it is important that you as the adult facilitator be the “bad person” rather than having a participant play the negative role. It is usually suggested that role-plays be used to practice positive behaviors rather than to become a reinforcement of negative behaviors.

Lead a discussion using the following questions that are most appropriate for the group:

**How much more comfortable do you feel responding with a “No” statement?**

**Which “No” statements are you most comfortable using?**

**What surprises you about your ability to say no?**

**What type of situations do you think are most challenging if you want to say no?**

**What can you do to remember to use “No” statements?**

**What advice would you give to someone else about dealing with peer pressure?**

**How do “No” statements fit with the steps of PAUSE decision making?**

### Summary

Conclude the activity by saying:

**“Learning to say no allows you to be consistent with your values and also to maintain friendships with people who are important to you.”**

**Assessment (15 minutes)**

**Materials:** Paper, markers, or crayons

### A Picture to Remember

Participants summarize and customize what they have learned about decision making and thinking creatively.

Review the importance of being able to make decisions independently and to think creatively.

Say:

**“We’ve learned to make better decisions using PAUSE and to think more creatively by using several methods. We’ve also had practice saying no in several different ways. All this is important so you can take charge and become the person you want to become. In the end, you have to figure out which of the things we’ve learned about will be most helpful for you.”**

Distribute paper and markers or crayons to everyone.

Say:

**“I would like you to think about the PAUSE steps for making decisions, using creative thinking methods to turn a problem into an opportunity, and making ‘No’ statements. Which of these do you think will be most helpful for you? Which do you think is most interesting? Or which would you like to use more often?”**

**“Make a poster that summarizes these ideas. Let your poster show how important these ideas are for you. How would you represent them using both pictures and words? What combination of images and letters will help you remember them? Are there animals, objects, scenery, or people you can draw that remind you of the steps of PAUSE or ways to say no? Be as imaginative as you wish, but try to make a picture that shows how you will use PAUSE, ‘No’ statements, and creative thinking methods.”**

Give participants time to work. Save about five minutes so that those who wish can share their posters and talk about how they will use decision making, creative thinking, and “No” statements.

**Note: “A Picture to Remember” serves as an assessment of Learning Objectives 1 and 2 of Unit 2, Session 4, and Learning Objectives 1, 2, and 3 of Session 5. If you chose to break this session up to allow more application time, you can also allow participants more time to create their posters.**

### Summary

Conclude by saying:

**“With practice, everyone gets better at making decisions, thinking creatively, and saying no. The posters you have just made can be a reminder to you of your plan to learn and grow as you practice these skills.”**

References:  
(None)