Acting Out

Introduction: Today, more than ever, young people are facing pressures to engage in unhealthy behaviors. Due to peer pressure and other factors, many teens are smoking, drinking, using marijuana and other drugs, and joining gangs. Using positive peer pressure, students research, write scripts, and perform skits to inform their fellow students on the dangers of these behaviors, while offering strategies on how to handle some pressure situations.

Grade Level and Subject: Sixth Grade Language Arts and Health

TEKS: Language Arts 1a, 5a, 5c, 5e, 13a, 13c, 13f, 15b, 15e, 18a, 18d, 18f, 18g, 18h, 19c, 20a, 20b, 20c, 24a, 24c; Health 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 7a, 7b

Materials: pen, paper, appropriate props and costumes as topics require

Resources: Health textbook, anti-drug pamphlets, internet, pen, paper

Websites:
http://www.keepkidsfromsmoking.com
http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/tobacco/smoking.html
http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/gangs.asp
http://www.focusas.com/Gangs.html
http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/drugs/know_about_drugs.html
http://www.4prevention.info

Activity: Divide students into groups of three, and assign each group one of the topics listed below. Students are to research their topic; develop, edit, and finalize a three-minute script; and perform the skit for the class. The script should be written in the form of a short play, including a creative cover page that includes the title and illustrations. The first page of the script should include the actors’ names and the characters they will play, as well as a short introduction to “set” the skit. Inform students that they will be evaluated on the accuracy of their information, as well as the creativity and persuasiveness of their skit. Encourage students to use props and costumes (within school policy) to make their message more effective.

Topics:
Why smoking is bad
How to handle peer pressure and smoking
How drinking affects the body and mind
How to handle peer pressure and drinking
What marijuana does to your lungs and brain
How to handle peer pressure and marijuana
Popular pills and the damage they do
How to handle peer pressure and pills
Why young people join gangs
The dangers of gang membership
How to handle peer pressure and gangs

Evaluation: Evaluate scripts for accuracy of information, inclusion of required criteria, spelling, mechanics, and appropriateness for the audience and purpose. Evaluate skits for creativity, appropriate language usage to audience, purpose and occasion, and persuasiveness.