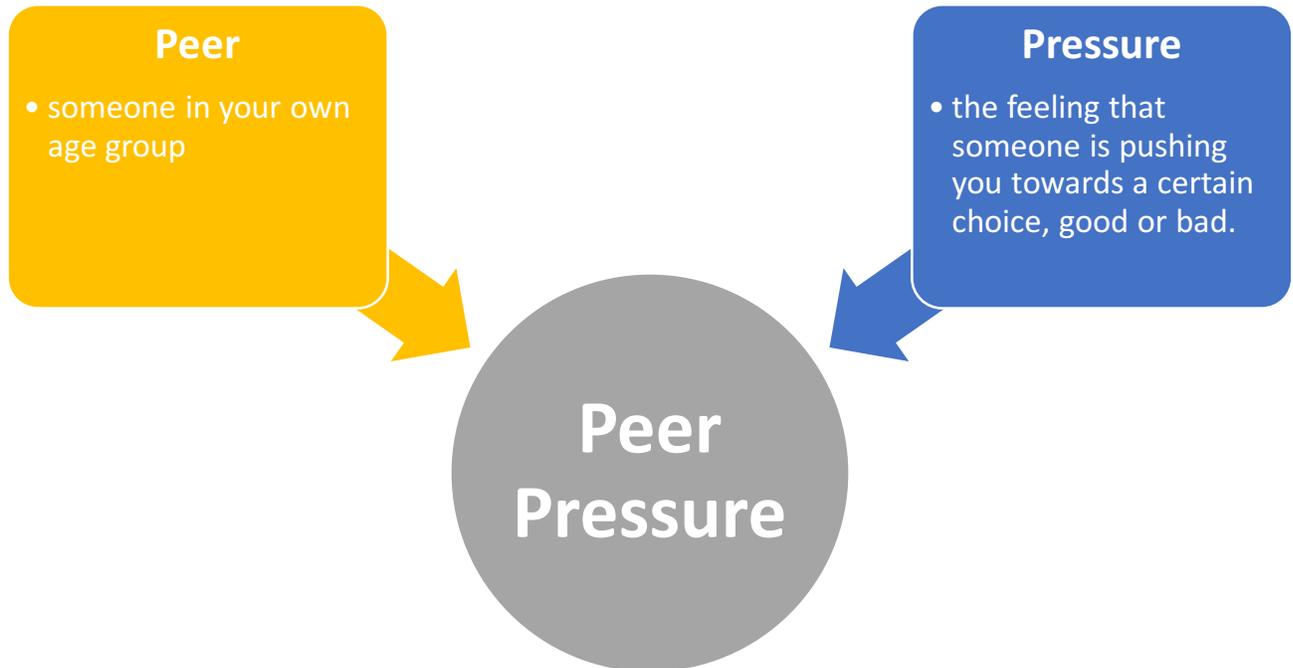


Peer Pressure

What is peer pressure?

The feeling that someone your own age is pushing you towards making a certain choice, good or bad.



When does this happen?

Peer pressure can happen at any time in your life, but is most likely to happen during adolescence.

Why does this happen?¹

Your friends and peers can have a large influence in your life, especially at time when you are becoming more independent. During adolescence, you can end up spending more time with your friends than with your family! The decisions and interests of your peers can largely influence your decisions and interests in a positive or in a negative way.

Peer influences can include the way they dress, the things they do on their time off, and the attitudes they show. People are influenced by peers because they want to fit in, and they may want to be like peers they admire, do what others are doing, or have what others have.

¹The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth. (2015) *Peer pressure: Who are your peers?* Retrieved from http://kidshealth.org/teen/homework/problems/peer_pressure.html

Positive versus negative peer pressure

Negative: Often can lead to *danger* or ill-health and will go against society rules, school rules, or personal values.

Examples: skipping school, destructing property, stealing, cheating, smoking, doing drugs, drinking alcohol, sneaking out of the house, bullying, unprotected sex, disrespecting authority

Positive: Often overlooked but can be an influence to do something good and/or *right*.

Examples: joining a sports team, volunteering, studying, helping others, befriending someone

How to overcome and deal with peer pressure

Steps to deal with direct or indirect peer pressure

1. Ask yourself questions

“Why would we do that?”, “Whose idea was this?”, “Is this the smart thing to do?”

Example: If someone is being peer pressured to smoke, they should ask themselves, “Is smoking something that I should do?”

2. Identify the negative behavior or action

“Calling her mean names is going to start trouble”, “I don’t think smoking is a good idea”, “It is against the rules to leave school during school hours”

Example: If someone is being peer pressured to smoke, they should identify the negative behavior as smoking.

3. Evaluate the consequences

“We will get in trouble”, “smoking is not healthy”, “I will get kicked out of the school”

Example: If someone is being peer pressured to smoke, they should understand that smoking is not good for you and will have negative consequences physically and financially.

4. Suggest an alternative

“Why don’t we leave school when school is done?”, “why don’t we play a sport instead?”

Example: If someone is being peer pressured to smoke, they should explain their opinion on smoking and suggest something else, such as going to a café or watching a movie.

5. Leave the situation

If all else fails, remove yourself from the situation. Try to find peers that have similar interests to you.

Example: If someone is continuously being peer pressured to smoke and they tried the above solution, they should stop hanging out with this friend.

Strategies against peer pressure

- Make a joke and change the subject
- Say “no” and keep saying “no”
- Leave the area
- Hang out with others who share your beliefs
- Suggest a different activity



Examples

Negative

1. Isaac is on his way to school when his friend runs into him and tells him that he and the boys are skipping school to play video games at the internet café. Isaac knows that school is important and knows not to miss the day, but does not want to look uncool in front of his friends. He is peer pressured into skipping school for the day.
2. Soo Win and May Thein go meet up with their friends behind the school. They see their friends from the neighborhood spraying the back of somebody's house with spray paint. Their friends invite them to join. Soo Win doesn't think it's a good idea to destruct somebody's property, but May Thein thinks it would be fun. Soo Win is confused about what to do.
3. Layla is shopping with Thea. Layla takes a bar of chocolate and sneaks it into her pocket. She hands another bar of chocolate to Thea and tells her to put it in her pocket as well. Thea knows that stealing is wrong but does not have the money to pay for the chocolate. She is peer pressured into stealing.
4. Tazeem goes to class to find out that there is a surprise math test. He did not study and is worried about failing. He expresses his concern to his friend Sibi and asks him if he could look at his test for answers. Sibi is scared of getting in trouble for cheating, but really wants to help Tazeem. He is being peer pressured into cheating.
5. Mario got invited to a party with all of his school friends but his mom is not letting him go. His friends told him that it was going to be the best party ever. He is pressured into sneaking out of the house to attend a party where there will be alcohol and drugs. He is not sure if he should engage in this behavior, but all of his friends are doing it and he does not want to feel left out.
6. Dora is so happy with her current boyfriend but he is asking her if they can have sex. Her friends tell her that it's awesome and that she should do it, but she is not ready for it.
7. Ahmed walks into school to find all of his friends pushing and bullying a boy in his class. He is expected to join them but he does not want to bully another person. He is being peer pressured to be a bully.

Positive

1. Miro has friends who go play football every Wednesday night but she does not think she is good enough to join. Her friends tell her that practice will only make her better and that she should come out and try. Miro is being positively peer pressured into trying a new sport.
2. Michalina's friends are all going to attend a workshop with IYAFP on the weekend. She has no plans but wants to be with her friends. She decides that she, too, will go to the IYAFP workshop.
3. Samir wants to play games with his friends after school, but they are all studying for an exam that they have at the end of the week. He decides to join them.
4. Andi is walking back from the store with his friend Sandar. He sees Sandar rushing to help an older woman carry her bags of fruit back to her motorbike. Thatti decides to help as well and carries some of the older woman's bags too.

ROLE PLAYING: PEER PRESSURE



OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify a negative behavior or action
2. Develop verbal responses to reject peer pressure

AUDIENCE:

Youth aged 11-18

TIME:

Approximately 45-90 minutes (depends on number of groups)

MATERIALS:

- White board and marker
- Peer pressure dice (*see how to make the dice on the following pages*)

PROCEDURE

1. After reviewing the ground rules, write the words **PEER PRESSURE** on the board. Ask youth what they think this means.
2. Engage in a discussion explaining what peer pressure is and why it happens. Provide examples (see explanations/examples above). Make sure that everybody gets a chance to speak
3. Write **POSITIVE** and **NEGATIVE** on the board and talk **about the different kinds of peer pressure and then discuss how to deal with it.**
4. After giving the participants examples of each kind of pressure, bring out the peer pressure dice (*see how to make the dice on the following page*) and ask them to get into groups of 2-4 people.
5. Each group will roll the die once and will have to create a scenario based on the people causing the pressure and what the pressure to do is.
 - a. For example, if you roll a “friends (neighborhood)” with a “smoking”, then the group will have to create a skit where somebody rejects their neighborhood friends’ pressure to smoke.
6. Explain that each skit should be between 5 and 10 minutes and should include:
 - a. An introduction of the characters
 - b. A negative peer pressure
 - c. A person rejecting the peer pressure
7. Give each group 15-20 minutes to prepare their skit to present to the group
8. Have the groups present their skits
9. Engage in a discussion after each skit.

Discussion questions:

- a. How did it feel to be the person pressured into doing something?
- b. What are some other ways in which the person could have dealt with the situation?

Dice: print and cut out along the lines.

dice maker
from www.mes-english.com

Friends (sports)

Friends (of friend)

Boyfriend

Girlfriend

Friends
(neighbourhood)



Friends (school)

dice maker
from www.mes-english.com

Drugs/Alcohol

Sex

Stealing

Being
disrespectful/cheating

Looking fashionable



Skipping school