

HANDLING PEER PRESSURE

You're going to be in situations where others try to pressure you into doing something. These situations can be uncomfortable and stressful, but if you know you can stay true to yourself you don't need to sweat it. Try the following:

Ask yourself what's going on. Who are you with and how are they affecting your behavior? Would you behave the same way if you were alone or with different friends?

Think about the consequences. Ask yourself how you will feel about what you're doing tomorrow? What sort of person will you be if you become comfortable with following the crowd. Who would be disappointed to hear that you've followed the crowd and done something uncharacteristic?

Your senses are telling you something and that may be: Get out!

When faced with overt or indirect pressure to do something you're not sure about, try using the following strategies:

Give yourself permission to avoid people or situations that don't feel right. Work on setting boundaries. It's OK for you to do what is best for you.

When people or situations that make you feel pressured are not avoidable, try the "delay tactic". Give yourself time to think about your decision instead of giving an immediate answer: "Let me think about that," "Can I get back to you?" or "Check back with me in an hour."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NH Student Assistance Program: It may make sense to talk to a New Hampshire Student Assistance Program (SAP) staff member. These counselors are in more than 40 New Hampshire schools and can meet with you face-to-face. For a list of state SAPs, visit: dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bdas/sap.htm

Above the Influence: Every teen's life is filled with pressure, some of it good, some of it bad. Above the Influence's goal is to help teens stand up to negative pressures, or influences. The more aware you are of the influences around you, the better prepared you will be to face them, including the pressure to use drugs and alcohol. To learn more about how to stand up to pressures, visit: abovetheinfluence.com

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS!

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What Teens & Tweens need to know about Peer Pressure?

You may have heard the term “peer pressure,” but do you know what it actually means? What are adults talking about when they say, “Don’t give into peer pressure” and how can you know when you might be influenced by others?

Different types of Peer Pressure

Even adults don’t always understand that peer pressure can be a good thing. A lot of times it’s peer pressure that makes us want to try out for the football team or a school play. Peer pressure also makes us want to reach new goals or drives us to prevent bullies from preying on our friends.

Sometimes peer pressure can influence our decision to use alcohol or other drugs, skip school, cheat or disobey our parents or teachers. We may go along with the crowd at first, but after a while it’s hard to tell the difference between where the crowd ends and we begin. That’s when we know that we’ve given into peer pressure.

Why Learn About Peer Pressure?

During your teen years, you’ll make a lot of important decisions that will affect your future. It’s important to understand your own values, the importance of making up your own mind, and what to do in a difficult situation. Keep in mind that the wrong choice now (using drugs or alcohol, for example) may lead you on a path that’s difficult to get off of in the future.

Take time to get to know yourself and the values that you have so that you can be strong enough to say no to peer pressure. Peer pressure situations can be uncomfortable and stressful, but being prepared for them will help you stay true to yourself.

Don’t Be Afraid to Stand Alone

Be confident in yourself. Your body language and perception of yourself often go hand-in-hand so stand up straight, look people in the eye, and speak firmly. It’s ok to say, ‘no thanks,’ ‘I’m not interested,’ ‘I’ve got a better idea’ or even to say that you have other plans. If you continue to be pressured, find a reason to walk away.

Consider what decision you’d make if you were alone. Are you really a person who would do drugs or drink alcohol? Does the idea of skipping school or cheating make you feel proud or ashamed? How would the decision to follow the crowd change how you see yourself?

Give Your Self-Esteem a Boost!

Treat your self-esteem like a muscle, there are some easy ways for you to build it up.

Know your values: Your values are the things that are important to you, the ideas you believe in and will defend. Spend some times exploring your value system on a regular basis.

Set realistic goals: We all set mile-high goals from time to time, but spend time thinking about what you can accomplish and the steps it will take you to get there.

Do things on your own: Don’t be afraid to spend time by yourself doing things that you enjoy. This is a perfect time to reflect on your values.

Take pride in yourself: Recognize your personal accomplishments and don’t be afraid to share them with others.

