Peer Pressure

Using drugs or alcohol always comes with a fair amount of peer pressure or social pressure from people to take part in risky activities. Here are some ways to deal with peer pressure as these situations come up throughout your life.

Walking Away From Peer Pressure

It is tough to be the only one who says "no" to peer pressure, but you can do it. Paying attention to your own feelings and beliefs about what is right and wrong can help you know the right thing to do. Inner strength and self-confidence can help you stand firm, walk away, and resist doing something when you know better. The number one factor that keeps people away from risky situations is to have at least one other peer or friend, who is willing to say "no," as well. You have probably had a parent or teacher advise you to "choose your friends wisely." Peer pressure is a big reason why they say this. If you choose friends who do not use drugs, cut class, smoke cigarettes, or lie to their parents, then you probably will not take part in these behaviors, even if other kids do. Try to help a friend who is having trouble resisting peer pressure. It can be powerful for one kid to join another by simply saying, "I'm with you...let's go."

Even if you are faced with peer pressure while you are alone, there are still things you can do. You can simply stay away from peers who pressure you to do stuff you know is wrong. You can tell them "no" and walk away. Better yet, find other friends and classmates to pal around with. If you continue to face peer pressure and you are finding it difficult to handle, talk to someone you trust. Don't feel guilty if you have made a mistake or two. Talking to a parent, teacher, or school counselor can help you feel much better and prepare you for the next time you face peer pressure.

1) What is the number one factor that can help people steer clear of risky situations such as using drugs, alcohol, lying or cutting class?

2) What are some things you can do if you are faced with peer pressure when you are by yourself?

3) On the back of this sheet of paper, reflect on a time where you or some someone you know stood up against something that you knew was wrong. If nothing like this has happened to you before, you may reflect on a movie or book that deals with this topic. How did you or the character feel before and after the conflict? (You do not have to be specific if the situation makes you uncomfortable).