

PEER PRESSURE

The term ‘peer pressure’ means the influence of people of your age group over your life. Your friends or classmates play a very significant role in your life. They are those people with whom we have our most interaction. Peer pressure occurs when a peer group exerts direct or indirect pressure to do certain actions. Peer pressure can not only bring about changes in behavior, but also thoughts, opinions, and feelings. People are susceptible to peer pressure because of a desire to belong as well as for a fear of not belonging.

Types Of Peer Pressure

Peer pressure can be active or passive.

Active peer pressure describes a situation where a person tries to convince someone else to do something. For example, two friends might encourage a third friend to drive above the speed limit since “everyone drives that fast anyway.”

Passive peer pressure refers to modeled or mimicked behavior. Someone with several friends who text while driving may be more likely to text and drive themselves. They may reason that their friends text and drive, so it must not be so bad.

Peer Pressure: Negative or Positive?

Many people consider peer pressure a negative thing, but this isn’t always the case. People, especially teens and young adults, may be more likely to do prosocial behaviors when they see people their own age doing the same things. **Positive peer pressure occurs when peers support and encourage constructive actions for one another.** For example, research has shown that teens with friends who volunteer are more likely to volunteer themselves.

How to Overcome Peer Pressure

- **Everyone has a set of values that are unique to them.** Think about what your core values are, why you have them, and what they mean for your future.
- **Be mindful of your own reactions and feelings.** When something goes against our set of values, we can often feel it in our gut.
- **Do stuff that you love not what your friends love:** popularity gets diminished easily. So, don’t do anything just to be cool. Only if you really want to do something, then take part. If your friends understand you then they would not judge you or make you feel inferior.
- **Learn to Say NO nicely – “N.I.C.E” to say NO**
 - **N:** Say “No”. Not “maybe” or “later”.

- **I:** Follow with an “I” statement: “I’m not going to , it is not part of my life plan”
- **C:** If pressure continues, “Change”. Change the topic. Change your conversation partner. Change the location.
- **E:** If these strategies do not help, you need an “Exit “plan. Leave a bad situation immediately.
- **Be assertive.** Practice confident individualism. Make use of sentences that start with phrases such as “I think”, or “I like”.
- **Self – love:** it is very important to remember that- you come first, no matter what kind of situation you are in. So, don’t let anyone else make you feel otherwise. Perfection is not real. Body shapes, talents, these things change a lot but a good heart is what matters the most. Individuality is more special than all of these traits. So, love yourself. Most important, emotional support is actually your own.
- **Don’t be afraid to associate with a wide range of people.** Interact with people who are old or young, rich or poor, or of any religion. We are all different, and you might discover values that resonate with you among people you wouldn’t expect.
- **Once you find people that affirm your values, stick with them.** If you feel like people no longer share values with you, don’t be afraid to let certain relationships go and seek out new ones with those who do.
- **Don’t focus on critics.** They will always exist, regardless of whether you are being true to yourself. People who put others down are likely doing so to soothe their own internal anxieties.

How to talk to your child about peer pressure. (Can be used for IVRS)

“When you’re discussing a tough topic like peer pressure with your kids, make sure the conversation is age appropriate,”

Whenever your child talks about their day or their peers, it gives you a great opportunity to have these conversations. Maintaining good relationships and open lines of communication with your children can help them navigate this period of life successfully.

- Use examples of peer pressure from your childhood and discuss how it made you feel at the time.
- Give advice on how your child can help a peer who is experiencing peer pressure.

- For younger children, there are developmentally appropriate books and movies available to help them learn about peer pressure.
- For teenagers, there are shows and movies with themes of peer pressure,

Talking regularly with your kids will help you get comfortable with having difficult conversations, especially around safety issues. It's important to stress that regardless of what their peers tell them, they are responsible for the consequences of their behavior.