



PEER PRESSURE



When the people around us influence the decisions we make and the things that we do, we call it peer pressure.

What does peer pressure feel like?

Someone you know may try to encourage you to do something you don't really want to do - or stop you from doing something that you know that you really should do.

Peer pressure is often negative, but it can be **positive**, too. For example, positive peer pressure might be a situation where others in your group of friends talk about how unhealthy smoking is, and you decide not to try it.

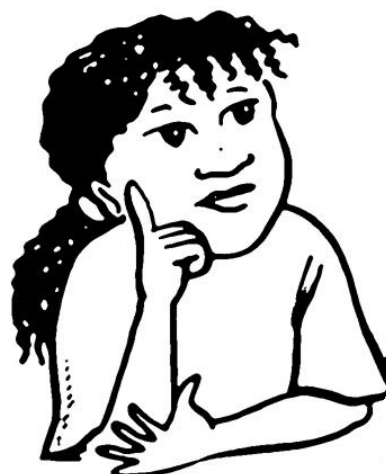
Negative peer pressure, however, is doing what other people want you to do, even if it makes you feel uncomfortable - for example, hanging out with friends instead of going to school, or excluding someone because they aren't popular with the 'group'.



What can I do about it?

When we feel pressured to act in a certain way, there are things we can do to help ourselves:

- lighten the moment
- change the subject
- remember what your values are
- choose friends wisely
- ask a trusted person for help
- find new friends



What is Assertive Behaviour?

Where we make the choices for ourselves, and let others make their own choices.

"I'll decide for me and you decide for you"

Assertiveness is the ability to speak up for ourselves in a way that is honest and respectful.

What is Passive Behaviour?

Where we let others make our decisions for us, we go along with the crowd even if it doesn't feel right.

"You decide for me"

Passive behaviour can lead to feeling unheard and unconfident, and may deprive the group of good ideas and contributions.



What is Aggressive Behaviour?

Where we make the choices for everyone and get angry when others don't do what we want.

"I'll decide for everyone"

Aggressive behaviour can be dominating and forceful, showing disrespect towards others.

It can even make it difficult to maintain friendships.

Ways I can act when someone is acting aggressively include:

- Staying calm and keeping my cool.
- Standing tall and looking the person in the eye.
- Thinking about what I want to say, and speaking clearly and politely.

How to manage my behaviour

Things that happen can make us upset, angry, or sad. The way we act when we feel bad has an impact on the people around us, as well as on ourselves. Some good tools to use when I am upset are:

- Count to 10 and breathe slowly, to help me calm down.
- Talk about how I feel to a friend, or an adult I trust.
- Do something physical - run around the outside of the house or do star jumps.
- Remember that it is OK for me to feel angry, and that I can use this energy positively.



References

KidsHealth.org. October 2012, Retrieved from http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/peer_pressure.html# 16 December 2014 and <http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/anger.html#> 30 April 2015

Kids Helpline Australia, May 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-info/hot-topics/peer-pressure.php> 16 December 2014.

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