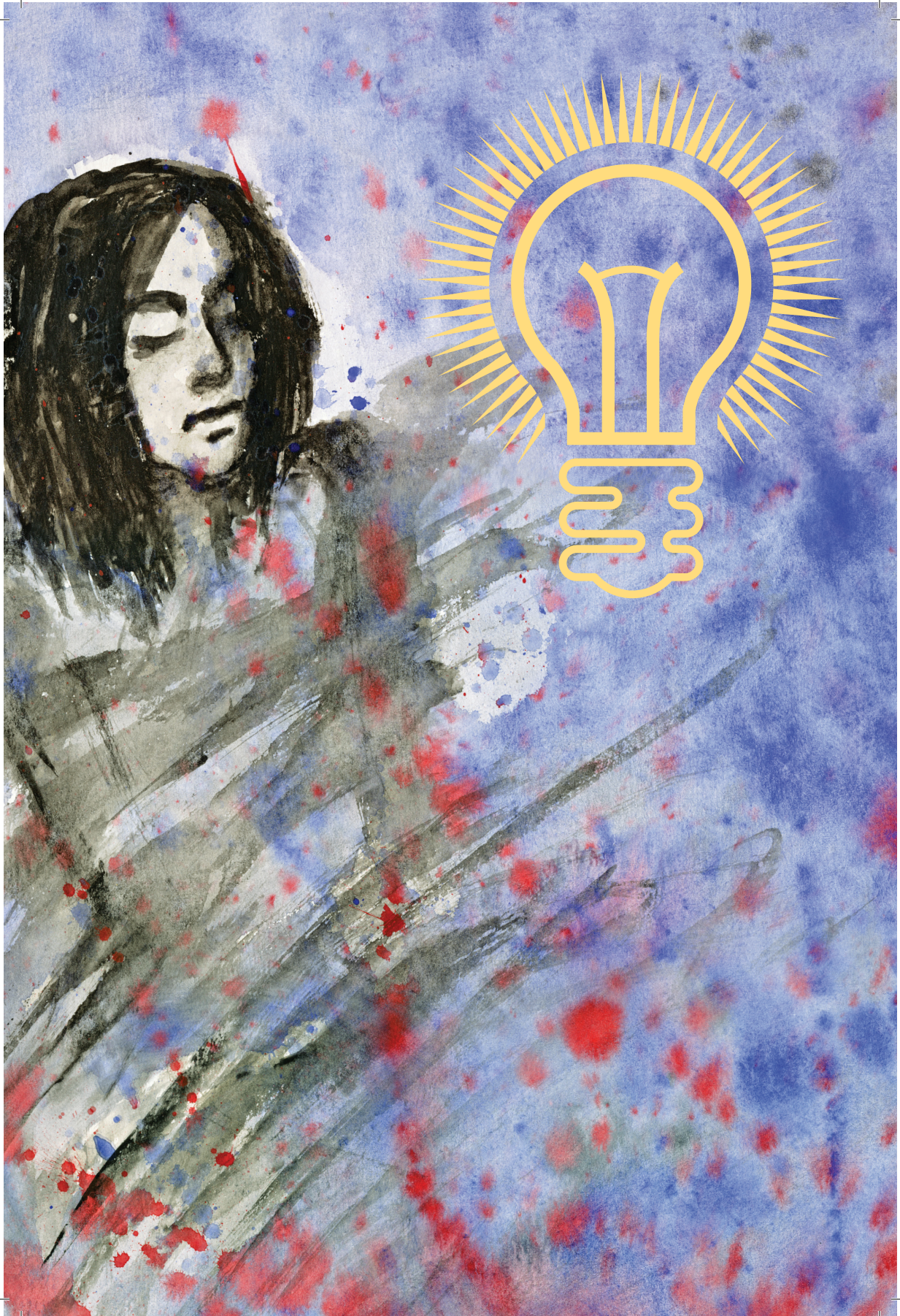




KNOW
More™

Know More About
PEER PRESSURE



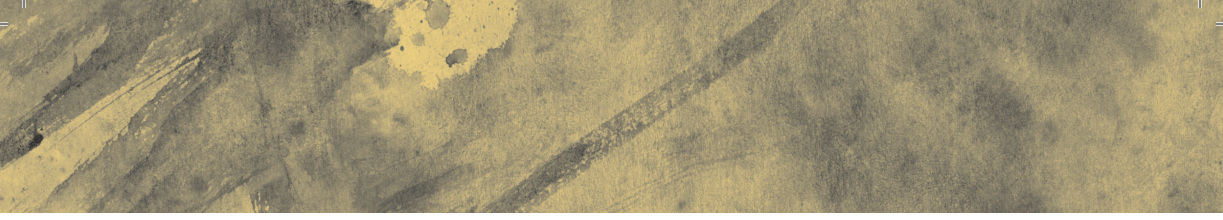
KNOW More™

ABOUT PEER PRESSURE



uring the teen years, relationships with peers can become more important than any other relationship including relationships between teens and parents, siblings, teachers or coaches. For teenagers, “fitting in” is very important. You worry about your image and what others think about you. You are looking for a place to belong. Sound familiar?

Your peer group is a major influence on your choices, decisions and attitudes—the clothes you wear, the music you listen to or the types of activities you pursue. Often, teens do what others are doing so they can fit in—or at least not stand out. Unfortunately, sometimes peer pressure can lead to bad behaviors or dangerous situations. Learn the facts about PEER PRESSURE so we can make wise decisions **based on what you KNOW.**



WHAT IS A PEER PRESSURE?

Your peer group can include your friends, classmates, teammates, kids from your neighborhood – anyone you hang around with on a regular basis. As a teenager, your peers play a big role in your social and emotional development. It is natural, healthy and important for you to have friends that you can rely on as you grown and mature.

Peer pressure is the influence that people around you have on what you do and how you think. It is pressure to take a certain action, adopt certain values or conform to be accepted. Peers have a big impact on a teenager’s behavior, dress, attitudes and habits. By doing what their friends are doing, teenagers hope to be accepted.

Because teens want so badly to fit in with their peer group, this desire to be accepted can cloud their good judgment. This is especially true for teens that are facing difficult challenges at home. When teens listen to their friends more than they listen to experienced adults, they can often find themselves in compromising situations.

GOOD

OR

BAD



Peer pressure can be good or bad. Some of your friends may set a positive example while others can negatively influence you in ways that can be difficult to resist.

Kids often give in to peer pressure because they want to fit in. They want to be liked; they worry that they may be left out or made fun of if they don't go along with the group.

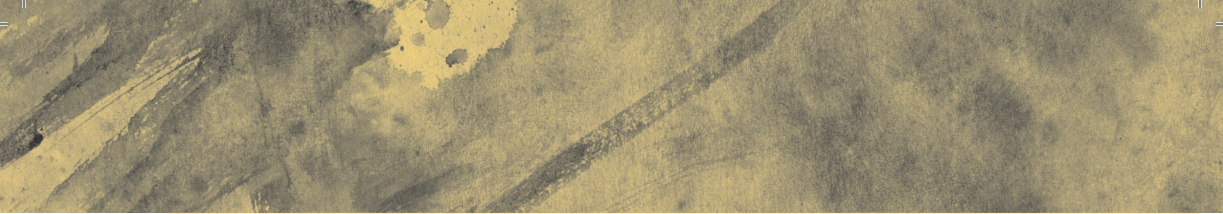
Peers with a positive influence can help you develop new skills or stimulate your interest in sports, books, fashion, music or extracurricular activities.

YES I CAN
IDEA
DO IT NOW
PRACTICE
BE OPEN
DON'T GIVE UP
SUCCESS



LOST FEAR
NO UNSURE
GIVE UP
UNCLEAR
I CAN NOT
PERPLEX CONFUSE
FAILURE





POSITIVE Peer Pressure

MIGHT RESULT IN:

- Doing well/better in school
- Eating healthy and exercising
- Helping others
- Joining a team or after-school programs
- Expressing yourself creatively

However, peers can also have a negative influence. They can encourage you to skip classes, steal, cheat, use drugs or alcohol, or become involved in other risky behaviors. The majority of teens with substance abuse problems began using drugs or alcohol as a result of peer pressure.

NEGATIVE Peer Pressure

MAY LEAD TEENS TO SUCH RISKY BEHAVIORS AS:

- Cutting class
- Failing school
- Underage drinking
- Drug use
- Smoking
- Shoplifting
- Sexual activity
- Bullying
- Physical violence
- Gang activity

WHAT

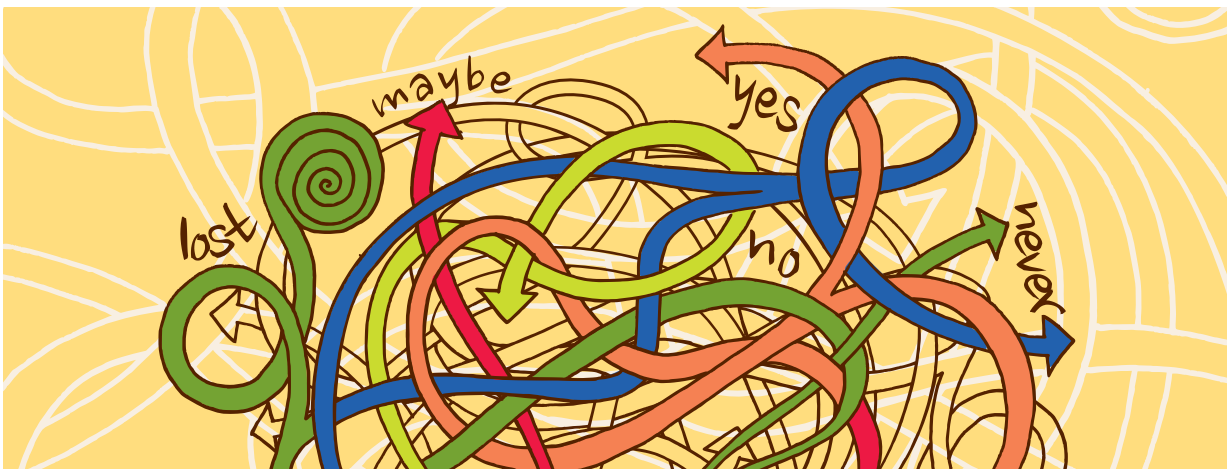
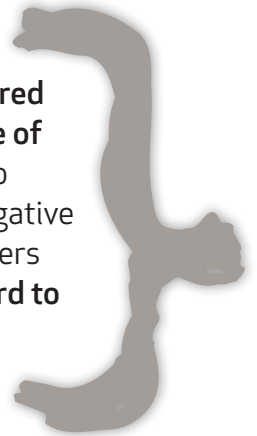
DOES PEER PRESSURE LOOK LIKE



Some peer pressure involves a peer group **directly telling a teen what he or she should be doing** or what is okay for him or her to do. They may use **insults** or the **threat of rejection** to force him or her to do something he or she doesn't want to do.



Peer pressure can also be indirect. **Teens may feel pressured to participate in underage drinking by the mere presence of alcohol at a party.** Hanging out with a group of friends who smoke or do drugs can make a teen believe this kind of negative behavior is acceptable. Or, by surrounding himself with peers who are involved in risky behaviors, **a teen may try too hard to fit in, doing things because other people are doing them.**



WHY



IS PEER PRESSURE
SO HARD TO RESIST



32.80
QUADRANT - A2
LOC 2.007 - G2

KNOW MORE ABOUT PEER PRESSURE - www.ag.state.la.us

Because the brain is still maturing during your teen years, your judgment and reasoning abilities are still developing, too. This means teenagers don't always make good choices where their friends are concerned. As a teenager, you are more likely than adults to act impulsively when confronted with stressful or emotional decisions. You also are less likely to fully understand the consequences of your actions.

Using alcohol or drugs increases a teenager's chance of giving in to peer pressure. Substance use impairs judgment and interferes with the ability to make good decisions.

Teens who have difficult family situations often turn to their friends to replace lost relationships. Peer groups can give a teenager a sense of belonging during times of family stress like separation, divorce or death. But, if the group a teen becomes a part of is involved with drugs, alcohol, violence or gang activity, he or she is more likely to take part in these activities.

Girls are especially at risk from peer influences when they lose their emotional connection with parents or other family members. Teenage girls can be pressured into risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, or shoplifting. They may also be pressured into engaging in sexual activity before they are ready or other activities that make them uncomfortable.



HOW



DO I HANDLE UNWANTED PEER PRESSURE

You are not alone. Many teens experience negative peer pressure at some time during their teen years. Preparing a strategy ahead of time is the best way to handle uncomfortable situations when they arise.

PREPARING YOUR STRATEGY

A good strategy or plan to handle unwanted peer pressure begins with good, thoughtful choices.

Ask yourself these questions:

What are my values and standards?

Know yourself and what is important to you. Decide before you get into an uncomfortable situation just what your values and standards are and don't compromise them. Avoid situations where people are doing things you don't want to do.

What are the results of my decisions and actions?

Think about what might happen if you move forward in certain situations. Is the activity dangerous? Could it harm your health or get you in trouble?

Who are my real friends?

Choose good friends who share your values. Good friends use positive peer pressure to help you be your best self.

Why do I do the things I do?

Think about your reasons for doing things: Are they good reasons? Are you being true to yourself and your values?

WAYS TO DEAL WITH A DIFFICULT SITUATION

Here are some practical things you can do to avoid or deal with situations that are uncomfortable or dangerous:

Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable, even if your friends are okay with what's going on, it means that something about the situation is wrong for you. Make decisions that are best for YOU.

1

2

Practice ways to say "NO!"

If necessary, come up with excuses, such as that you don't want to get in trouble, damage your body or your mind, or risk blowing your involvement in sports or academics.

3

Stay away from peers who pressure you to do things that seem wrong or dangerous.

4

If someone is pressuring you to do something you know is wrong or dangerous, talk to an adult you trust—a parent, teacher, coach, youth leader or school counselor. Tell them about the kinds of pressure you face and listen to their advice.

5

Learn how to avoid or get out of uncomfortable or unsafe situations. With your parents or another trusted adult, come up with a code word you can use to let that grownup know that you need help getting out of a bad situation but can't talk about it.



GOING

AGAINST THE GRAIN

You already know that the teen years can be tough.

.....

You are figuring out who you are, what you believe, what you are good at and what your place in the world is going to be.

.....

It's comforting to face those challenges with good friends who are into the same things that you are.

.....

Nearly every one ends up in a sticky peer pressure situation at one point.

.....

No matter how wisely you choose your friends, or how well you think you know them, sooner or later you will have to make decisions that can be difficult and unpopular.

.....

These situations can be opportunities to figure out what is right for you.

.....

Here are some tips to make resisting peer pressure easier:



BE PREPARED » Think through situations ahead of time. Plan how you will say 'NO!' if someone offers you a cigarette, a drink, or a ride with someone you don't know well. Practice saying it in front of the mirror, so when you find yourself in that situation, you won't have to think. The kids who are pressuring you will be less likely to push back when you say no if you sound confident and sure.

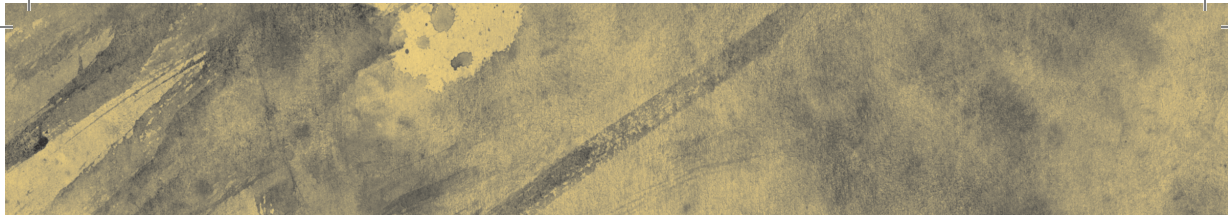
AVOID IT » Spend time with other kids who don't try to get you to do things you don't want to do. It helps to have at least one friend who is also willing to say, "NO!" Also avoid places where you feel uncomfortable. If friends are hanging out and you are worried that they may be up to something bad, suggest another activity or tell them you'll meet them later.




BE PROUD » Say "NO!" and be proud that you are being strong and doing what is right for you! Stand up straight, make eye contact and don't apologize for your actions. Feel good about what you are doing.

BE A GOOD FRIEND » Don't put your friends in situations where they feel bad about doing what you want to do. If someone is pressuring your friend, help him or her stand up.





HAVE COURAGE



Learning to handle peer pressure gives teenagers like you more confidence and maturity. If just one teen stands up against unwanted peer pressure, usually others will join him or her. It's not easy to resist negative peer pressure, but when you do, you will feel good about it afterward. And you may even be a positive influence on your peers who feel the same way.

Now that you KNOW MORE, you can find the courage to stand up against PEER PRESSURE.

RESOURCES

Parts of this booklet were derived from the following sources:

- *Facts for Families: Peer Pressure #104*
American Academy of Child and Adolescent
- *How Does Peer Pressure Affect Juvenile Delinquency?*
LiveStrong Foundation | livestrong.com
- *Peer Pressure* | kidshealth.org
- *Peer Pressure* | teenhelp.com
- *Peer Pressure* | teensforlife.com
- *Teen Girls and Peer Pressure From Boys*
LiveStrong Foundation | livestrong.com

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