

Bluffing



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Identify Problem: Influences are all around us. We are pressured to do many things. Sometimes these pressures are done consciously or subconsciously; doesn't matter which, it happens all the time and many times is very effective. Kids want so much to fit in that they will say and do anything they normally wouldn't do and follow the crowd. Peer pressure can affect the way we dress, the music we listen to, the way we behave and the decisions we make. This activity will help kids realize how much people follow the crowd, and teach them to avoid following and making their own decision.

Materials: Board game of Balderdash (can be purchased at the store or online)

Exercise: Play the game as directed on the box. Watch and listen as the kids play to see their reaction, this helps with discussion. Are they following the groups' choice or sticking with their own.

Questions and Discussion:

- How many of you went along with what the group was picking rather than your own choice?
- What are some of the factors that influenced your decision?
- How does peer pressure play a part in something like this?
- Would you risk losing a friend to something you felt strongly about?
- How can you prepare yourself for group pressure situations?
- How many of you went with your gut feeling or took a chance? Did it benefit you?
- Did you evaluate your options and what the outcomes might be before making the decision?
- Do you think of consequences when someone tries to pressure you into doing something?

How to Avoid Peer Pressure

1. **Avoid putting yourself in situations that puts you in a negative situation.** For example, if you don't smoke and you know a lot of people go to a certain spot to smoke, steer clear of that place.
2. **Be careful when choosing friends to hang around.** Look for friends with positive qualities.
3. **Start saying no to your friends when you don't want to do something.** This is perhaps the hardest thing to do. Your friends may not want to hang around you because they might say you've changed.

4. **Learn how to be an individual.** You don't have to always be in the "In Crowd". This will help you later in life too. You don't always have to be accepted by everyone.

How to Cope with Peer Pressure

Know who you are. Develop a strong sense of identity. Be clear about what you want out of life. If you are sure about your values, then you will be less likely to compromise them for someone else. It is easier to cope with negative peer pressure when it is in opposition to your beliefs.

Build your self Esteem. Feeling bad about yourself makes you more vulnerable to peer pressure. Take good care of yourself. Set goals and celebrate your accomplishments. Participate in activities that make you more confident.

Trust your instincts. No one knows what is right for you more than you. If something feels wrong, then chances are that it is wrong. Your intuition is a great too. Heed its warning to make good choices and cope with peer pressure.

Surround yourself with like-minded people. Everyone needs a support system. If your confidants are people who wouldn't steer you in the wrong direction, then that's one less source of negative peer pressure for you to worry about. Those same people will be there for you when you experience peer pressure from elsewhere.

Learn to say "No". Everyone wants acceptance, but your need for approval should not make decisions for you. Exercise your freedom of choice to cope with peer pressure and avoid creating resentment. Compromise is a part of every relationship, but people pleasing can be detrimental to your well being.

Refusal Skills:

1. Ask questions - Be sure you know what someone wants you to do. "Do you have any money for that candy bar?" "Will there be drugs at the party?" "Who's going to be at the party?"
2. Name the trouble - Tell them that this is something you don't want to do and why. "Taking the candy bar without paying - that's stealing?" "That's illegal."
3. State the Consequences - What could happen if you went against your better judgment? "If I do that I could get grounded" "If I do that I could get in an accident" "If I do that I could be arrested."
4. Suggest Realistic Alternatives - Suggest something fun and safe to do. "Instead, why don't we go to a movie" "Instead why don't we play video games."
5. Move on - Get yourself out of the situation. Move it, sell it and leave the door open: "If you change your mind, I'm going to get some friends to play basketball at the park, come over if

you want” “If you change your mind, I’ll be at my house watching a movie, you can come if you want.”

6. Other ideas - Switch topics, use humor, walk away, use an excuse, don’t pay attention.

