

Shocking Truth About Peer Pressure



Lightning Reaction

Identify the Problem: Peer pressure is a real issue with kids. The greater the pressure the harder it is to resist. Usually the pressure becomes harder to resist the longer period of time over which it is applied. We need to help kids understand it is important to know how to avoid peer pressure, avoiding things and places when they know it is not a good situation to be in. Peer pressure usually works best on those that are least prepared to handle it. It is important to teach kids refusal skills so they know how to react when they are in a situation they need to get out of.

Activity:

Materials Needed:

- Lightning Reaction Game (can be purchased at a store)

Challenge some individual in the group to play. Tell them it tests their reflexes. This game will shock someone, don't tell them that. After you have played a round and they figure it out just watch how things play out. Some kids will not want to play anymore, they will be afraid. Watch how kids try to talk them into it, you can help them a little by "pressuring" them to.

Some kids will right away want to try it just because they want to show they are tough and cool. After you have played and given everyone the opportunity to have a chance to be "pressured". Process it in how your group went as they played.

Discussion Ideas:

- Did anyone pressure you into doing something you didn't want to do?
- How many of you gave in and did it, even when you knew there was a chance you could be shocked?
- How many of you "Pressured" others to try it?
- How can this compare to other things such as drugs and alcohol, tobacco, vandalism?
- **Ask questions similar to the above on how your group played out with the game.

Identify Skills: How to Cope with Peer Pressure

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **Trust your instincts.** No one knows what is right for your more than you. If something feels wrong, then chances are that it is wrong. Your intuition is a great too. Heed it's warning to make good choices and cope with peer pressure.

4. **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.
5. **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.

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.

Refusal Skills:

1. **Ask Questions-** Be sure you know what someone is wanting 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 attentions

