



Dealing With Peer Pressure



Overview

Fitting in with other people makes us feel good. It's nice to be part of a group, because it shows we're liked and respected by our peers. But if you feel pressured to fit in, you may be tempted to do things you normally wouldn't do. We call this feeling "peer pressure." And it can be tough to deal with. Here are some strategies to help.

Stop and think

First, If you feel pressured to do something, stop and think. Be honest with yourself. Do you feel OK about it? Does it seem right to you? Could it lead to serious consequences? If you're uncomfortable, something is wrong. Stop and set some boundaries. You need to do what's right for you.

Say no

Often, the most direct way to deal with peer pressure is to say "no." But saying "no" isn't always easy. If it's too hard to say "no," make up an excuse. Or delay. Say you need to think about it. Say "not today" or "maybe another time."

Reach out

You may need to reach out to someone you trust. Talk to a parent, a mentor or a counselor about how you're feeling. They can give you advice and support.

Choose friends wisely

And finally, realize that you probably won't be liked by everyone all the time. And that's OK. If you're being mocked, belittled, shamed or criticized, you need to rethink your friendships. Real friends don't pressure you. They respect your decisions. So give yourself permission to avoid people who don't treat you the way real friends do. By using your head and choosing your friends carefully, you can steer clear of peer pressure.