

Peer Pressure: Helping your child navigate peer pressure and make healthy choices

Mental Health Series



How Peer Pressure Influences Your Child in Positive and Negative Ways

Peer pressure is the influence exerted by people within the same social group. It's often associated with friends, but peers can also include anyone of a similar age, ability, or social status.

While peer pressure is often viewed negatively, it can have positive effects too. For example, it can motivate teens to excel in school or participate in community service. Learning group norms can be an important part of social development, helping kids understand how to live and interact with others effectively.

A child's reaction to peer pressure can showcase different aspects of their personality.

- Natural leaders are often less susceptible to negative peer pressure.
- Followers may have a harder time resisting negative peer pressure.

As a parent you want to learn the signs, types, and impact of peer pressure, and how to handle it when your child experiences it.

For parents knowing the signs to look for that might indicate your child is navigating or experiencing peer pressure can be very helpful. Those signs include:

- Avoiding school or social situations
- Being very image-conscious
- Changes in behavior
- Expressing feelings of not fitting in
- Low moods, including anxiety and depression
- Making social comparisons
- Trouble sleeping
- Trying new hair or clothing styles

Research indicates that children with low self-esteem are more susceptible to peer influence and a desire to conform. Navigating peer pressure can be challenging, but you can support your child positively and effectively by:

- Keeping the lines of communication open.
- Offer support and advice without judgment.
- Choose your battles wisely.

- Get to know their friends.
- Discuss important issues openly.
- Set healthy boundaries.

Remember, being a parent sometimes means setting firm boundaries to guide your child. If you suspect they are involved in harmful behavior, it's important to talk with your child and provide guidance as necessary. This proves to your child that you care and are involved in their wellbeing. Setting boundaries when your child faces negative peer pressure not only protects them but also reinforces positive influences. Clear guidelines help them make informed decisions, reject harmful behaviors, and embrace positive peer pressure. This support empowers your child to excel academically, participate in community service, and build healthy friendships, fostering resilience and confidence.

Teaching our kids to say “NO” to negative peer pressure

Share with your child that saying no can be difficult or uncomfortable but these tips can help:

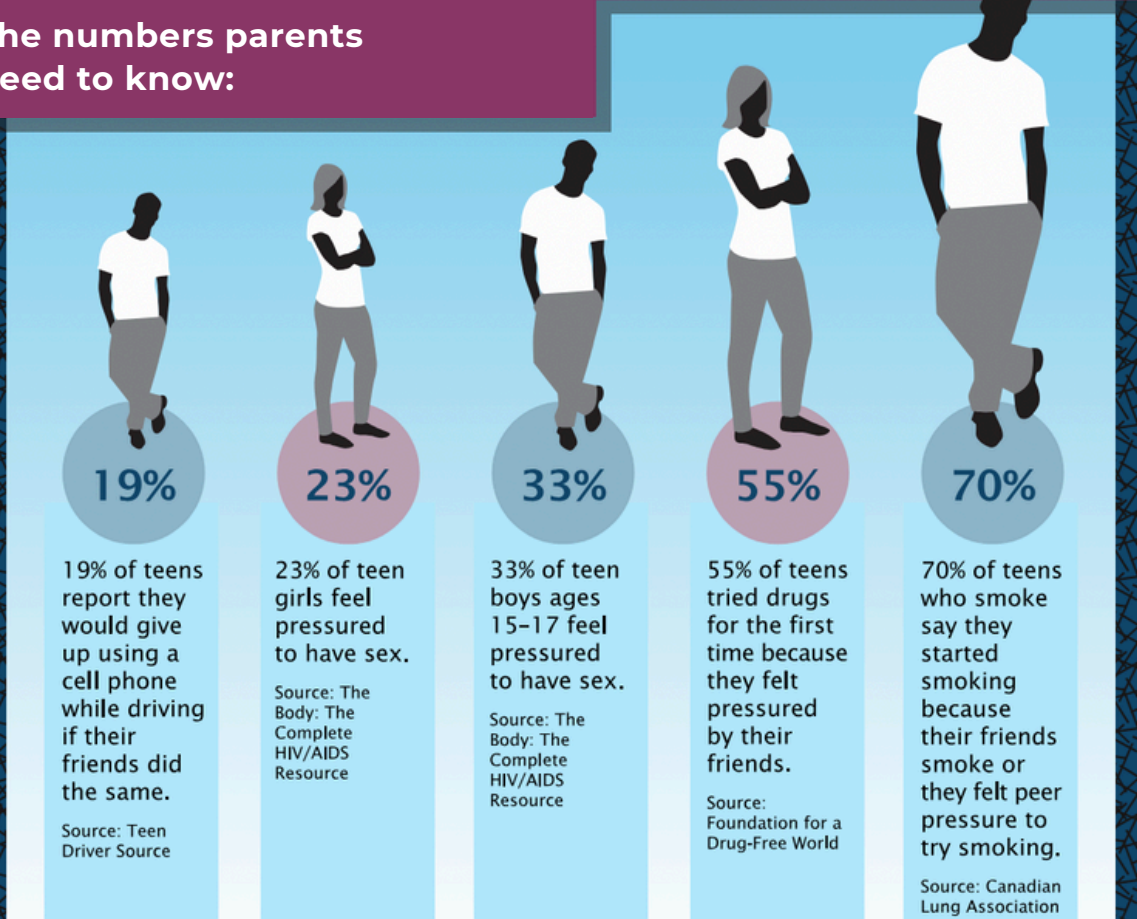
- Pay attention to your feelings
- Review your beliefs about what is right and wrong
- Have the self-confidence to speak up
- Think of consequences
- Practice saying no
- Walk away and be with others
- It's okay to say no if it could hurt you or someone else.

Together, frequently discuss peer pressure and practice how to respond.

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