

Peer Pressure? Let's Talk About It

Outcome

USC7.6 Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including assertiveness skills, to effectively and skilfully manage peer pressure (e.g., alcohol and drugs, exclusionary behaviours, family expectations, academic pressures, rules/laws).

Indicators

USC7.6(B) Analyze peer norms and trends and reflect on the consequences of following and/or resisting them.

USC7.6(D) Examine how peer pressure may be positive or negative.

USC7.6(L) Assess the importance of avoiding negative peer pressure/attachment for the sake of belonging.

Refer to the background information pages on:

- Smokeless Tobacco
- Harmful Effects of Smoking
- Tobacco Addiction
- Refusal Techniques

Activity

1. Have students interview a trusted adult to assist them in learning how to make informed decisions regarding tobacco and peer pressure.
2. Have the students conduct the interview using the following three documents:
 - Letter to Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult;
 - Student Questions for Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult;
 - Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult Questions for Student.
3. Once the interview has occurred, ask the student to document personal thoughts and reflections based on their interview discussion.
4. Have the students answer the post-interview questions and prepare to demonstrate two key lessons to the class (What stood out the most for them? What surprised them?, etc.). As a class, identify the strategies that each student is representing to resist peer pressure.

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Letter to Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult

Dear Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult:

Thank you for participating in this interview. Health education aims for students to be able to make informed decisions based on health-related knowledge and apply decisions that will improve personal health and/or the health of others.

One way for students to make informed decisions is to explore and to learn from a variety of sources such as family, friends and the communities that surround them. The purpose of this interview is to support students in learning how to make informed decisions. This will also provide you and the youth interviewer with the opportunity to discuss tobacco and how to effectively and skilfully manage peer pressure. If you use tobacco products, please be honest in your responses, as it is important that our youth understand that tobacco is both addictive and harmful to their health.

At the end of this learning experience, you will be invited to interview your son/daughter/young person about what he/she has learned about tobacco and how the peer pressures faced by various generations, ages, backgrounds, etc. may be similar and/or different.

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Student Questions for Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult

Part 1: Read the six discussion points/questions that are provided and then create two of your own questions to ask a parent/guardian/trusted adult.

1. Reflect on the peer norms and trends of tobacco use when you were my age (e.g., Do you believe that there were more non-tobacco users than tobacco users? Was using tobacco more socially acceptable than now?)
2. Reflect on the pressures and influences to use tobacco products that you faced when you were my age. How do you believe this is similar to what people my age face today? How do you believe this is different to what people my age face today?
3. Describe a situation where you experienced positive peer pressure.
4. Describe a situation where you experienced negative peer pressure.
5. What were some of the consequences of following or resisting the pressures to use tobacco when you were my age? Does your decision to engage in or resist using tobacco affect you today? If so, how? If not, why?
6. What two reasons would you identify as important for a person my age to avoid negative peer pressure/attachment for the sake of belonging?
 - 1.
 - 2.

Note: You may wish to work with your students to adapt these questions to better represent your community.

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Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult Questions for Student

Part 2: Ask and discuss the following questions/discussion points with the youth:

1. Reflect and describe the peer norms and trends of tobacco use that you experience today.
2. Describe the greatest internal pressure and peer pressures that you face today.
3. Do you experience peer pressure to use tobacco?
4. For you personally, what are the consequences of responding to peer pressure and using tobacco?
5. For you personally, what are the benefits of resisting peer pressure and not using tobacco?
6. What are a few strategies that would help you to resist peer pressure to use tobacco products?
7. What else would you like to discuss related to tobacco and/or peer pressure?

DID YOU KNOW?

Current research shows:

- Tobacco addiction is considered to be a pediatric disease as 90% of tobacco users are those who smoke before their 18th birthday.
- Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, 2009
- Adolescents are at greatest risk of smoking if their parents began smoking at an early age.
- Science Daily, Nov. 24, 2008
- In 2010, Saskatchewan's smoking rates for ages 15-19 years was 20%. This is the highest in the country, as the national smoking average for this age group is 12%.
- Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, 1999-2010

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Student Questions - Post-Interview

Part 3: Reflect back on the discussion that you had with your parent/guardian/trusted adult and reflect/answer the following questions.

1. Describe how resisting peer pressure takes personal commitment, skill, and practice. Provide examples of how you will resist tobacco use.

2. Demonstrate the two biggest lessons from your interview to the class. (What stood out the most to you? What surprised you?, etc.)