

## Free Discussion

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### Peer pressure



#### How to Combat Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is one thing that all teens have in common. You can't escape it -- it is everywhere. No matter how popular you are, how well liked you may be or how together you feel, sooner or later you will have to face peer pressure. Whether it is pressure to conform to a group norm (like wearing certain types of clothes or taking part in specific activities and clubs) or pressure to act (like having sex, trying drugs or alcohol, or alienating another teen), peer pressure is something everybody has to deal with at some time in their life. How successfully you handle peer pressure depends a great deal on how you feel about yourself and your place in the world. There are certain "risk factors" for peer pressure, personality traits that make you more prone to give in to peer pressure.

The traits that put you at higher risk for falling in to the peer pressure trap include;

- Low self esteem
- Lack of confidence
- Uncertainty about ones place within a given peer group
- No personal interests exclusive of one's peer group
- Feeling isolated from peers and/or family
- Lack of direction in life
- Depression
- Eating disorders

- Poor academic abilities or performance
- Fear of one's peers
- Lack of strong ties to friends, feeling that friends could turn on you easily or with little reason
- Close bond with a bully

### **How do you prepare yourself to face peer pressure and win?**

The answer is simple.

- Prepare yourself ahead of time for uncomfortable situations, mentally script out the reaction you WANT to have in a given situation (the reaction that goes AGAINST peer pressure) and play that script out in your head over and over again.
- Know where you stand on key issues like sex, drugs and alcohol and do not allow anybody to make you deviate from your position.
- Do not allow yourself to seek comfort in making other people feel bad or sad, flatly refuse to take part in anything designed to cause harm or distress to another person and speak up when/if such a situation arises. You do not have to be angry or confrontational, a comment like "lets not bother with this" or "why do we need to do this" is usually enough to inspire others who are uncomfortable to stand up and be counted.
- Think of yourself as a leader and act accordingly. The more you see yourself in a leadership role the more comfortable you will feel asserting your own opinions and feelings.
- Refuse to let yourself down! Often when we give in to peer pressure it hurts already fragile self esteem creating a vicious circle. If you think of giving in to peer pressure as letting yourself down it becomes easier to combat and your confidence will earn you respect.