

USEFUL FOR:

Understanding why you sometimes feel pressured to act differently around some people, and figuring out what to do about it.

THE PRESSURE OF PEER PRESSURE



Wanting to belong to a group is totally normal and finding a good group of buddies has loads of benefits. But when you start to change as a way of trying to fit in, you might be **doing more harm than good**.



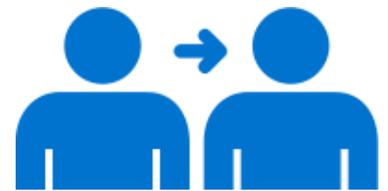
What is peer pressure?

Peer pressure is all about being influenced by the people around you to do and say things that you wouldn't normally do or say. It isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes being around your friends might encourage you to do something good, like work harder in class. But on the flip side, some influences can be negative. For example, your friends might pressure you to treat other people in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

How does peer pressure happen?

Peer pressure happens all the time and comes in three different forms:

1. **Direct:** when someone tells you what to do.
2. **Indirect:** when you find yourself acting differently around a certain group of people without them telling you to.
3. **Self-motivated:** when you pressure yourself to fit in.



How do I deal with peer pressure?

Peer pressure can be tricky. But there are a bunch of tips you can try to make peer pressure a thing of the past.

Tips for in the moment:

- › **Say no.** If you don't feel comfortable doing something, it's okay to say "no". You might think it sounds silly or uncool but a good friend will respect your decisions.
- › **Make an excuse to leave.** Feel like you can't say no directly? Try and leave the situation that is making you uncomfortable.
- › **Change the subject.** Try to direct the conversation away from the situation at hand.

Tips to avoid peer pressure in the future:

- › **Choose mates who are a good match for you.** Hang out with people who have similar interests to yours so you're not bending your behaviour to suit them.
- › **Respect.** If you respect other people's decisions, they are more likely to respect yours.

If you've tried these tips but peer pressure is still a problem for you, talk about it with someone you trust like a parent or counsellor. They can help you get to the bottom of it.

To wrap up

- › Peer pressure is about people influencing the way you behave, and it can be good or bad.
- › Peer pressure can be direct, indirect or self-motivated (pressuring yourself to fit in).
- › Practice saying "no" to people if they're making you feel uncomfortable.