

Peer on Peer Abuse - Peer Pressure

What Peer Pressure Means:

- Your friends and peers influence your day to day decisions, even if you don't realise it.
- Sometimes this can be a good thing. Maybe a friend suggested a book and now it's a favourite.
- Other times, they might pressure you to do things you really don't want to do. Like hurt someone, bully someone or miss school.
- Peer pressure is feeling like you have to do something just because all your friends are doing it. But it's OK to say no and make your own choices.

It can be hard to say 'no' to your friends, especially when they're all joining in. Sometimes it might feel that you have to do what they say in order to be accepted. It can make you feel scared and alone.

It's not alright for friends to pressure you like this. It's not your fault. Try these tips to help:

1. Say it with confidence - Practice saying 'no' so that it's easier when someone asks. Avoid situations which feel uncomfortable or unsafe. You could explain that you're going to pay for something rather than steal it.
2. Try not to judge them - By respecting their choices they should respect yours.
3. Spend time with friends who can say 'no'. - It takes confidence to say no to your friends. You could try seeing how your other friends stand up to peer pressure and can try this too.
4. Suggest something else to do - If you don't feel comfortable doing what your friends are doing why not suggest something you could do instead.

Being Assertive

Being assertive can help you to explain how you feel and what you need, without being rude or aggressive. These skills can help you stand up for yourself and still treat others with respect.

- Clearly explain what you need or want from someone without being pushy or trying to frighten them.

- Sometimes it can be hard to say how you really feel, especially if it means disagreeing with someone else. But everyone has the right to say how they feel and ask for what they need.

When to be assertive:

- Standing up to people who bully.
- Saying 'no' if someone is pressuring you to do something you know is wrong.
- Asking a teacher for help or assistance.
- Saying 'no' when someone asks you to do something illegal.

Stand up to friends

- Your friends may have got used to you always going along with them. They may be surprised when you start standing up for yourself.
- They may try and make you go back to the way it used to be. It's really important to keep remembering your assertiveness skills if they do.
- Remember you have the right to say how you feel. A good friend should respect this, even if it means you disagree with them.
- Be careful what you say as aggressive behaviour can hurt other people as can saying nasty things or swearing. It's good to stand up for what you want but without being aggressive or intimidating.
- Build your confidence by acting as if you feel really confident and assertive and this can help you feel stronger inside.
- Stay calm and pick a good time to have your conversation. Don't try to start a difficult conversation if you feel yourself getting frustrated and angry. Try and calm down by taking long, slow breaths and stopping to count to 10. If you feel you are losing control it might be better to walk away.