



SEVEN PROJECT

STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

PEER PRESSURE

Discussion Guide

Use these tips and the questions that follow to facilitate a discussion on character:

- Use the first 2-3 questions to warm students up and help them feel comfortable responding.
- Encourage students to open up and share personal experiences when appropriate.
- Keep the discussion focused on the topic at hand.
- Keep the discussion positive and encouraging; discourage negative comments toward any person.
- Don't be afraid of silence. Give students a few seconds to form a response. If no one responds, give your own response to the question then ask someone directly to give their opinion.

Discussion Questions

Define the word "peer" (Peers range from classmates to work associates. Anyone in your age group is considered a peer).

How important is it for you to be accepted by your peers?

You know you are experiencing peer pressure when someone tries to influence what you do and the way you act

What are some situations in which you have, or someone you know has, experienced peer pressure? (Possible answers could include: using illegal substances, stealing, cheating, gossiping, lying, etc.)

Why do you think it's so difficult to withstand peer pressure? (Possible answers could include wanting acceptance, don't want to be different, no time to think, go with the flow, etc.)

What would you do if one of your friends began pressuring you to do something you didn't want to do, or didn't approve of?

If someone were consistently trying to pressure you to do something you were uncomfortable with, would you consider that person a friend? Why or why not?

Why do you think peer pressure is so often associated with negative behavior?

What are some ways to avoid negative peer pressure?

- Make friends with those who share the same values as you, and who don't do things that you might question.
 - Avoid uncertain places or situations.
 - Make sure events are chaperoned and go with a friend or group.
 - Think about what pressure you might encounter and how to respond to it.
 - Introduce your peers to your parents.
 - If you are pressured to do something, give an excuse to get out of the situation or make a joke about it. Don't do things just because your friends are doing it, and stay true to your beliefs.
 - Ask yourself, what you will be risking and what are the consequences?
- (adapted from www.nationalsave.org)

What strategies have you used to withstand peer pressure?

There is power in positive peer pressure. In what ways can we influence our peers positively? (Possible answers could include: encourage peers to study, do well in school, do their best at whatever they choose, be good citizens, make wise choices, etc.)

Close the session by encouraging students to develop positive peer influences. Read the following from Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE):

“Positive peer influences can help students choose healthy, appropriate behaviors over unhealthy and inappropriate behaviors. As a student, you have the choice of whether to surround yourself with friends who will positively or negatively influence you. You also have the responsibility of deciding whether you will be a positive or negative peer influence on others.”