

# Peer Pressure

First of all...who are your peers?

Your peers are your friends and the people around you who are in your class or who are about the same age as you.

They may be really good friends, people you know well or just people you see from time to time at school or in your community.

## WHAT IS PEER PRESSURE

- is the pressure we feel from our peers.
- makes you feel like you should act, talk and dress a certain way...just like all of your peers.
- is not something you talk about...everyone is just doing it.
- can be stressful, especially if you feel different from your peers in a bad way.
- is when you feel like you need to do things to be “cool” and to be liked by others.
- can make you feel like there’s something wrong with you or you aren’t good enough.
- can affect the way you treat others and yourself.

Your peers can have a big influence on the choices you make in your life.

You may not even realize the effect they have on your decisions!

You may notice yourself wearing certain brand names, listening to certain types of music or acting a certain way so that you will fit in with your group of peers.

While it’s not so bad if your musical tastes and fashion sense are influenced by your friends, some things are more serious.

The pressure to fit in with your peers can lead to some bad decisions if you don’t **THINK FOR YOURSELF**.

Peer pressure can make you believe that being different is not cool...but in reality, **EVERYONE** is different.

It would be boring if we were all the same.

Peer pressure can make you believe you have to give up your values, or pretend to be someone you’re not.

It can make you treat people without respect and judge people without taking the time to get to know them.

**BE AWARE:** Don’t fall into the trap of negative peer pressure!

## **THINK FOR YOURSELF**

If someone tells you it’s not cool to wear white socks, are you going to believe them?

What if they tell you that being single is for losers and that you need to have a boyfriend/girlfriend to fit in?

Don’t believe everything you hear!

Learn to make healthy choices for yourself.

## BE YOURSELF

Sure, it sounds easy to “be yourself”... but sometimes people find it easier to pretend to be someone else.

Each person has their own likes, dislikes and interests.

Don’t be afraid to try new things, but be true to yourself.

You are a unique person who deserves to be valued and respected.

## **BE A ROLE MODEL**

Everyone can influence their peers even **YOU!**

Learn to stand up for yourself and for what you believe in.

Don’t accept disrespect.

Be a person you are proud of.

Stand up for others who may be facing difficulties caused by peer pressure.

Speak up and be heard.

## Stereotypes

- are judgments you make about a person or a group of people.
- may or may not be true.
- affect the way you treat other people.
- Don’t believe everything you hear!

Think about the stereotypes

You may have heard about people who

- have lots of tattoos and piercings.
- like to play hockey.
- wear glasses.
- wear brand name clothing.
- enjoy skateboarding

- like hip hop music or heavy metal or rap or country or pop or opera
- like to play computer games.
- make their own clothes.
- own a motorbike.

Don't believe the stereotypes!

Each person is unique.

Take the time to look beyond the stereotypes!

Connect with real people!

Make a list of stereotypes you've heard about GIRLS.

- How should they act?
- How should they dress?
- What should they like and dislike?
- How should they look?
- What should they be interested in?

Make a list of stereotypes you've heard about GUYS.

- How should they act?
- How should they dress?
- What should they like and dislike?
- How should they look?
- What should they be interested in?

Do you fit the stereotypes?

Do your friends?

Think for yourself! Be yourself!

### Self Esteem

Self-esteem is about believing in yourself and in your abilities.

It is about feeling proud of who you are, and of your talents and accomplishments.

Most people have times when they feel good about themselves, and other times when they feel not-so-good.

A person with good self-esteem has mostly positive feelings about herself or himself.

I'm smart! / Lots of people like me! / I look nice!  
I'm good at... / I take good care of myself!

A person with low self-esteem thinks mostly negative thoughts about himself or herself.

I'm dull and boring./ Nobody likes me. / I can't do anything right! / No one will ever date me.  
I don't deserve respect.

### Why does self-esteem matter?

Your self-esteem affects the way you think, act and feel.

It affects your personality, your choices and the way you get along with others.

Self-esteem is important in your relationships. If you have low self-esteem, you may feel like you're not good enough or that no one will ever love you.

You may think it's better to stay in an unhealthy or dangerous relationship than to lose your partner.

You may feel like you are not strong enough to leave the relationship, or that you deserve to be treated badly.

Self-esteem can also affect your choices around sexuality.

If you believe you are "worth it" and that you have control over your own body, you are more likely to make good decisions for yourself.

You will be comfortable with being in a relationship or being single.

You will talk to your partner about your boundaries.

When a person feels worthless and unlovable, they are more likely to make unhealthy decisions.

They may do things that make them feel uncomfortable, just to try to make someone else happy.

**Everyone deserves respect!**