

TEEN TURNING POINTS



Teen peer pressure

Peer pressure is when people your age try to influence the way you think or act in positive and negative ways. Positive peer pressure may encourage you to attain good grades, maintain good health, or participate in school activities. Negative peer pressure, unfortunately, occurs more frequently and can even hurt you. It may influence you to use alcohol or other drugs, skip school, steal, have sex, vandalize property, disobey parents and teachers, lie, or influence others to do bad things.

Peer pressure affects everyone

Peer pressure affects everyone, especially teenagers. It can interfere with many of life's major decisions through its negative influence.

Because it can affect you negatively, influence you to use poor judgment, or make you feel uncomfortable, learning how to cope with peer pressure is important.

Be comfortable

Here are some suggestions to help you cope with peer pressure, make your own decisions, and feel comfortable being yourself.

- Believe in yourself (have self-confidence).
- Participate in activities you can enjoy by yourself.
- Respect yourself and others.
- Talk to your parents and a trusted adult (teacher, coach, or minister).
- Make new friends.
- Decide what is important to you and make your own decisions.
- Take time to make a good decision.
- Know and accept your strengths and weaknesses.
- Set realistic goals for now and the future.
- Take pride in yourself and your accomplishments.
- Know how to resist peer pressure.
- Talk to a counselor. Don't be afraid. It's a sign of strength to ask for help.

Are you using sound judgment?

The next time you are being influenced to use poor judgment, remember this simple checklist.

Take a careful look at the situation.

Decide if it makes you uncomfortable and if you want to participate. Trust yourself.

Consider what would happen to you if you participated in the situation. Ask yourself if the positive consequences outweigh the negative consequences.

Make a decision with which you are comfortable. Does your decision affect other people? After careful consideration of the consequences you should be able to make the right decision.

Let others know your decision. This may be difficult, but be confident when announcing your decision. Your decision may encourage someone else to reconsider poor judgment.

For more help

For help in an emergency, call Crisis Services at (810) 257-3740 or toll free at (877) 346-3648, where a counselor is available 24 hours a day. TTY users call (810) 232-6310. For non-emergency services, call (810) 257-3742.

Other Genesee Health systems handouts include: *Assisting teens with healthy grieving, Teen-parent communications, Adolescence and independence, Out of the blue, Team up with self-esteem, You've got peer power, Gang-related violence, and Healthy dating relationships.* © www.genhs.org



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