

I WISH MY TEACHER KNEW: THE IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE

Length: 30-45 minutes / Designed for 4th through 8th grade

Summary

According to 3rd grade teacher, **Kyle Schwartz**, “No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.” Significant relationships with students are built through classroom activities that build trust and provide them with an opportunity to communicate about important topics, such as peer pressure. Inspired by Ms. Schwartz’s, **I Wish My Teacher Knew** exercise, this lesson provides students with an opportunity to share something they wish their teacher knew about peer pressure.

Beginning with a teacher-led discussion, students will engage in a whole-class conversation about peer pressure. Learning includes reflecting on times when they’ve been subjected to peer pressure, understanding how peer pressure impacts healthy decision making, identifying strategies to cope with peer pressure, and concludes with students independently sharing something they wish their teacher knew.

Objectives

Through this lesson, students will:

- Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on healthy behaviors.
- Identify strategies to cope with peer pressure.
- Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to make healthy decisions important to future success.
- Communicate through written and visual language.



Standards

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| CCSS Literacy Standards: | NHES 2024: |
| • W.5.2 | • 6-8. 4.8.4 |
| • W.5.2.D | • 6-8. 5.8.2 |
| • W.5.2.E | • 6-8. 5.8.6 |
| • W.5.3 | |
| • W.5.3.D | |
| • W.5.4 | |
| • SL.5.1 | |
| • 5.1.B | |
| • 5.1.C | |
| • SL.5.4 | |

What You'll Need

- Index Cards

To learn more about teaching units on the impacts of underage drinking and peer pressure, see additional lessons from *Ask, Listen, Learn*

[See all lessons](#)



For more info head to AskListenLearn.org

- 1 Introduce the topic of peer pressure with a whole class discussion using any or all of the following questions:
 - In your own words, how would you define peer pressure?
 - What does peer pressure look like? What does it feel like?
 - How do you respond to peer pressure?
 - Why do you think people are easily swayed by the influence of friends or classmates?
 - Why does it feel hard to escape peer pressure?
 - Why might it be hard to stand up to friends?
 - Is peer pressure always negative? Can it have a positive effect?
 - What are some of the risks of peer pressure?
 - What could be some benefits to peer pressure?
- 2 Discuss how peer pressure can be positive (a friend inspires you to read a new book, work together to improve your grades, practice a sport together to make a team, etc.) or negative when it leads you to engage in risky activities and make poor choices.
- 3 Pose the following question to students to brainstorm ideas: What advice would you give a friend who is dealing with peer pressure?
- 4 Introduce the idea of mentors and trusted adults as a strategy to cope with difficult situations. Define what a mentor is.
- 5 Share an anecdote about how a mentor helped you during a difficult time or provided guidance to make a choice. Alternatively, you can read a book (or excerpt) that features a student facing peer pressure. See suggested titles below.
- 6 Ask students if they have anyone in their lives they consider to be a mentor or someone who they look up to as a role model. Students can independently identify the individual or share if time permits.



- 7 Allow students to reflect on peer pressure felt at school or home using the following discussion questions:
 - Have there been times you have observed peer pressure inside or outside of school. What happened and how did you handle it?
 - Are there times where you felt influenced to make decisions that were not healthy or responsible? What happened? Was there anything they would do differently now?
 - How might your mentor or trusted adult be able to help you with peer pressure?
- 8 Provide an index card to each student. They should write the phrase: "I wish my teacher knew..." and then complete the sentence. Let students know their writing will be kept confidential unless they would like to share.

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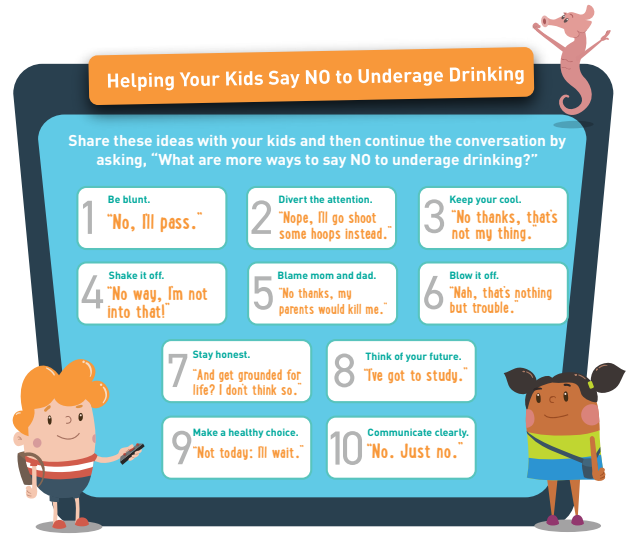


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Books

- **Fourth Grade Rats** by Jerry Spinelli (grades 3-4)
- **Confessions of a Former Bully** by Trudy Ludwig and Beth Adams (grades 3-6)
- **Blubber** by Judy Blume (grades 3-7)
- **Ink Girls** by Marieke Nijkamp (grades 3-7)
- **The Very Unfortunate Wish of Melony Yoshimura** by Waka T. Brown (grades 3-7)
- **Warrior on the Mound** by Sandra W. Headen (grades 3-7)
- **Crash** by Jerry Spinelli (grades 4-6)
- **All's Faire in Middle School** by Victoria Jamieson (grades 4-7)
- **Jane, the Fox, and Me** by Fanny Britt (grades 4-9)
- **The Witch of Blackbird Pond** by Elizabeth George Speare (grades 5-7)
- **Stargirl** by Jerry Spinelli (grades 5-8)
- **Scrawl** by Mark Shulman (grade 5+)
- **Buddha Boy** by Kathe Koja (grades 6-10)
- **The Chocolate War** by Robert Cormier (grades 7-9)
- **Not So Pure and Simple** by Lamar Giles (grades 7+)



Supplemental Resources

- [10 Ways to Say "NO" Infographic](#)
- [Saying "NO" to Negative Peer Pressure Video](#)

Lessons:

- **How Alcohol Affects The Brain** - Eight lessons and animated videos that take kids on a journey through the developing brain to learn how alcohol and cannabis affects it.
- **Ask, Listen, Learn: Alcohol and the Developing Brain Digital Exploration** - In this self-paced module, students learn about the effects of alcohol on the developing brain and use this information to make informed and responsible decisions when confronted with peer pressure to drink underage.
- **Brain, Body Behavior: Refusal Role Play** - Students react to scenarios related to underage drinking with a refusal strategy, an acceptance of a positive alternative, or a strategy to keep friends from making unhealthy choices.
- **Classroom Activity: Making Choices** - This lesson focuses on responsible decision making and concludes with a mini goal-setting session to help them make responsible choices in the future.
- **Classroom Activity: Defining Responsibility** - Students explore the concept of responsibility with the goal of encouraging their peers to make smart and healthy choices.

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