

I wish my teacher knew:

The Impact of Peer Pressure



Goals:

- Understanding the impact of peer pressure
- Building community within a classroom of learners

OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors
- Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health and goal setting
- Students will reflect on pressure from peers and their home situation
- Students will learn to identify strategies to cope with peer pressure and learn what's important to their future success.
- Students will communicate through written and visual language to express

NATIONAL STANDARDS:

- Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information)

Developed by Leticia Barr and Elena Sonnino, Education Program Amplifiers for Responsibility.org. Leticia and Elena are former classroom teachers who taught in Washington, D.C. area school systems (Montgomery County Public Schools and Fairfax County, respectively) and combined have over 20 years of classroom teaching experience and providing professional development to teachers.

RESOURCES:

This lesson was inspired by the lesson that Kyle Schwartz used to understand her students by asking them to complete the sentence: *I wish my teacher knew...*



<http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/colorado-teacher-shares-heartbreaking-notes-graders/story?id=30368103>

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES AND INFORMATION:

Confidence in Your skin = Confidence to Withstand Peer Pressure:



<http://asklistenlearn.org/confidence-in-your-skin-confidence-to-withstand-peer-pressure/>

How to help kids deal with peer pressure:



<http://asklistenlearn.org/how-to-help-kids-deal-with-peer-pressure/>

Peer Pressure from National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:



<http://www.thecoolspot.gov/pressures.aspx>



MATERIALS:

Books to prompt class discussion or as an extension:

- *The Berenstain Bears and the In-Crowd* by Stan Berenstain (While this book is young for class reading, it can be used to show short examples)
- *Blubber* by Judy Blume
- *Fourth Grade Rats* by Jerry Spinelli
- *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli
- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
- *Bully* by Patricia Polacco
- *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier
- *Confessions of a Former Bully*, by Trudy Ludwig and Beth Adams

TEACHER GUIDE:

Lead a classroom discussion about peer pressure with these questions for the whole group:

- How would you define peer pressure in your own words?
- Why do you think people are easily swayed by the influence of friends or classmates?
- Why is it hard to stand up to friends?
- What advice would you give a friend who is dealing with peer pressure?
- Are there any examples you can think of where peer pressure could have a positive effect?

Introduce the idea of mentors and trusted adults as a strategy to cope with difficult situations.

Define what a mentor is and ask students if they feel as if they have anyone in their lives they consider to be a mentor or someone who they look up to as a role model. Teachers can share an anecdote about how having a mentor has helped them during a difficult time or to make a choice. Alternatively, you can read a book (or excerpt) that features a student facing peer pressure.

Ask students to reflect on their own lives – at school and at home. Are there times where they felt influenced to make decisions that were not healthy or responsible? What happened? Was there anything they would do differently now?

(Or: Ask students to reflect on times that they have observed peer pressure in school. What happened?)

Provide an index card to each student. They should write the phrase: I wish my teacher knew...and then complete the sentence. (Discuss the fact that these cards will be kept confidential unless the student would like to share their reflection.) Depending on the students, teachers may want to show examples from the original lesson by Kyle Schwartz as models.

NOTES:
