

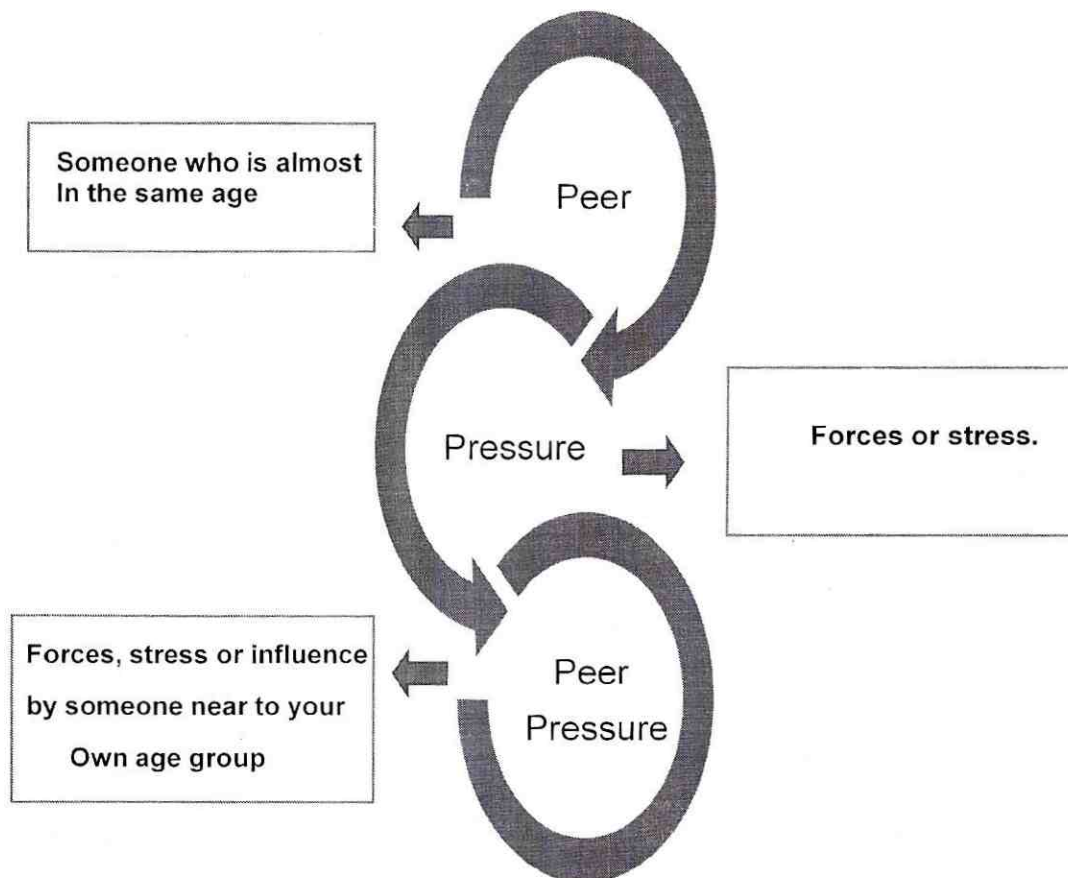
## "HOW TO DEAL WITH PEER PRESSURE"

*Ask yourself:*

Have you ever found it difficult to say 'No' to your friends?  
How many of you have ever experienced this kind of pressure in your life?

Today, we will talk about peer pressure and its impact on us.

When we look into the meaning of these words separately, that is, 'Peer' and 'Pressure', we can easily derive the meaning of the whole word as below –



Adolescence is the time when a person is most susceptible to **peer pressure**.

Peer pressure is something everyone goes through at some point of time. During adolescence period, teenagers tend to believe that people of same age group understand their needs and feelings better than adults. Hence, peers tend to influence behavior and peer conformity in young people is most pronounced with respect to style, taste, appearance, ideology and values. For example, many teenagers start smoking just to be friends with the groups, according to peer group, are seen as 'cool'. However, all types of peer pressure are not bad.

### **TYPES OF PEER PRESSURE:**

Just as some influences can be negative and some can be positive too.

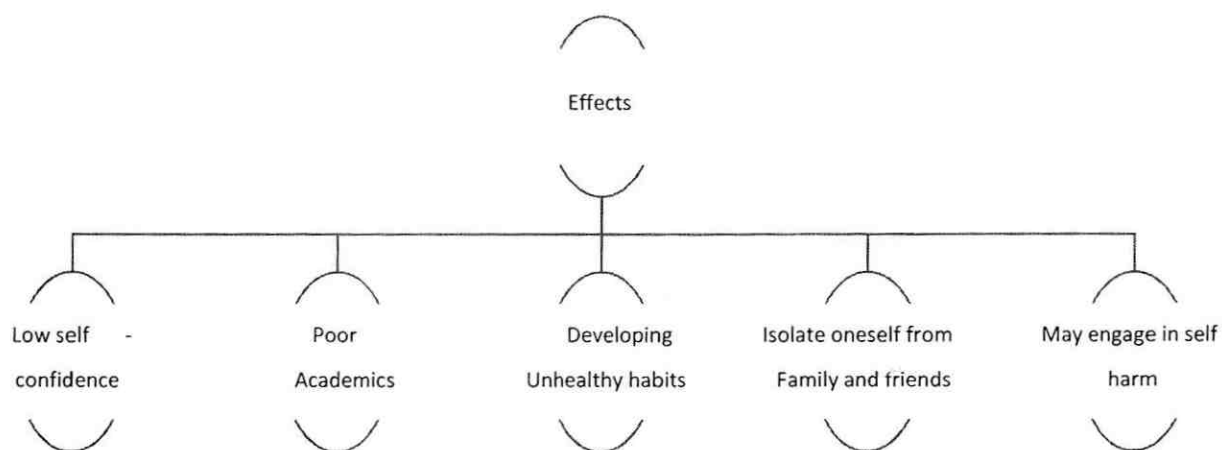
#### **POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE:**

Positive peer pressure would be a pressure on oneself where you will be forced to make a positive or progressive change. For example, when your friend gives tip how to memories the difficult topic the way s/he has been doing it.

#### **NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE:**

Negative peer pressure is when the pressure from your own opinion and thoughts doesn't matches with your age mates. For example, your friends indulge in an activity like picking on someone or teasing in group. You feel that it is not correct and hence you do not engage in those activities. Due to this, your friends start maintaining distance from you or force you to join them in this activity.

### **EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE:**



**Low self-confidence:**

Peer pressure can affect your self-confidence by making you self doubt your own thoughts and opinions. It may also affect your wellbeing. You start self doubting yourself according to how your peers judge or see you. For example if you are being pressurized to bunk a class and you agree to it, because s/he told you so and you didn't wanted to feel rejected from your friends. This will have negative impact on your image of self and you would self doubt your own thoughts and opinions.

**Poor Academic Performance:**

Some of us have high need to be accepted by their peers. This means that your peer group's approval gets placed above that of your parents and teachers. This in turn has a direct impact on your academic achievement as you may change your priorities from studies to some other activities.

**Developing unhealthy habits:**

The more extreme forms of peer pressure propagate unhealthy habits such as smoking and drug abuse. Many teenagers start smoking or using drugs just because they can't avoid rejection from peer, fear of missing out and fail to deal with the situation assertively.

**Isolate oneself from family and friends:**

Adolescence is age of identity exploration. Constant feeling of that nobody understands you and that the whole world is against you. We tend to get swayed away with their opinion and thoughts which might distant us from our family and friends. Distant yourself and fall into unhealthy company which will affect you socially and psychologically in longer run.

**May engage in self-harm and negative thoughts:**

Sometimes the impact of peer pressure on you is so extreme that you can hardly stand to be in your own self. Isolating yourself from your family and friends can make you feel sad all the time and anxious. In many such instances, adolescents attempt self-harm behavior or fall prey of suicidal thoughts.



## **COPING STRATEGIES:**

- Avoid people or situation that you don't feel right and leave a situation that becomes uncomfortable.
- Self awareness of your own thoughts and opinion and accepting it. Understanding your own moral and immoral values.
- Learn to set boundaries so that it can save guard yourself from peer pressure
- Learn to say "NO" when you feel it's not correct or it's against your moral values.
- Share your fear and apprehensions of your assertive behavior regarding the repercussions with someone who can be your support system .Don't give up before giving it a try.
- Ask yourself, "How am I feeling about this?", "Does this seems right to me?", "What are the pros and cons of making this decision?"
- Recognize and realize: It's not ok for others to pressurize, force or trick you into doing things you don't want to or for others to make threats if you don't give in.
- Spend time with people who respect your decisions and won't put unfair pressure on you to confirm. There are other people whom you can be friends with. Try to make new friends or join group of similar thinking friends.
- When people or situations that make you feel pressurized are not avoidable, try the "delay tactics". When you can't avoid or delay a pressure filled situation, practice saying "No thanks" or "just NO! If "no" feels uncomfortable, practice using other responses, such as "not today", "may be another time", or "Thanks, but I can't."
- Take a friend who supports you along if you are going to be in a pressure-filled situation and let them know what your intentions are.
- Stand up for others when you see them being pressurized by others.
- Ask for support from parents or other trusted family member, or a counselor, if you need to handle stress arising out of peer pressure and deal with it effectively.

**"It's easier to prevent bad habits than to break them."**

**.....Benjamin Franklin**