

A report on peer pressure sociology essay



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Peer Pressure can be a huge problem for some young adults. It can sometimes be positive, but most of the time its negative and destructive. Depending on the persons social group, peer pressure represents social influences that effect adolescents. The stress of wanting to belong can lead to reckless behavior.. Peer Pressure has been blamed for adolescent behaviors ranging from choice in clothing to drug usage. The need for parental guidance is at an all time high. Parents need to play a role in preparing their child for dealing with the pressures the face from their peers.

Peers influence your life, even if you don't realize it, just by spending time with you. You learn from them, and they learn from you. It's only human nature to listen to and learn from other people in your age group. Peer pressure is defined as the social pressure by members of one's peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted. (peer pressure, 2009) Teenage is that phase of life when you are exposed to the world outside. These are the years when you spend most of your time with your friends. Teenage is the phase of beginning to become independent in life; the years of forming your ideals and principles, the years that shape your personality and the years that introduce you to your own self.

In order to understand peer pressure it is important to identify risk factors involved. Risk factors are any circumstances that may increase the likelihood of youths' engaging in risky behaviors. Risk factors have been identified within individuals, family environments, schools, peer or social relationships and the community. Individual risk factors include anti-social behavior, anxiety or depression, rebelliousness. Family risk factors include divorce,

uninvolved parents, negative communication, unclear rules and expectations. School risk factors include academic failure, school transitions, negative labeling, truancy, and low commitment to school. Peer risk factors include associating with those who use drugs, rejection, and gang involvement. Community risk factors include permissive laws, drug availability, lack of meaningful roles, and low socioeconomic status. It is also important to note that exposure to many risk factors has a cumulative effect and reckless behavior.

There should be a distinction between risk behavior and reckless behavior. According to Arnett, risk behaviors are socially approved, such as motorcycle riding and bungee jumping. In contrast, reckless behaviors are those that lack social approval. (1992) Young people who engage in one type of reckless behavior are likely to participate in others. (Arnett, 1991) Various reckless behaviors include reckless substance use, reckless sexual behavior and reckless driving.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are plenty of high-risk behaviors your adolescent might feel pressured to engage in. Many adolescents are engaging in behaviors that place their health at risk — including cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, illegal drug use and sexual activity. And in all likelihood, their peers are pushing them to try these behaviors.

Emerging into adulthood is a time when conscious choices are made and individuals explore and have to choose between various possibilities. Researchers comparing the influence of parents and peers on emerging

adult problem behavior have found peer influences to be stronger. (Clapper, 1994) Reckless behavior usually occurs in peer contexts. Reckless substance use is usually a group activity. Reckless driving occurs with multiple passengers. Reckless sexual risk taking requires someone else to participate. (Teese & Bradley, 2008)

Peer Pressure has negative effects that can lead to a variety of issues all of which can have devastating effects. From the social learning perspective, experimental smoking is primarily a function of peer role modeling and vicarious reinforcement that leads youth to expect positive physical and social consequences from smoking. From this perspective, it should be youth who spend the most time with peers and friends who smoke who are the most likely to perceive the positive social benefits of smoking and to experiment with smoking themselves. (Karcher & Finn, 2005)

Although students drink for a variety of reasons (Baer, 2002), peer pressure plays an important role in maintain these patterns. (Crawford & Novak, 2007) Binge drinking is a major health concern and the negative problems associated with it are well documented (Wechsler, Davenport, & Dowdall, 1994). A recent European study on the characteristics of binge drinkers concluded that males were more likely to binge drink and that peer pressure was one of the strongest influencing factors (Kuntsche, Rehm, & Gmel, 2004).

Early adolescence is generally regarded as the time when peers begin to exert a significant influence on child behavior (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Peer pressure is one of the most dangerous aspects of adolescence to which

teenagers are exposed. The difference between negative and positive peer pressure is the outcome. Consequently, parents should care more about their adolescents until they overcome this critical age. Connectedness to parents and teachers serve as controls against risk taking by encouraging conventional behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes. (Karcher & Finn, 2005)

Poor parental monitoring and inconsistent discipline have been shown to have direct relations with adolescent substance use. (Steinberg, Fletcher, & Darling, 1994) Parents must take an active role in their child's life. They need to talk with their child about their friends and the influence they may have. Informing them about the cost of saying no can prepare a child for consequences they will face if they make poor choices. Parents can prepare them their children by discussing the different ways in which people experience peer pressure. They can role-play different scenarios with their children so they can practice saying no in difficult situations. It would also be valuable to share stories from the past about how they dealt with peer pressure. Empower your children by giving them excuses for getting out of tough situations. Most importantly make an effort to cultivate a positive personal identity and self-esteem in your child. There is a strong relationship between appearance and self-esteem during adolescence. Since adolescents pay more attention to others' feedback and appearance is the link between the self and the others, each remark about appearance goes directly to the self (Morrison, Kalin, & Morrison, 2004).

Peers set plenty of good examples for each other. Having peers who are committed to doing well in school or to doing their best in a sport can influence you to be more goal-oriented, too. Peers who are kind and loyal

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influence you to build these qualities in yourself. Even peers you've never met can be role models! For example, watching someone your age compete in the Olympics, give a piano concert, or spearhead a community project might inspire you to go after a dream of your own.

Teens involved in sports, student politics, or even the chess club, are also being influenced by peer pressure. The desire to remain or become a part of any group will cause a teenager to strive to fit in, whether it means running the fastest mile, winning the spelling bee, or being the loudest cheerleader. The key to making peer pressure work in your favor as a parent is to stay involved in your child's life. Know their friends, know where they go, and know what they do when they are gone. Don't assume because your children are involved in positive religious or school groups that they are always doing the right thing. Parents need to set clear expectations for behavior, establish rules about communicating where and with whom their teenagers are spending their time, and should pre-set consequences for lying about activities or where they are going. By communicating your expectations, your adolescent cannot claim they "did not know" that you would be upset.

Parent-child relationships that at the beginning are powerful and fully nurturing can become undermined as our children move out into a world that no longer appreciates or reinforces the attachment bond. (Neufeld & Mate, 2005) Among young people, it is critical to understand that they are far more influenced by each other—their peers—than by parents, teachers, or other adults in their lives. (Gartner & Riessman, 1998) Peer pressure can lead to experimentation with drugs and alcohol, sex, skipping school, and various high-risk behaviors.

Parental involvement is at the core of dealing with peer pressure. According to Hansen and Dusenbury, parents should increase their parenting qualities including communication, supervision, and setting clear standards for behavior through positive parental attention. (2004) Strengthening parental skills and improving family strengths are key elements in preventing substance abuse and other behavior problems. Parents need to develop nurturing skills that support their children as well as discipline and guide them. Children need to gain an increased appreciation for parents and acquire skills for dealing with stress and the pressure they face from their peers.

It is critical to understand that they are far more influenced by each other—their peers—than by parents, teachers, or other adults in their lives. One of the best things that parents and teachers can do is instill self-confidence in their children. Self-confidence comes from being able to make a choice based on what you know is right and remain assertive in the face of peer adversity. Teach kids to think for themselves as well as help them how to consider consequences and weigh their decisions.

Protective factors are any circumstances that promote healthy youth behaviors and decrease the chance that youth will engage in risky behaviors. School protective factors include promoting a positive attitude towards school. High expectations in a high quality school with clear standards. Living in a stable community that promotes safe and healthy environments along with high community expectations.

A strong support from family, an ability to differentiate between the positive and the negative and a skill to choose friends from the peers – this three-pronged strategy is the best way to keep away from negative peer pressure.

According to Ennett, Bailey, & Federman, the quality and supportiveness of the relationships youth experience are another source of potentially risk-enhancing or risk-decreasing effects on behavior. (1999) According to social learning theories, youth who have role models for deviant behaviors and who perceive these behaviors as being sanctioned by significant others are more likely to engage in the behaviors than youth who do not have these role models and sanctions. (Bandura, 1977)

We have discovered that one of the most important reasons of teenage drug usage is peer pressure which has the devastating effect of depression. Some teens feel an enormous pressure to fit in. This may not seem like an important thing as adults, but to them it's more important than a lot of things. Teens will do just about anything to fit in with the group they are seeking acceptance in. Loneliness is a feeling many teens go through. Teens sometimes abuse drugs to pass their time because they are lonely. For a parent with a child suffering with teen depression it is imperative that the parent becoming involved in their child's life.

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