

Effect of peer pressure on students



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Peers become an important influence on behavior during adolescence, and peer pressure has been called a hallmark of an adolescent experience. Peer conformity in young people is most pronounced with respect to style, taste, appearance, ideology, and values. Peer pressure is commonly associated with episodes of adolescent risk taking (such as delinquency, drug abuse, sexual behaviors, and reckless driving) because these activities commonly occur in the company of peers. Affiliation with friends who engage in risk behaviors has been shown to be a strong predictor of an adolescent's own behavior.

However, peer pressure can also have positive effects when youth are pressured by their peers toward positive behavior, such as volunteering for charity or excelling in academics. The importance of peers declines upon entering adulthood. While socially accepted kids often have the most opportunities and the most positive experiences, research shows that being in the popular crowd may also be a risk factor for mild to moderate deviant behavior. Popular adolescents are the most socialized into their peer groups and thus are vulnerable to peer pressures, such as behaviors usually reserved for those of a greater maturity and understanding.

Peer pressure is the phenomenon wherein we tend to get influenced by the lifestyles and the ways of thinking of our peers. Peer pressure is when members or friends of the same age group try to influence or talk you in to doing things that you do not do. Many people give in to peer pressure because they want to be accepted with their friends. Peer pressure is not always a bad thing; one can also be pressured in a positive way. Peer pressure is influence that a peer group, observers or individual exerts that

encourages others to our peers are the people with whom you identify and spend time.

In children and teens, they are usually, but not always, of the same age group. In adults, peers may be determined less by age and more by shared interests or professions. Peer pressure occurs when an individual experiences implied or expressed persuasion to adopt similar values, beliefs, and goals, or to participate in the same activities as those in the peer group will turn their attitudes, values, or behaviors to conform the group norms. Social groups affected include membership groups, in which individuals are “formally” members (such as political parties and trade unions), or social cliques in which membership is not clearly defined.

A person affected by peer pressure may or may not want to belong to these groups. They may also recognize dissociative groups with which they would not wish to associate, and thus they behave adversely concerning that group’s behaviors. (Kellie B. Gormly, “Peer Pressure — for students and adults — can be positive,” Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, March 18, 2013.) Peer pressure exists for all ages. Three-year-old Timmy insists that his mother take him to the store right away and buy him the latest fad toy because his friends have it.

When she doesn’t, he has a temper tantrum. Nine-year-old Sarah wears a new shirt to school once, and then refuses to wear it again because her friends made fun of it. Juli, at sixteen, works out three hours a day to have a “perfect” body. When one of his friends at the gym offers him some anabolic steroids, he accepts, sacrificing his health for his image. Meanwhile, Juli’s

forty-year-old father just took out a loan he couldn't afford to buy a new BMW because most of his neighbours drive luxury cars, and he didn't want them to think he couldn't afford one too.

No one is immune from peer pressure. The level of peer influence generally increases as children grow, and resistance to peer influence often declines as children gain independence from the family or caregivers, and before they fully form an adult identity. Pre-schoolchildren tend to be the least aware of peer pressure, and are the least influenced by the need to conform. However with more social interactions outside the home and more awareness of others, the influence of peers increases. Pre-teens and teenagers face many issues related to conformity and peer pressure.

They are pulled between the desire to be seen as individuals of unique value and the desire to belong to a group where they feel secure and accepted. The result is that often teens reject family or general society values, while feeling pressure to conform rigidly to the values of their peer group. An example of this phenomenon is seen when young people join gangs. In joining the gang they are rejecting the community's way of dressing and behaving. Yet to belong to the gang, they must conform to the gang's own style of dress, behaviour, and speech. (Kellie B.

Gormly, " Peer Pressure for students and adults can be positive," Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, March 18, 2013.) However, it's something most parents don't want to hear, but the sad fact is that the most influential people in your teen's life are their friends. Most parents like to think that they have some say in what their teenage child does, but the truth is that most parents

sorely underestimate the power of peer pressure. Peer pressure can turn a perfectly level headed child into class-cutting, insolent, problem child. Why is this? Well, several reasons.

First teens are not children, and they're not adults so you can't use either form of psychology on them. A teens body is under the powerful thrall of hormones. You're not dealing with a rational person. Hormones are powerful chemicals, and they are telling your teen to exert their independence at all costs—and they do. You'll find that once puberty hits, whatever unresolved family problems lying just under the surface will rear their heads and be magnified a thousand times. Resentments about past hurts and difficulties will show themselves in numerous, albeit, destructive ways.

For example, when you missed out on an important event in their life as a child, a temper tantrum may have consisted of a crying spell and a slammed door. That same scenario played out in the teen years may consist of partying with friends, sex, and/or drug use. It all depends on the social network your child is associating with. High school can be a tough world. Learning to cope, manage emotions, and come out of it with any self esteem is a monumental task. Despite their efforts to appear nonchalant, teens are psychologically fragile.

Peer pressure by itself is neither positive nor negative. For example, both high and low academic achievements is closely linked to peer influences. Several studies confirm research findings that the values of the peer group with whom the high school student spends the most time are a stronger factor in the student's level of academic success than the values, attitudes,

and support provided by the family. Compared to others who started high school with the same grades, students whose families were not especially supportive, but who spent time with an academically oriented peer group, got better grades.

Those students whose experienced stress academically, but who spent time with peers whose orientation was not toward academic excellence, performed less well. These peer pressure studies contradict prevailing ideas about the influence of families on the academic success of racial and cultural minorities such as Asians and African Americans. While some Asian families were not especially involved in their children's education, the students were high academic achievers because they tended to band together in academic study groups that provided both an academic and a social focus.

On the other hand, African American students whose families tended to be highly involved in and supportive of education were subjected to intense peer pressure not to perform well academically. According to one study, strong African American peer groups associated the activities of studying and spending time at the library with “white” behavior. They promoted the idea that students who got good grades, participated in school activities, or spoke Standard English were betraying their racial heritage and community.

Consequently, gifted African American students felt external pressure to “dumb-down” in order to fit in or to find a different group of peers who valued academic achievement. Research suggests that this type of peer pressure contributes to a decline in the grades of African American students (especially males) as early as the first through fourth grades. In study after

study, peer pressure is associated in adolescents of all ethnic and racial backgrounds with at-risk behaviors such as cigarette smoking, truancy, drug use, sexual activity, fighting, shoplifting, and daredevil stunts.

Again, peer group values and attitudes influence more strongly than do family values the level of teenage alcohol use. The more accepting peers are of risky behavior, and the more they participate in that behavior, the more likely a person is to do the same thing. Regardless of the parenting style, peer pressure also influences the degree to which children conform to expected gender roles. For example, up until about grade six, girls' performance as well in science and math as boys, but during adolescence girls' test scores and level of expressed interest in these subjects declines.

The tendency is to abandon competition with boys in favor of placing more emphasis on relationships and on physical appearance. Physical appearance is extremely important to teenagers. Young people are all too well aware that the group may reject them simply because they look different or dress differently. Jeff, who wanted to have the “ perfect” male body is no more immune to peer pressure than a girl who develops anorexia or another eating disorder in an effort to have the “ perfect” female body. Peer pressure can be either expressed or implied.

In expressed peer pressure, a boy may be challenged by the group to “ prove your manhood” by having sex or performing a risky stunt such as roof riding. Girls may be told that if they want to be part of a group they must do something illegal such as shop lift. Studies has show that both girls and boy are inclined to take risks they do not want to take because they believe the

risky behavior will increase their standing in the eyes of their peers and assure their acceptance in the group. Implied peer pressure is more subtle and can be harder to combat.

For example, a group of girls may make fun of the way another girl is dressed, pressuring members of their group to dress only in one acceptable style. Often young people who look, dress, or act differently, or who have significant interests that differ from those of their age group become outcasts because of the pressure groups place on their members not to associate with anyone unlike themselves. This can lead the rejected person to feel desperate and depressed.

2. 0. 3 Why Is Peer Pressure So Powerful?

Peer groups have so much influence, especially with adolescents, because, no matter how inappropriate it seems to adults, belonging to a group really does give something significant to the young person. Peer groups provide a place where children feels accepted, where they can feel good about themselves, and where their self-esteem is enhanced. Some psychologists also point out that life become simpler when we conform to expectations. Young people tend to gravitate toward other young people with the same problems and in the same situations as themselves and where they feel they will be understood and accepted.

There is a very, very strong need to satisfy that thirst for unity and for acceptance. The feeling of belonging is a very powerful force that can outweigh ties to church, school, family, or community. In addition to the feeling of belonging and not being alone or socially isolated, some characteristics that peer groups offer which make them attractive and that

families may lack are: (1) a strong belief structure; (2) a clear system of rules; and (3) communication and discussion about taboo subjects such as drugs, sex, and religion. 2. 0. 4 Types of Peer Pressure Peer pressure is a part of a person's routine life.

Commonly seen amongst teenagers, peer pressure can affect people's lives irrespective of their age or sex. The intensity of peer pressure generally varies with age and maturity. Main reasons behind peer pressure are rising communication gap between parents and children, intense desire to be an acceptable member of a group and a highly impressionable mind that fails to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. These are the varieties of peer pressure we know: – Spoken Peer Pressure Here we see peers verbally influencing a teenager to behave the way they are behaving.

A peer might be seen saying to a teen, " Why are you wasting time studying Calculus? We still have a long time till the exams. Why don't you come out for a smoke with us? It will be more fun! " The teen who would have otherwise continued with his own way of life, listens to the peers and starts believing that the lifestyle led by his peers is more attractive. At times, he may see the downside of getting influenced by his peers, but his mind is set on becoming an acceptable member in his peer group, someone who would never be made fun of or teased.

Unspoken Peer Pressure Here we see teenagers getting influenced by their peers without any provoking verbal communication taking place between them. If a teen routinely watches his peers living a particular kind of lifestyle, his mind gets influenced and starts assuming that his peers are leading a

better life than him and that there is nothing wrong in doing something if everybody is doing it. Here, one's common sense and better judgment often goes for a toss. e. g: A teen may start substance abuse or smoking if he sees all his friends doing it fearlessly.