

# Peer pressure



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Peer Pressure My first interviewee was a fifteen year old boy. When I asked him about the most significant challenge that he faced, he whispered in my ears that he was dealing with the psychological trauma resulting from gynecomastia, a condition in which some boys grow excessive breast tissue during puberty because of hormonal imbalances that makes their chest resemble that of females (Braunstein, 1999). The boy said that he was teased by his class fellows in school who pointed fingers towards his chest and sidelined him as a girl. He was too sensitive to the mockery and was starting to get into social exclusion because of that. He told me he preferred to avoid too much interaction with his class fellows because if he did not, he would be teased even more. I asked him if he had discussed this matter with his parents, to which he replied that he felt embarrassed discussing it with them. So he had not shared his problems with his parents thus far. He did not know what he should do about this problem. He told me that he had done some research about this problem on the internet and had learnt that the problem can be treated with a mild surgery if it does not go away with age, though he was not sure if he would ever get the surgery done. He said that he had always let his parents decide things for him, and could not take decision as an individual. This boy adjusts in the stage of identity diffusion of Marcias theory of identity development as he does not have a sound ability to make rational choices and is not sure how to come out of the problem. My second interviewee was a sixteen year old girl. When I asked her about the most significant challenge she was facing, she replied that she did not feel safe, or at least content with the co-education system. She said that her male class fellows would more look at her body than into her eyes while talking to her. She said that she felt offended at this disgraceful behavior of

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her male class fellows. She said that she was not the only one who was having this problem, boys generally looked at all girls as a symbol of sex and tortured them with their behavior. When I asked her if she had discussed this issue with the authorities in the school, she said she had no objective proof to stand up for. She said she was not called anything wrong or had not received any nasty comments from the boys so that she could complain. It was the behavior of the boys that was creating the problem. She had discussed the problem with her parents and she was all set to change her school. Research provides evidence that single sex education works best for sensitive students (Anfara and Mertens, 2008). She said she had taken admission in a school with consent of her parents that was only meant for girls. She said she would always conform to the expectations of her parents. This girl fits good into the identity foreclosure stage of Marcias theory of identity development. References: Anfara, V. A., and Mertens, S. B. (2008). Do Single-Sex Classes and Schools Make a Difference? *Middle School Journal*. pp. 52-59. Retrieved from <http://curriculumstudies.pbworks.com/f/Single+Sex+Classrooms+-+Anfara,+V,+Mertens,+S.pdf> Braunstein, G. D. (1999). Aromatase and gynecomastia. *Endocrine-Related Cancer*. 6: 315-324.