



## Resisting Negative Peer Pressure – Tips for Parents

### Tip 1: Be proactive: Talk through scenarios ahead of time.

Don't wait until your teen stumbles home reeking of pot to have a conversation about drugs and alcohol. It's not going to do your teen any favors to shelter them from the realities they'll face. (And it isn't a matter of "if" they face them, but "when.")

Be proactive and create a space for open, casual dialogue. If you think it would be helpful, bring up examples from your adolescence. Let them know that moments of peer pressure are inevitable, and can be handled with grace. Remind them that otherwise good people can get caught up in dangerous or unhealthy behaviors.

### Tip 2: The way you say it is just as important as what you say.

When having these talks, it's easy to become emotional and resort to lecturing. However, try to maintain a calm, friendly, and neutral tone of voice. Your child will be more receptive and feel comfortable sharing.

### Tip 3: Don't criticize their experimental peers.

For teens, their friends often function as their (chosen) family. Even if you aren't a huge fan of the company your child keeps, refrain from attacking or criticizing their more experimental pals. If you do, you could drive a wedge between you and your teen, shutting down the open line of communication you've fostered.

If you really feel the need to critique, say you disapprove of the behavior, not the person. For example, "I think Jimmy is a good kid who is getting caught up in some bad stuff right now."

### Tip 4: Appeal to their goals, not yours.

Your teen may not be motivated by a college diploma or a varsity letter, but that doesn't mean they are unmotivated.

Every person (young or old) measures success in their own way. Make the extra effort to learn how your teen understands success, and guide them in making choices that will help them reach those goals. Teach them that irresponsible decisions they make now can affect their ability to meet even their own set goals.

The reason so many teens give into peer pressure is because it's so much easier to go with the flow and act passively. Saying no requires an explanation and creates "conflict." Teens understand this and engage in people-pleasing behaviors. Making waves is difficult! Acknowledge that saying "No, thanks," isn't exactly easy.

### Tip 5: Come up with a script.

This is the most crucial piece of advice. As humans, it's very hard for us to come up with intelligent answers on the spot. We panic! Sit down with your teen and help them come up with answers that feel natural and personal.

Let your kids know that if they ever face peer pressure they don't know how to resist, they can always refuse by blaming you: "My parents will kill me if I do that." Other reasons could be, "I have to [study for a big test/get ready for my game/babysit]. Having a code word your kids can use when texting or calling is another helpful way to get them out of uncomfortable situations while still being discreet.

Source: TeenSafe