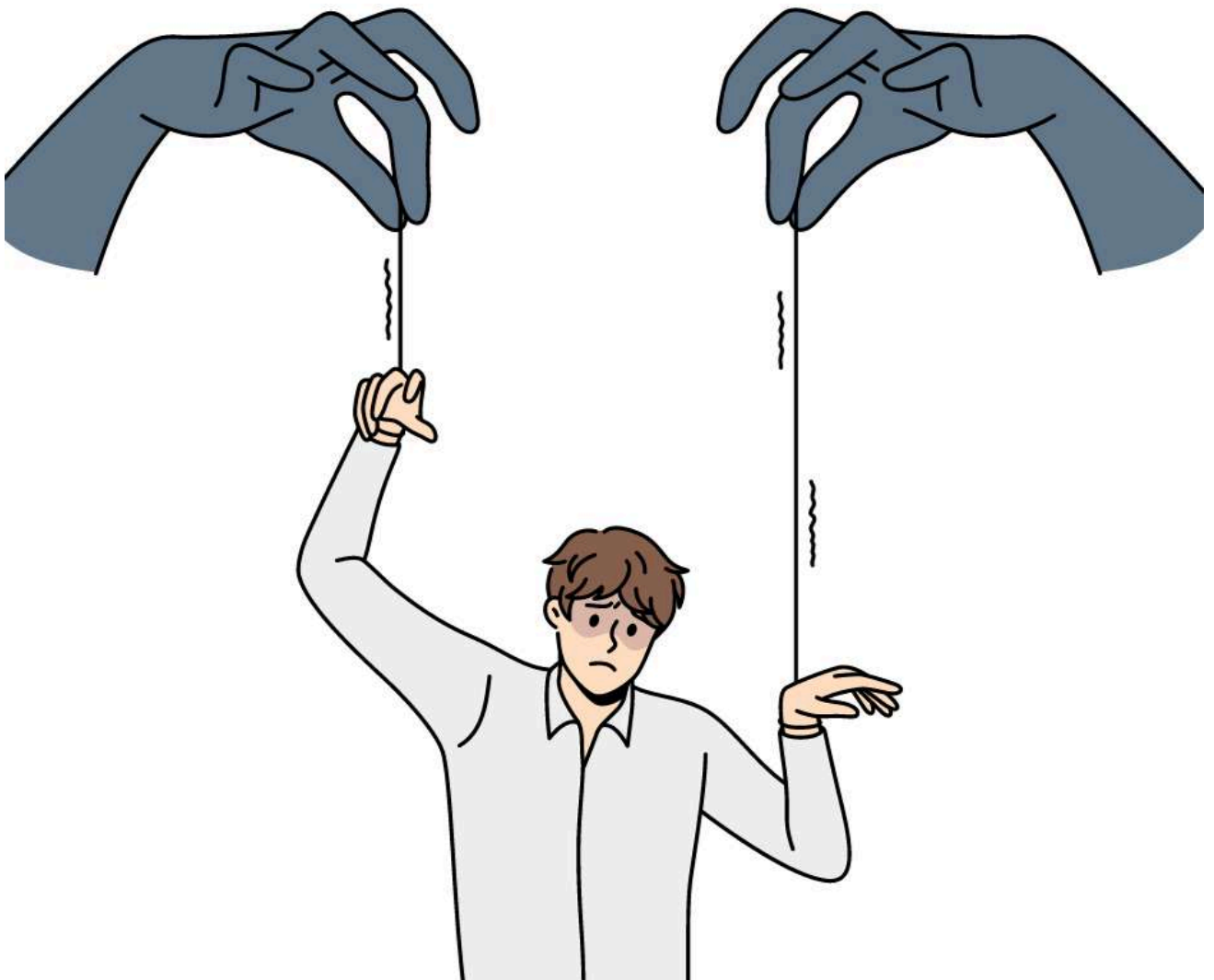


# A guide to **DEALING WITH PEER PRESSURE**

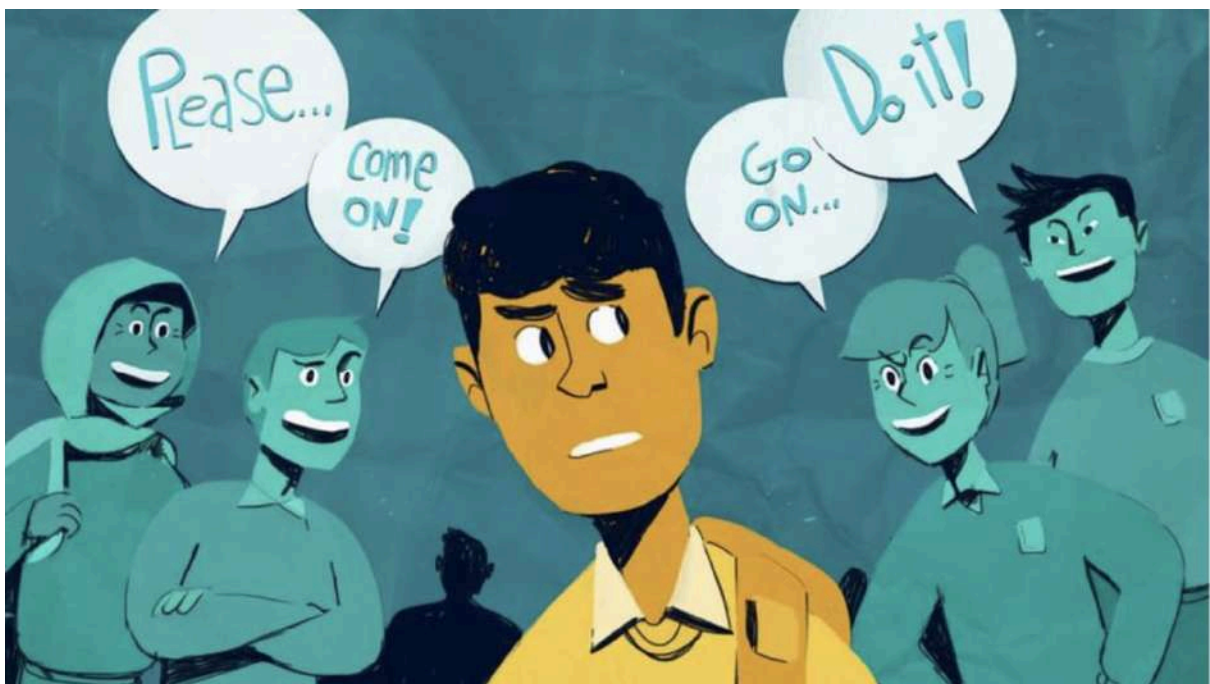
Developed as part of  
ICMR's Multistate Implementation Research Study on Improving  
Mental Well Being Among School and College Students



# Let's talk about **NAVIGATING PEER PRESSURE**

## Understanding Peer Pressure

During adolescence, friendships and social connections are very important. You are figuring out who you are, and often, you look to your peers for acceptance and validation. However, this can sometimes lead to



Source: The Roaring Times, A student newspaper of John H. Pitman High School, *Peer Pressure*, and *Why It Can Be a Good Thing*

facing peer pressure, where you feel pushed to act, think, or behave in a certain way to fit in or be accepted by your friends.

Peer pressure is when you feel influenced by people your age to do something you might not otherwise do. This can be direct, like someone telling you to do something, or indirect, where you feel the pressure simply because "everyone else is doing it."

## It is Normal to Feel Confused

Peer pressure can create a lot of confusion. On one hand, you want to fit in and be liked, but on the other hand, you might feel uncomfortable with what you are being asked to do. It is important to recognize that feeling this way is normal, and you are not alone in this experience.

## Types of Peer Pressure

Peer pressure can come in different forms. Understanding these types can help you recognize when it is happening to you:



### Direct

When someone asks or dares you to do something



### Indirect

When you feel the need to fit in or be like others



### Internal Pressure

When you push yourself to meet others' expectation

## Positive vs. Negative Peer Pressure

Not all peer pressure is bad! It is important to understand the difference between positive and negative peer pressure.

### Positive Peer Pressure

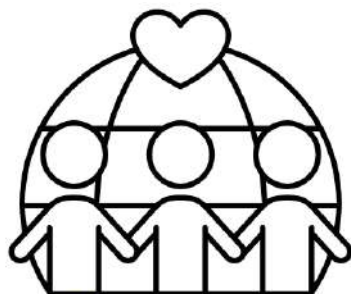
This occurs when your friends encourage you to make **good choices**. Positive peer pressure can help you grow and make healthy decisions. **For example**, your friends might encourage you to study for an exam together, join a club, or try a new sport.

### Negative Peer Pressure

Negative peer pressure is when you feel pushed to do something that goes **against your values** or makes you uncomfortable. **For example**, things like being pressured to drink alcohol, cheat on a test, or gossip about someone.

## Coping with Peer Pressure

It can be tough to stand up to peer pressure, especially when it feels like everyone else is on board. Here are some strategies to help you cope.



**Know your values**

Understanding what is important to you makes it easier to say no to things that do not fit with your values. Think about what you believe in and what kind of person you want to be. Assessing your values helps you stay true to yourself and guides your decisions.



**Talk to a trusted person**

Talk to someone you trust, like a friend, parent, or counsellor, about what you are going through. They can offer advice and help you think through your options.

 <p><b>Suggest an alternate plan</b></p>	<p>If you feel pressured, suggest doing something else. For example, "Instead of going to the party, why don't we watch a movie at my place?"</p>
 <p><b>Practice saying no</b></p>	<p>It can be helpful to rehearse how you will respond if you are pressured. You can use simple phrases like, "No, thanks," or "That is not for me." Practise your responses in front of a mirror or with a trusted friend.</p>
 <p><b>It's okay to walk away</b></p>	<p>If the pressure is too much, it is okay to remove yourself from the situation. True friends will respect your choices and will not pressure you to do something you are uncomfortable with.</p>

**Remember**

**True Friends Respect You:** Real friends won't pressure you to do things you don't want to do. They'll understand and support your choices.

**You Have the Power to Choose:** You're in control of your decisions. It's okay to walk away from situations that don't feel right. Your well-being comes first.

## Time to Reflect!

### Peer Pressure Scenarios

Read each scenario and decide if it is an example of positive or negative peer pressure. Write down how you would respond.

- 1. Scenario:** Your friends encourage you to join the debate team because they think you would be great at it.
  - **Type of Peer Pressure:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Your Response:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Scenario:** A group of classmates dare you to skip school and go to the mall with them.
  - **Type of Peer Pressure:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Your Response:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Scenario:** Your friend insists that you try a cigarette, saying, "Just once will not hurt."
  - **Type of Peer Pressure:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Your Response:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Scenario:** Your peers are all joining a study group for an upcoming test and keep insisting you to join.
  - **Type of Peer Pressure:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Your Response:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Your Personal Mantra

Create a personal mantra or phrase that you can repeat to yourself when facing peer pressure. Write it down and decorate the page to make it stand out. Examples: “I stand by my choices,” or “I choose what is right for me.”

Your Mantra:

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## My Coping Plan

Write down how you will handle situations where you feel pressured. Use the strategies from the handout to guide you.

- If I am feeling pressured to do something I am uncomfortable with, I will:

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- I will practise saying:

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- If I need support, I will talk to:

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- An alternate activity I can suggest instead is:

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