

Parents & Kids, Talking About Sex ©

Tackling Tough Topics - Peer Pressure Survival Skills

The PROBLEM -- kids want to be individuals, different from their parents, but NOT different from their friends. Need to fit in and be accepted

Teaching Survival Skills to Resist Peer Pressure

From Dr. Ken Ginsburg's *But I'm Almost 13*

1. **How other actions can avoid risk** – Use fictional or real events affecting others as they are not as threatening.
Television show– “Now she could have handled that differently, don’t you think?”
News Show – “How do you think that they get kids your age to try drugs?”
2. **The importance of “NO.”** Kids don’t like to say no because it sounds mean.
 - For parents -- When you say “NO,” mean it. Be consistent.
 - Teach that “No” should not sound like maybe. Teach how to say, “No” with clarity and firmness so it is absolutely not negotiable.
 - Use “secret” role play to teach. “How would you handle that?”
3. **How to Recognize Lines** – show kids how manipulative some people can be by discussing other people’s use of and response to lines.
 - “What a line! That’s ridiculous! What do you think they want out of you?”
 - “Why do you think he told her that? Do you think she should believe him? Will she fall for that line?”
4. **How to Respond to Lines**
 - Teens don’t want to take an unpopular stand. Since they want to remain on friendly terms, the line must show that the subject is not negotiable and they can still be friends. It needs to soften the blow or extend the discussion of why the teenager will not buy the line.
 - Responses should be immediate, clear, allow no room for negotiation and end with a period not a question mark.
 - Example – “Oh, come on. Everybody does this stuff. Just once. How will you know if you like it or not unless you try it?”
Option 1 – A reasonable conversation with no room for negotiation, that softens the blow and suggests something else to do. “Look, I know you’re my friend. I want to hang out with you – just not when you’re high. When you’re straight, let’s play basketball. I’ll probably still be at the courts.”
Option 2 – A reverse the pressure response. “You know if you were really my friend, you wouldn’t pressure me about this.”
5. **Shift the Blame** – It is normal for children to not want to oppose their peers and to want their approval. You can help by being willing to be the heavy and take the blame. You can develop a **secret code**, not shared with anyone else that is used only in an emergency. Never punish your child for getting in a difficult situation or she/he will not come back to you for help in another crisis. Discuss how proud you are he/she left and strategies for avoiding similar situations. Then change the code word to be able to use it again.
6. **Create a Rumor** – Give your child an acceptable reason to tone down the offending behavior. Your child complains that you are forcing him/her to give up a certain behavior because you have lowered the boom. “I’ll be grounded for a month if my parents learn that Iagain.” Ex. to prevent smoking -- “They smell me every time I come home.”

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Peer Pressure Survival Skills – continued

How do you make winning choices?

1. Put "STOP Signs" in your life. If you do not know where you should stop, you will go through the stop sign. Guys are affected by sight while girls are affected by touch. Once touch becomes part of the equation it is much more difficult to STOP. Remember -- momentum. If you don't slow down, you won't be able to stop.
2. Develop "good" friendships with people who know and agree with your values and beliefs.
 - 25% of 13-17 year olds said they had felt pressured by their friends to have sex.
3. Avoid tough situations - most problems occur at your home, after school when you are alone. Be alone in public places.
4. Have an "Escape Plan." If you are at a party and drugs, alcohol, or "Truth or Dare" becomes "Kiss the Body Part" get out. Remember your "code word" and have parents come and get you.

Ways to Avoid Date Pressure: (Adapted from the American Social Health Association's List)

- Hang out with friends who also believe that it's OK to not be ready for sex yet.
- Date several people and hang out with different groups of people.
- Go out with a group of friends rather than only your date.
- Introduce your friends to your parents.
- Invite your friends to your home.
- Always carry money for a telephone call or cab in case you feel uncomfortable.
- Stick up for your friends if they are being pressured to drink, smoke or have sex.
- Think of what you would say in advance in case someone tries to pressure you.
- Be ready to call your mom, dad or a friend to pick you up if you need to leave.
- Never feel obligated to "pay someone back" with sex in return for an expensive date or gift.
- Say "no" and mean "no" if that's how you feel.

Alcohol SAFETY

1. Don't let anyone talk you into drinking.
2. Notice if friends, especially your driver, are or have been drinking.
3. Don't get into close, private situations with someone who has been drinking.
4. Don't let a friend who has been drinking go off alone with someone.
5. Always have an "escape plan" in case your driver has been drinking.
6. The less you drink, the more you will be aware of everyone else, your driver, your friend - and even someone you don't know who could hurt you.