



Making Good Decisions When People Pressure You

KS3 Ages 11-14 🕒 3 min read

What Is Peer Pressure?

Peer pressure happens when people around you—usually friends or classmates—try to get you to do something you're not sure about. It doesn't always mean bullying. Sometimes it's just your friends saying "Come on, everyone's doing it!" or "Don't be boring." Other times it can be more serious.

The tricky part is that **peer pressure** can make your brain feel confused. Your friends matter to you, so their opinions feel extra important. That's completely normal—but it can also stop you from thinking clearly.

How Your Brain Works Under Pressure

When someone pressures you, your body releases a chemical called **adrenaline**. This makes you feel rushed, anxious, or like you need to decide right now. Your logical brain (the part that thinks carefully) gets quieter, and your emotional brain (the part that worries) gets louder.

Think of it like a video game. When a timer is running, you make worse decisions because you're panicking. When you can pause and think, you play better.

Steps to Make Good Decisions

Step 1: Buy Yourself Time Don't decide right away. Say things like "I need to think about it" or "Let me ask my parents." A real friend will understand.

Step 2: Check In With Your Gut Does the decision feel wrong? That feeling matters. Your instincts pick up on things your brain hasn't figured out yet.

Step 3: Ask Yourself Three Questions First: **Would I do this if nobody was watching?** Second: **What's the worst that could happen?** Third: **What would I tell a friend to do?**

Think of it like being a coach for yourself. You give better advice to others than you sometimes follow. Use that same wisdom on yourself.

Step 4: Talk to a Trusted Adult Parents, teachers, or school counsellors aren't there to punish you—they're there to help you think things through. Many tough decisions feel easier after talking them out.

Remember: You're Not Alone

Almost everyone feels **peer pressure**. It's a normal part of growing up. The good news is that learning to make decisions now will help you for your whole life. Your real friends will respect you more for thinking for yourself—not less.