

## **Four Activities for Peer Pressure**

### **Intro**

The following questions will get students thinking about the issue of peer pressure:

Describe the term peer pressure in your own words.

What is the difference between negative and positive peer pressure?

List one example of positive peer pressure.

Which kinds of pressure seem to be the hardest for you to resist?

Is it harder to resist being pressured by friends or by people that you have never met before?

Have you ever been pressured by a friend to do something you didn't want to do?

How can you prepare yourself to handle peer pressure?

Have you ever tried to pressure a friend to do something that you know they did not want to do?

Given the personal nature of peoples' experiences around issues of peer pressure, an honest conversation might be difficult to have in a group, as students might not want to share personal stories. Based on your group's dynamic, the questions can be discussed in a variety of ways. The following are 3 different styles of sharing. Choose the one that would best fit your group.

### **Activity 1**

*Think-Pair-Share* is a way to have a conversation with a partner or small group. In this type of sharing, ask one question from the list and have students turn to the person next to them to share their thoughts. After each question, students may rotate or stay with their original partner. Students can also, if desired, share something that they heard or could relate to with the larger group.

### **Activity 2**

A *Fishbowl* discussion may also be used to allow students a chance to safely share their ideas. For a Fishbowl, arrange five or six chairs in an inner circle. This is the fishbowl. Arrange the remaining chairs in a circle or two outside the fishbowl. Select a few students to fill the inside fishbowl seats, and ask the rest of the class to sit in the seats on the outside of the fishbowl.

You can set up the fishbowl in two ways, depending on how you want to structure the discussion: leave one chair empty in the fishbowl, or fill them all. In an open fishbowl, any student on the outside can, at any time, enter the empty chair and join the fishbowl discussion. When this happens, an existing member of the fishbowl must voluntarily leave the fishbowl and free up another chair. The discussion continues with students frequently entering and leaving the fishbowl in an organic and free-flow way. In a closed fishbowl, the first students you select to be in the bowl speak for specific period of time. When time runs out, they leave the fishbowl and a new group from the audience enters the fishbowl. This continues until all students have spent some time in the fishbowl.

### **Activity 3**

A *Silent Discussion* could also be used to discuss the questions. In a silent discussion, students write an anonymous response to a question presented. After students have had a chance to write, collect all of the papers and put them on the tables in a random order. Ask students to find a paper, read it, and write a short response underneath the response. Rotate the students from paper to paper, asking them to respond silently. When students have rotated multiple times, ask students to find their original work and read the responses.

## **Activity 4**

### *Creative Short Stories*

In the scene you have watched from Little Miss Sunshine, Olive's father and brother worry that the audience will make fun of Olive if she goes on stage to perform her unique dance. Her mother gives her a chance to opt out of the pageant and leave before dancing, but Olive decides she wants to perform despite the fact that she clearly does not fit into the pageant scene.

First, explore the film clip by asking students to brainstorm things they noticed that were the same in the contestants. If they need help, offer them suggestions such as spray-on tans, hair styles, exaggerated smiles, etc.) After you have discussed the norms, discuss ways in which Olive did not fit in to the norm.

When you are finished discussing the clip, hand out paper and ask students to create a list of times when they did not fit in to the norm. Get them started by sharing a few of your own personal experiences of non-conformity. Let them know that they do not have to share if they are not comfortable, but encourage a safe and positive space for sharing. When their lists are complete, ask students who are willing to share some experiences with the group. Generate a master list of scenarios (without names) on a large piece of easel paper or the board.

Invite students to choose one scenario, (it does not need to be their own), that they will use to write a short story or short film script. Remind students that the scenario they select is a launch for their own creative expression. They are free to add characters, modify events and create endings of their choice. Stories or films may be shared when completed.