

# Drug education

Year 5-6, Lesson 3: Influences and pressure



# Influences and pressure

This is the third of four drug education lessons, for year 5–6. This lesson focuses on the reasons why someone may or may not choose to use a drug, through analysing different influences. Pupils also explore ways to manage these influences and ways to respond, including how to do so assertively in a range of situations.

Classroom-ready PowerPoint versions of the lesson plans are available to [members](#) of the PSHE Association.

## Learning objective

To learn about the reasons why people use drugs, and how to manage peer influence.

## Learning outcomes

Pupils will be able to:

- explain why people may choose to use or not use a drug, and the different factors that might influence them
- analyse what is most likely to influence a person to use or not use a drug
- describe strategies for managing peer influence in situations that might involve drugs
- explain how to ask for help from a trusted adult if they have any worries about drugs and why this is important

## Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. These include relevant subject knowledge for this topic, guidance on creating a safe learning environment, and curriculum links.

It is important to consider sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' experiences in relation to drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping. Pupils' exposure to different influences will depend on their individual, family and social circumstances. Ensure that ground rules refer to not sharing personal stories and keeping confidentiality. If concerns around personal safety arise during this lesson, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Post-it notes
- Resource 1: *Bus stop conversation* [one per pupil]
- Resource 2: *Influences diamond 9 cards* [one set per group]
- Resource 3: *Pressure scenario cards* [one set per class]
- Resource 4: *Responses prompts* [one per pair, as required]
- Resource 4a: *Responses prompts – teacher guide* [teacher copy]

## Key words

influence

pressure

peer

passive

aggressive

assertive

## Baseline assessment

### Baseline assessment activity (Slides 10-11, 15 mins)

**This activity should be completed before the lesson.** This allows time to look through pupils' work and note any patterns or misconceptions prior to teaching the lesson. Before carrying out the activity, remind pupils of ground rules for these lessons.

- Explain that some young people are having a conversation about why people use drugs, smoke tobacco, vape, or drink alcohol.
- Ask: What might they be saying?
- Then ask: What could someone do or say if they didn't want to use drugs, smoke tobacco, vape, or drink alcohol?

Pupils use **Resource 1: Bus stop conversation** to record their ideas. Collect these in and use responses to inform this lesson and future teaching about drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping.

*Pupil responses might include:*

*They are saying: to try it out and see what it's like, because they feel they need it, are addicted, because their friends are doing it, they think smoking is cool, to relax, they think vaping doesn't harm you*

*If someone didn't want to, they could: say no; walk away; explain their reasons for not wanting to; avoid the situations or places where it happens.*

### Introduction (Slides 12-13, 5 mins)

Remind pupils of the importance of the shared ground rules for these lessons, including that it is important to accept that people have different opinions and beliefs and to be respectful of each other's views in the lesson.

Introduce the learning objective and outcomes. Ask pupils to think of a drug and why a person might use that drug. Record the pupils' ideas on the board or flipchart.

To maintain a safe climate for learning, it is important that pupils know they do not need to name the drug or the person, just to give the reason.

## Core activities

### Diamond 9: Part 1 (Slide 14, 10 mins)

Ask pupils to discuss the different people, places or things that might influence someone to use a drug. Make a list on the board.

*Responses might include: where they are; who they are with; what they have seen/heard about the drug; their health; how they get the drug.*

Ask pupils to think of a drug and work in groups to consider what would most influence whether a person would use the drug.

Ask pupils to rank the following influences from most to least influence in a diamond 9: friends; family; online gamer/influencer; religion/beliefs; money; health advice (e.g. from a doctor); the situation; their feelings/emotions (mental health); their physical health – using **Resource 2: Influences diamond 9 cards**. The card at the top of the diamond should represent what they think is the greatest influence and the card at the bottom of the diamond should represent what they think is the least influence. The cards in the middle section are placed in rows that they think are ‘equally important’.

Compare responses from different groups. If there are any other influences that may not have been included on the cards, that pupils discussed, highlight these with the class.

*Pupil responses at the top of the diamond 9 might include:*

- *Friends - people might feel more pressure to use a drug if their friends are also doing so.*
- *Situation - if the person is in a situation where the drug is readily available, or in which they feel nervous.*
- *Online gamer/influencer - if someone they look up to online is shown using the drug too.*

*Other influences pupils might highlight could include magazine/news articles or the person’s own beliefs on whether it is right or wrong to use the drug.*



**Support:** Ask pupils to work with a reduced number of influences in a diamond 5.



**Challenge:** Ask pupils to suggest another influence and add it to the blank card in **Resource 2: Influences diamond 9 cards**. Where would they place their suggestion in the diamond?

### **Diamond 9: Part 2 (Slide 15, 10 mins)**

Now ask pupils to consider reasons why someone might choose not to use a drug (any drug, including medicines). Record their responses on the board, next to the original list of reasons why someone may use a drug. Note whether the pupils think the influences for or against using a drug are similar or very different.

*Pupil responses might include:*

- *Their physical health or mental health - it is harmful to their body or mind*
- *Religion/beliefs - it is against their religion/beliefs*
- *Friends - their friends don’t use the drug, so they don’t feel pressure to either*
- *Family - their family does not use the drug, so they are not used to people using the drug*

Ask pupils to repeat the diamond 9 activity, thinking about the same drug but this time considering what is most likely to influence someone not to use the drug.

Take feedback, drawing out what happened to the diamond 9 cards and noting whether the cards change position or remain similar.

*It is likely that family, religion, health advice will be higher in this version of the diamond 9, whilst friends and online influencers will be lower.*

Ask pupils to discuss which examples they think are the most influential and why.

## Strategies for managing pressure (Slides 16-17, 10 mins)

Write the following words on the board: **passive, aggressive, assertive** (or show slide 16) and discuss what they mean. For example:

- **Passive:** accepting or allowing what happens or what others do, without actively responding
- **Aggressive:** being ready or likely to confront or attack others or what others do
- **Assertive:** standing up for oneself or someone else, calmly and positively, or getting a point across without causing upset

Show and read aloud one of the scenarios from **Resource 3: Pressure scenario cards**. Working in pairs, ask pupils to identify who or what the character is being influenced by and whether they are feeling pressure, including peer pressure (pressure from those around them).

Then, ask pupils to consider the different ways the character could respond:

- What would be an example of a passive response? *For example, joining in with the group to feel included*
- What would be an example of an aggressive response? *For example, shouting “no” and being rude to others*
- What would be an example of an assertive response? *For example, saying a calm, firm but polite “no thanks”*



**Support:** Use **Resource 4a: Responses prompts – teacher guide** if pupils need some support to give examples of different responses.

## Responding to pressure (Slide 18, 10 mins)

Working in pairs or small groups, give pupils copies of **Resource 3: Pressure scenario cards**. Choose the scenario cards that best fit the needs of your class, using baseline assessments and local data on the key issues for the local area.

Ask pupils to work through the rest of the character scenarios, identifying:

- What are the risks for the character?
- Who or what are they being influenced by? (There could be more than one in each situation)
- Are they feeling pressure and if yes, what/who from?
- In what ways can they manage the situation?
- What would be an example of an assertive response?

Take feedback, discussing strategies that could be used and which would be the most effective in the different situations.



**Support:** Ask pupils to use **Resource 4: Responses prompts** to identify the assertive responses and match them to the scenarios.



**Challenge:** Challenge pupils to find two different assertive responses for each scenario and say which they think will be the most effective in each situation.

## Signposting support

### Signposting support (Slides 19–20, 5 mins)

Discuss whether any of the characters should get help, either in the situation or afterwards. When should they seek help? Who should they talk to and what should they say? Why is this important in this situation?

*For example, Jamie – they should tell a trusted adult what they have been asked to do – giving away or selling illegal drugs is against the law and could be dangerous.*

Remind pupils that no-one should feel pressured into doing something unsafe or illegal, especially a young person, and that if they have any worries or concerns, they should:

- Talk to a trusted adult at home or school
- Contact a children's advice line such as ChildLine 0800 1111
- Contact the police 101 or emergency services if someone is in immediate danger 999.

## Reflection and endpoint assessment

### Reflection and endpoint assessment (Slide 21, 10 mins)

Ask pupils to think about their learning on:

- drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vapes
- feeling pressure and peer pressure
- ways to respond to pressure

Ask them to then write a sentence on a post-it note (without adding their name) about what they think is the most important thing to 'take-away' from the lesson about drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping, pressure and how to manage it.

These can be typed up and displayed for whole class reflection and kept as assessment of learning.

## Extension activity

### Assertive responses (Slide 22)

Ask pupils to draw a cartoon to depict one of the scenarios they have discussed, adding speech and thought bubbles. They should focus on depicting the character demonstrating an assertive response to the situation that will help them to stay healthy and safe.