

Some ideas to help you manage peer pressure around alcohol

- **Value common interests** – hanging out with people who share similar interests may help to avoid a situation where you feel pressured into doing things you don't want to do. Being part of the IN crowd may not be as much fun as it looks.
- **Say 'no'** – having the strength to say 'no' may be hard, however, it also feels good to stick with what you believe is right for you
- **Try not to judge others** – try not to place judgments on other people's choices. Respecting someone else's choice will help them to respect yours. Try to remember that you don't have to agree with their actions. Focusing on the reasons why you don't feel happy with the choice may help you not to judge them
- **Take action** – sometimes you are able to tackle peer pressure if you are older, or feel more comfortable in your environment. Standing up for someone else may help you feel stronger about your own decisions
- **Change your peer group** – you usually choose your peers, so if your peer group is pressuring you and you want to avoid that pressure, then it might be an option to change peer groups. Get involved in a new activity and meet new people
- **Suggest activities that aren't alcohol or drug related** – it's awesome to get creative and think of other activities outside the square that you can all enjoy and don't revolve around drinking alcohol or experimenting with other drugs eg. Like going to the movies, get your mates together and cook up a storm in the kitchen have a massive feast, preparing for that next surf/skate comp, or sporting event, have mini challenges that incorporate a healthy lifestyle

- **Pretend** – sometimes when people are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs they can be more persistent and pushy than they realise. This means that saying ‘no’ is harder than it could be in other situations.

You could pretend you need to go home (because you feel sick or you forgot about something else you had to do, or even fake that you received an important phone call) to avoid being pressured into drinking or taking something, say you’re on antibiotics everyone knows you can’t mix hey!

Putting pressure on yourself

Sometimes the pressure to drink alcohol or experiment with other drugs might start with yourself. Feeling different from the group may be hard and to avoid this, we sometimes do things to make sure we feel like the rest of the group.

Part of being an individual and looking after you first and foremost involves making Informed decisions based on what is best for you. It means taking ownership and responsibility for what you do and how you think.

Being an individual means that you are still a valued member of your group, and that’s how you start gaining respect within your peers, they look up to you because YOU can make your own decisions.