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## Peer pressure into drug use

Sometimes, while you are a rebellious teenager, you get together with a group of friends. These friends are usually people you are not one hundred percent familiar with or your own friends informed you that they think they are good people, but you're still going to be uneasy about the fact you're hanging out with strangers. Some people feel as if because they are in a group, they have to seem cool and disconnected from authority. Most of the time in a peer pressure scenario, they see their "friends" smoking. Your heart would start racing, asking yourself if you are actually going to do this, but the pressure of the people around you gets to you, and you do it.

This one experience now led you to years of substance abuse. This one experience leads you to depression and withdrawal from reality. Teenagers and even young adults are desperate to be above anyone else, it's an inevitable thing to want to be different and stand out from the crowd, people think smoking makes you tough, while all it makes you is an addict. People may even think they are entitled to join in on these acts, for example, a student who just got into a fraternity in college. They would feel entitled to go to parties and indulge in bad behavior that will soon lead to bad habits. These students are also at a window of vulnerability, they want to experience the robust social complexion of college life. They feel as if they are missing out if they don't contribute to the stereotype of a rambunctious college student. This mindset leads people to terrible things, many say they know they wouldn't do it on their own as a rational decision, but the pressure and heat of the moment overcharges them, causing them to break. Another example of peer pressure would be jealousy. You could read what I just said and say, "Jealousy, how?" The answer to this sums up in a quick statement. Your own friends and sometimes family, could be against you and you wouldn't even know it, they could be supportive of the drug use and make it seem exciting and a good thing to indulge in, just so you fail and become somebody who is under them. Many don't realize this is what is taking place and see drugs and alcohol as a safe escape based off other people's views of the substance. We could take all this information and be morbid and say society is to blame for the increase of substance abuse in younger generations, yet this isn't true. People, expectations, shows, movies, all of this is what is pressuring children into drugs.

However, there are specific methods we can perform so we can avoid being pressured into drugs. One thing that could take place would be schools having assemblies, counseling, and recovery programs for all grade levels for people above age thirteen. If this issue was more mainstream showing all the negative aspects from what drugs would do to your brain, more people would consider all the cons before doing them. Another method for whenever you would be in a group setting would be to make eye contact with the user, and use a polite yet firm voice to tell them you will not engage in it, a true friend would understand this and back off. You could also suggest another activity for the group to do, and try to steer the conversation away from the

action being performed. You also could make up an excuse, saying you cannot partake because of responsibilities you have to tend to the next day, babysitting, dog walking, work, etc. The final method and the way I would do it, would be to leave the situation. Walking out the door and calling an actual trusted loved one to come help you is the smartest thing, for you will be safe. Sometimes people put their safety as a second priority but if you are someone who is disagreeing with drug use, you have an actual piece of mind that you are using to make decisions, therefore in my educated opinion, you would be conscious of what you are doing, and you would want to help yourself, so leaving would be the best option. If the situation turns violent, please be rational and make yourself the top priority, not being the coolest, not being the best, only your health and safety should be your main concern.

In conclusion, anybody can be peer pressured into substance abuse, but there are always ways you can help yourself in the time needed. Many teenagers and young adults drive to be different and this overcomes their rational mind, yet using your educated mind can make a world of difference. You should never be pressured into doing something you don't want to do or wouldn't do alone. These people who try to force this onto you are not real friends and only care about themselves. Blair County cares about you, I care about you, and I don't want to see you go down the wrong path. Thank you.