

WAS IT WORTH IT?

Asserting yourself against social influences

Target competency	Assert oneself against social influences
Cross-curricular competency (QEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct their identity
General objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply strategies to resist negative peer pressure



REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

In the last workshop, we talked about asking for help. Do you remember the challenge I gave you? Tell me how it went.

* The challenge was to ask someone you trusted for help when you needed it.

THE ADVENTURES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

The sweet smell of the BBQ drifts over Camp OFF-TRAIL. The students love it when the counsellors bring out the grilled meats and salads for the big feast! Charlie and Leo sit quietly, a little further back from the group, digesting the feast they've just wolfed down.

Charlie voices her feelings: "This is my favourite part of camp, when we get together for the big feast."

"Yeah, me too," says Leo. And in the end, rock climbing was fun."

William and Louis approach Leo and Charlie.

William smiles mischievously and shows them a small bag filled with insects: "Hey, you two! Would you like to come with us to the dorms?"

"Uh, what are you planning to do at the dorm?" asks Leo.

Louis explains: "We're gonna put grasshoppers and millipedes in Nicolas' sleeping bag! I heard he's really scared of bugs. It'll be so funny to see his reaction!"

Charlie is offended. "Really, guys? Putting bugs in Nicolas' sleeping bag, knowing FULL WELL that he's scared of them?"

"We just want to play a prank on him." says William.

Louis supports his friend: "Come on, it'll be fun! It's the last night of camp! He can recover tomorrow..."

Hesitating, Leo asks: "Um... I'm not sure that's a good idea. Traumatizing Nicolas with bugs as a joke... You think it's really worth it?"

DID YOU KNOW?

It's perfectly normal for students to let themselves be influenced in the course of their lives, whether by friends, school staff, family members or anyone else who is significant or important to them. Letting yourself be influenced is a normal phase of development.

It's important to understand that observing and imitating the behaviours of those around them allows students to forge an identity and define themselves as individuals. Some influences are innocuous, while others are very beneficial to constructing the self.

However, it can happen that a student allows themselves to be overly influenced by others. Allowing yourself to be influenced too much will sometimes lead you to take actions that don't match your personality or respect your limits.

There are several reasons why a student may be more inclined to let themselves be influenced. For example:

- A lack of self-confidence;
- Difficulty asserting oneself and saying no;
- A desire to avoid conflict;
- A desire to be accepted by others;
- Attention-seeking.

(AlloProf, 2017)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the class in two: group A and group B. Students can remain in their seats. Ask each group to identify two volunteers to come to the front.
2. Invite the two Group A volunteers to put themselves in William and Louis' shoes. They must try to convince Leo and Charlie to join in the prank.
3. The two volunteers in Group B must put themselves in Leo and Charlie's shoes and try to stand up, resisting the pressure from William and Louis.
4. Explain that the other students in Group A can provide William and Louis with arguments to help them convince Leo and Charlie. The other students in Group B can provide Leo and Charlie with arguments to help them assert themselves and resist pressure from William and Louis.

Facilitation strategy: If you want to get the students to be a little more active, you can ask students in both groups to work together to prepare each character's arguments BEFORE the volunteers go to the front. Do this by forming two teams from each group, with one volunteer from each team presenting his or her team's arguments. Provide a blank sheet of paper and a pencil for each team (of 4) to write down their arguments.

5. Once the two groups have exchanged sufficiently, return to the scenario and inform the students that Leo and Charlie decided to follow Williams and Louis, but stayed silent while the others laughed at Nicolas. They were only witnesses. Ask the students what they think of Leo and Charlie's behaviour. In your opinion:
 - Did they resist, or did they allow themselves to be influenced?
 - Did they contribute to Nicolas' embarrassment?
6. Explain that even when we're not **actively** involved in a situation, we may still have been negatively influenced by others. If you don't prevent a bad situation, you are still contributing to it in some way, and the consequences can be just as negative.
7. Lead a discussion on peer influence based on the following questions:
 - Have you ever been influenced by someone?
 - Is it normal to let yourself be influenced sometimes?
 - What can happen if you let yourself be negatively influenced?
 - Why is it sometimes difficult to resist the influence of others?
 - Have you ever had to assert yourself to resist the influence of others? How did you do it?
8. Ask students what things they can do to assert themselves and resist negative peer influences, and record their answers on the board. If necessary, help them with ideas from the *Ways to resist influences* supplementary sheet, below.
9. Give the students the *Resisting the influence of others* worksheet, and ask them to fill in the ideas they've discovered.



CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Before the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, try to stand up to someone who tries to negatively influence you.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To reinvest what's been learned, you could perform some skits with your students to help them assert themselves and resist the negative influence of their peers, or to get out of situations where they might be tempted to let themselves be influenced. You could invite students to anonymously write down situations where they were influenced by others or that they witnessed, and perform skits based on these real-life situations.

When a student is faced with a situation of negative peer influence, you can help them weigh the advantages and disadvantages of letting themselves be influenced, and refer them to the *Resisting the influence of others* worksheet to remind them of the strategies they learned in this workshop.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Parr, T. (2016). *Be Who You Are*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Reynolds, P.H. (2020). *Be You!* Orchard Books.
- Verde, S. (2018). *I Am Human: A Book of Empathy*. Abrams Books for Young Readers.
- Verde, S. (2020). *I Am One: A Book of Action*. Abrams Books for Young Readers.



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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

Ways to resist influences

- Say no
- Use humour, make a joke or a pun
- State your case:
 - “I would choose this scenario because...”
 - “We have to do this because...”
 - “It's important because...”
- Listen to other people's arguments, ask questions
- Join with like-minded students
- Propose another opinion or idea
- Get help from others
- Compromise
- Identify your needs and expectations
- Trust yourself

WORKSHEET TO PRINT

Resisting the influence of others

Say no

Argue for your choices

Ask the other person to
explain their reasons

Get help from others

Propose another option

Use humour

Join with positive allies

