



HANDOUT: PEER PRESSURE

You may often end up in situations where you find yourselves doing something which makes you feel uncomfortable or not safe. Yet you do it because your friends are doing it. Sometimes it is hard to say no to your friends. That is because it is important that you feel you fit in with your peers i.e. others who are of the same age group or belong to your school or neighbourhood. However, you must remember that it is okay and that you always have the right to say no to something that you don't feel right about – perhaps you need to learn how to keep out of such situations which otherwise could lead you into trouble.

In situations where you feel conflicted, you need to take charge. Stop to think and ask yourself some questions:

- Could this mean trouble? Will I end up doing something that breaks the rules at home or is not lawful?
- As a result of my actions, will my elders who mean so much to me such as parents or teachers be angry with me or disappointed?
- Will someone be hurt – their body or their feelings?
- Will I be safe?
- Do I feel good about this?

Assess the situation – think about what is happening. You need to be able to recognize peer pressure that is not good for you and can lead to difficult situations. Think twice when you are coaxed by others with statements such as:

- 'Everyone does it'
- 'No one will know'
- 'You're chicken/you're scared'
- 'Who's going to find out?'
- 'Go on, I dare you'

Make a good choice. Think:

- Do I want to do this? What is my heart telling me?
- What good things can happen?
- What bad things can happen?

Take action to avoid trouble. Think quickly.

- Decide which strategy to use for saying NO
- If this is a situation where you are being bullied or might be in danger, then you must ensure your safety first. This might mean agreeing to think about it and then saying NO, when you are in a safer place or not alone.