



It can be difficult to deal with peer pressure online.

Some young people feel the need to go along with the crowd on social media to 'fit in'.

Others are made to do more serious things they don't want to do because people tell them to online. For example, bullying others, taking part in dangerous pranks, or sending naked photos online or through their mobile.

It can be even more challenging to deal with than peer pressure which takes place offline. Online there might be more people taking part, more people can see comments and messages, and you might want to do things just to seem 'popular' and gain more friends or followers.

If you were pressured by others online, what would you do?

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR TOP TIPS BELOW TO DEAL WITH PEER PRESSURE ONLINE:



Dismiss the pressure. Firmly say no, you're not interested. This can be hard to do but it is effective. If you get messages online that make you feel uncomfortable you can use the 'block' and 'report' buttons on most social networks and online platforms.



Distract the person pressuring you by changing the subject or using humour. See the list of phrases below you can use to help you.



Avoid the situation by choosing your online friends wisely. Real friends won't pressure you or make you do anything you're not comfortable with.

If the peer pressure becomes cyberbullying, don't suffer in silence! Check out our 'top tips' and more information on the following pages.

HOW TO BE AN 'UPSTANDER' TO PEER PRESSURE ONLINE

If you see someone being pressured to do something they don't want to do online, don't stand by and do nothing. Be an upstander with our top tips!



Let the person being pressured know one simple thing: they shouldn't be made to do something they don't want to do.



You could try to help the situation using positive language, images or humour



Offer friendship: ask the person being pressured if they are ok and let them know you are there to talk



If you know the person from school you could also offer friendship by inviting them to sit with you at lunch or spend time with your group of friends



Encourage them to use the block and report buttons on social media if they're receiving messages they don't want to see



If there's any other people in the group pressuring the person you could encourage them to leave the conversation

BYSTANDER

A **bystander** is someone who knows about or sees something happening – such as bullying or somebody being pressured to do something they don't want to do – and does nothing to prevent or stop it

UPSTANDER

An **upstander** is someone who recognises when something is wrong and acts to make it right. When an **upstander** sees or hears about someone being bullied or peer pressured, they speak up, and do their best to help, protect and support the person.

PHRASES TO USE TO HELP STAND UP TO PEER PRESSURE ONLINE

- Say no in casual way by using phrases like 'nah, I'm good thanks' or 'no thanks!'
- If they keep on trying to pressure you, remain confident and continue to say no in a nice way, like 'I said no 😊' or 'you should respect my decision – it's a no'.
- Use humour and positive images to diffuse the situation
- Change the subject to distract the people pressuring you: share a funny YouTube video or ask if they've heard the latest song from your favourite artist and share a link to the song
- If a friend is pressuring you, ask them why they're taking part in things you don't want to do? Ask 'I've noticed you're doing ___ more and more recently, is everything ok?'
- If you end up in a corner, make an excuse – say you've got to go help look after a younger sibling or go out with a friend
- If all else fails, 'walk away' by saying your phone's about to die and logging off
- If someone is trying to get you to send them a naked picture of yourself, you could use the friendly images on ChildLine's Zipit app to keep the situation in control. Or you could ignore them and hope they get the hint. For more info on Zipit visit: www.childline.org.uk/Play/GetInvolved/Pages/sexting-zipit-app.aspx
- Most importantly, stay confident and true to your beliefs. Real friends will respect your choices, and if they're putting you in an awkward situation it might be better to move on and distance yourself from them.

SEXTING_

'Sexting' is when people send and receive naked or near-naked photos online and on mobile phones.

Sometimes it's done to show off, show interest in someone, prove commitment or just as a joke.

But sexting can have extremely serious consequences for everyone involved - the person in the picture, the sender and the person who receives the picture.

If you're under the age of 18, sexting is illegal.

It's also important to remember that the internet isn't a private place. Photos can be very easily copied or sent to others. So what started out as a private conversation can become public very quickly and seen by anyone.

If you're feeling pressured to share naked images, remember:

- You should never feel pressured into doing something you don't want to do.
- Think before you post - once you send an image, it can be very difficult to get back. How would you feel if a parent, sibling or teacher saw this image?
- You can talk to Childline on 0800 1111 or visit the sites below for help and advice
- If somebody is sharing an image like this, don't pass it on - it's illegal and could also be seen as bullying
- Have you been sent naked pictures? Or has someone made contact with you that you're uncomfortable with? In the UK, you can contact the Internet Watch Foundation (www.iwf.org.uk/) or the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre to report it (www.ceop.police.uk)

If the peer pressure becomes cyberbullying, don't suffer in silence! Check out our Top Tips below.

Be Strong Online with our Top Tips



1. Remember that you're not alone – If you're being cyberbullied remember that others have felt this way. Cyberbullying can make you feel isolated, hurt and angry – but remember that these feelings will pass. It's important that you follow the advice below to get the support you need.



2. Choose your online friends carefully – Remember that anyone you accept as a friend will be able to see what you have made available on that profile. They may be able to share or screengrab your photos or information and post them elsewhere



3. Make a strong password for all of your accounts, change them regularly and never share these with anyone. Make sure your password includes a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. This will mean people can't access your account, steal any of your info, or post harmful comments or pictures in your name.



Check your privacy settings – choose the information you share with people, for example you can set your profile or data to private or only allow certain people to contact you and view particular information. Make sure you never share your address, phone number or email address with anyone online



5. Google your name to check what private info about you is available online. If somebody types your name into a search engine, what can they find? You may need to check your privacy settings.



6. Keep the evidence and save any cyberbullying texts or conversations you receive



7. Don't respond immediately if you receive hurtful messages online. Instead...



8. Tell someone you trust right away such as your parent, teacher, mentor, relative, brother or sister – anyone! If you are being cyberbullied they will work with you to sort out the problem.



9. Block the person bullying you – there is always a way to stop the bully contacting you – check out the privacy or safety settings of the service you are using to find out how



10. Report it - Any cyber bullying you suffer should be reported. Whether it is nasty comments, a text message, online chats or group bullying, it is still bullying and is not ok. Block the person and use the 'report abuse' buttons- all social networks have these.



11. Stay positive - Things will get better. Do activities which make you feel happy with people who love and appreciate you.



12. Be an Upstander and support others experiencing bullying by following our advice on the next page.

For lots more information and advice check out <http://www.antibullyingpro.com/how-to-stay-safe-online>.

Other people you can tell include...



24/7 advice for young people on a range of issues



Available 24 hours a day for confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts. Call on 08457 90 90 90 or visit www.samaritans.org

School- if the cyberbullying is happening at school, it's important to tell them and ask them to investigate it.

Service provider- e.g your mobile phone network or the social network site. Most service providers in the UK have special teams whose job it is to investigate complaints of harassment and abuse so make sure you let them know about what is happening on their service. So check out their websites or give them a ring to find out more.

Police- if you feel that the cyberbullying is particularly serious you should contact your local police

If you'd like to find out more about cyberbullying or would like the Be Strong Online Ambassadors to run a cyberbullying session, ask your teacher to download *Be Strong Online* for free from www.antibullyingpro.com/be-strong-online!

Peer Pressure Online Support Sites

www.antibullyingpro.com

www.childline.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

[www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics/sexting](http://www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics sexting)



Your child has taken part in a Be Strong Online session, a new peer-to-peer learning programme from The Diana Award charity in partnership with Vodafone.

This session explored peer pressure online: how do young people deal with pressurised situations they encounter when using the internet? What are some examples of peer pressure they come across online, both positive and negative? And what strategies can they use to tackle this pressure from others?

PEER PRESSURE ONLINE

Young people have always been influenced by people they admire, their friends, and also the people they want to be their friends.

The difference today is that they are increasingly influenced by people outside of the school gates and their immediate social circle – by the stars they follow on internet platforms such as YouTube, or those they ‘meet’ on social media sites and online gaming platforms.

The thing about these online peers is that they can influence without having to face the consequences that friends would if they meet in the offline world. It’s much easier to pressurise someone into doing something risky if you can hide behind your screen if things go wrong.

Your child may face pressure from these online friends to take part in potentially dangerous internet dares and crazes, or to get involved in other activities that seem out of character, such as smoking, drinking or sending naked or sexually suggestive images of themselves.

Here are our tips, produced in association with Parent Zone, to enable you to support your child and help them cope with online peer pressure. If you would like to find out more there is an article for parents with all the information you need to accompany this advice. You can find the link at the end of this section.

IT’S GOOD TO TALK

- Starting the conversation can often be the most difficult thing. One way to begin would be to tell them that you have read or heard about a child being pressured to do something online. Ask them if they have ever heard of that happening to anyone they know – or if it has happened to them.
- If they say they haven’t, ask them how they would resist someone pressuring them to do something online they didn’t want to.
- If it has happened to them, ask them how they dealt with it. Then ask them if it happened again, whether they would do the same thing.
- Once they have finished, discuss with them how they could try to make amends if they did something to hurt someone else, or how you can help them feel better about themselves if they are the ones who have been hurt. In either scenario, discuss ways they could deal with the situation if it happens again.

- Ask your child if they have ever been tempted to get involved in any online pranks or dares, or know someone who has. Make them aware of the boundary between a fun online dare and one that could lead to serious harm. Explain that sharing them with others online could lead children or young people more vulnerable than them to take unwise risks.
- Both parents and children can feel uncomfortable talking about sex, but it's much better to speak to your child now about the dangers of being pressure into sharing naked or sexual images online, rather than waiting until something happens.
- Suggest they think carefully before they post anything online or via email or a social media app, no matter how much they are pressurised into doing so. A compromising image sent to a friend or a nasty comment on a message board could be there forever and visible to anyone. Even if they delete an image or comment, someone else could have already shared it and your child will have lost control of what they posted.

Remember you know your child better than anyone. If their behaviour changes or they seem to be uncharacteristically withdrawn or upset think about what might be happening online as well as offline.

FURTHER HELP

If you are concerned about peer pressure affecting your child, don't be afraid to get advice or support from their school or a friend you trust. If you think your child may be being pressured into doing something that could put them at risk, you can contact the NSPCC's free Online Safety Helpline (0808 800 5002), or CEOP (www.ceop.police.uk) for advice.

MORE INFORMATION

www.parentzone.org.uk/peerpressure

www.antibullyingpro.com/how-to-stay-safe-online

www.parentinfo.org/

www.vodafone.com/content/parents

www.vodafone.com/content/parents/advice/sexting.html

<http://www.ceop.police.uk/>



OUR PROGRAMMES

The Diana Award



www.diana-award.org.uk



[@dianaaward](https://twitter.com/dianaaward)

Network/Training & Mentoring



www.facebook.com/thedianaawardd



[@dianaaward](https://twitter.com/dianaaward)

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors



www.facebook.com/antibullyingpro



[@antibullyingpro](https://twitter.com/antibullyingpro)

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK!

Diana Award, 1 Mark Square, London, EC2A 4EG, Telephone: 020 3934 2160

Website: www.diana-award.org.uk Twitter: [Dianaaward](https://twitter.com/dianaaward)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thedianaaward