Personal Development- Peer Influence

Issue for Enquiry: What are peer influences?

Suggested time allocation: 4

Objectives:
1. To understand the meaning of peers;
2. To differentiate between positive and negative peer influence;
3. To learn how to face and cope with negative peer influence.

Learning Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons and activities</th>
<th>Enquiry questions</th>
<th>Knowledge/Concept</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
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| Lesson 1 and 2         | Which are peer influences? | • self-image  
• self-independence  
• self-confidence  
• peer | • discussion  
• presentation  
• critical thinking  
• self-reflection  
• making choices | critical |
| Lesson 2 and 3         | How to tackle with negative peer influences? | • self-image  
• self-independence  
• self-confidence  
• peer | • discussion  
• presentation  
• critical thinking  
• self-reflection  
• making choices | critical |
Activity 1  Brainstorming

Who are our peers?
What is “influence”?
In what ways do our peers have influence over us?

Peer

People of similar age to us, whom we meet / contact often
Examples: schoolmates, neighbor etc

Peer influences

People of similar age to us, whom we meet / contact often
Examples: schoolmates, imposing intangible power through different channels, which may change our way of thinking and behavior

Influence

a kind of intangible power which could change people’s way of thinking and behavior; influence could be positive or negative
Can you name things that you do as a result of peer influence?

- Choosing a particular hairstyle or clothing
- Choosing a schoolbag of particular design or brand
- Going to the study room together
- Choosing to join a particular extra-curricular activity
**Activity 3**

Can you categorize the above behaviours into positive or negative nature?

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<th>POSITIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
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The above items are positive peer influence that make me

*Develop positive values, establish team spirit with my peers etc*

The above items are negative peer influence that make me

*Develop bad habits/hobbies, alienate other people from me, for example my family members*
The following are some examples of negative peer influences faced by Siu Ming. Please refer to methods stated in the section “Ways of dealing with Peer Pressure” and suggest some solutions to him.

Some of these methods can only treat the symptom but not get at the root cause of the problem. They are only ways to evade from facing the problem immediately but not the solutions. Teachers can encourage students to come up with solutions targeted at the problems or lead students into discussion on the following “suggested enquiry questions”.

Source 1
Ah Keung, “What’s the big deal about smoking? See how cool I look! You’re no longer a little kid, how come you do not dare to try it out?”

Suggested enquiry questions:
- Does smoking really make you look “cool”?
- Does smoking qualify you to become an adult?
- Are you timid just because you do not smoke?
- What will be the consequences of smoking?

Source 2
Ah Tat, “You’re already 13! Going out at night is no big deal. You need not phone and report your whereabouts to your family, do you? You’ve got your freedom to act as at your own will!”

Suggested enquiry questions:
- Is going out at night “not a big deal”?
- Does it mean that you have no freedom to act at your own will if you report your whereabouts to your family?
- Why do parents want to know their children’s roundabouts?
- What will be the consequence of phoning home?
- What will be the consequence of not phoning home?”
Source 3

Ah Lai, “Look how fashionable the way I’m dressed – with the 3 earrings and this tongue ring, so cool! Even if you don’t want to have your tongue pierced, to qualify as our friend, at least you’ve got to pierce 2 holes for your ear and have one tattoo. You’ll become outdated if you go on playing basketball with Ah Kin and their friends. No one likes to play basketball anymore nowadays!

Suggested enquiry questions:
- What is “cool”?
- What is “outdated”?
- Is body piercing a proper way to make new friends?
- What will be the consequences of body piercing and tattooing?
- Should I fulfill the demands of our peers at all expense in order to be accepted by them?

Source 4

Ah Fai, “What’s the big deal to fake the parents’ signatures? Other classmates are doing the same thing. No one will ever know if you don’t tell. If the teacher ever knows I faked the signature of my parents, it must be you telling him. I know that you will not tell the class teacher, Mr Chan. You don’t want me to get a bad mark, do you?

Suggested enquiry questions:
- Will you report the faking to your teacher?
- Does it qualify you to be his true friend if you choose not to report his misconduct?
- What will be the consequence of reporting misconduct?
- Do wrongdoings become correct if everybody practice them?
- Who should be blamed for getting a bad mark, the one who cheats or the one who reports the cheating?
- Should you ignore the truth in order to defend your friend?
Teachers can refer to other examples with students for further discussion.

1. Website of “Virtues and Values - Teaching Materials for Moral Education”, (談「美德」‧論「價值」德育教材手冊) Education and Manpower Bureau. (Chinese version only)
   <http://resources.emb.gov.hk/mce1/moralbk/stories.html>
   Select “Stories of Moral Education” 「德育故事」, then select “the Basketball Gangs” 「籃球黨」
   <http://resources.emb.gov.hk/mce1/moralbk/pdf_n/94-117%201.pdf>

Ways of Dealing with Peer Pressure

1. **Rejection with determination**
   Direct rejection provided with reasons.
   “I will not join you!”

2. **Family’s pressure as reason for rejection**
   Suggesting someone (whom you care for and known by your friend) will be displeased by such behavior. “No way! My father will scold me for that!”

3. **Diverting the attention / finding an excuse**
   Trying to change the topic of conversation, look for a pretext to evade the question. At the same time, find a reasonable excuse to justify your rejection. “Why not go to a movie instead? It’s much better than going to the Karaoke.”

4. **Self-mocking at oneself**
   “I can’t help it. Everybody knows I am timid.”

5. **Leave the scene**
   “Sorry but I have an important meeting and I’ve to go now! “

6. **Pointing out the adverse effects**
   Let your friends understand the consequences of such action by pointing out the bad effects.
   It would be even better if you are able to suggest other solutions to resolve the situation.

7. **Other solutions**

   My group suggests that when Siu Ming is faced with the situation similar to Source ______, he could use solution ____________ because
How to cope with it?

Source __________________
Problem to address:

Benefits
1.
2.

Adverse effects
1.
2.

Benefits
1.
2.

Adverse effects
1.
2.

My decision:

The solution I will choose:

The expected result:

Are you able to bear such result? Do you need to consider your decision again?
Will you consider other solutions?
Activity 5  Self-reflection

Have you ever encountered the above positive / negative peer influence?

In which ways are your behavior / way of thinking / decision affected by your peers?

How do you face negative peer influence?

Are the methods you undertake effective?
Results of the survey conducted by the Caritas Youth and Community Service shows that, among the interviewed youths, nearly 70% shows a low sense of self control. This suggests that rather than attained through individual effort, future personal achievements are easily affected by uncontrollable factors such as fate. Besides, 76% admitted that they are easily affected by other people.

Reference material 3
青少年崇尚名牌多受朋輩及傳媒影響
Professor Chan Ka-wah, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication
<http://www.rthk.org.hk/mediadigest/20050915_76_120607.html>

Reference material 4
A Complete Student’s Handbook 2002: Peer Influence
<http://robocon.etvonline.tv/etv/front/archive_wmp.jsp?PROGRAM_REF_NBR=3103>