



Grade 8 • Ages 14-16

Peer Pressure

Students will learn how to identify negative peer pressure and use kindness to safely avoid it.

Unit Objective

Students will be able to analyze how avoiding negative peer pressure shows kindness toward themselves and others and can positively influence their mental health.

Introducing This Unit To Your Students

For the next few lessons, we are going to talk about how peer pressure can impact us. Find a partner and discuss what peer pressure means to you and what kind of negative peer pressure 8th graders experience.

Allow time for students to discuss together. You can use this time to introduce the Kindness Concepts (assertiveness, integrity, self-discipline) and create community definitions for these concepts or share the definitions listed below. Consider using the [Kindness Concept Posters](#) for assertiveness, integrity, self-discipline as a way to reinforce learning.

Kindness Concepts

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

- RESPONSIBILITY** Being reliable to do the things that are expected or required in your life, home, community and environment.
- RESPECT** Treating people, places, and things with kindness.
- ASSERTIVENESS** Standing up for yourself and what you believe in while being respectful of the rights and beliefs of others.

Kindness is an intrinsic quality of the heart expressed through an act of benevolence reflecting care and good will for self and others.



These lesson plans were created by The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. For more information, please visit randomactsofkindness.org

If you have questions or comments, please email us at teacherhelp@randomactsofkindness.org

INTEGRITY Acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations.

SELF-DISCIPLINE Controlling one's words and actions for the benefit of self and others.

Unit Lessons

There are four lessons in this unit plus an optional lesson if you have time.

LESSON TITLE	LESSON GOALS	LESSON MATERIALS
Lesson 1: Egg And Bottle	Students will discuss the affects of pressure on their thinking and their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glass bottle with a mouth small enough so that hard-boiled egg won't fit through with force• Two hard-boiled eggs (peeled), match, paper• Large, self-adhesive poster sheets• RAK Journals• Kindness Concept Posters: Assertiveness, Responsibility, Respect, Self-Discipline and Integrity
Lesson 2: Peer Pressure	Students will watch some video clips about peer pressure and discuss how these relate to their own lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation for a Better Life TV spots from values.com website: Reach (30 sec.): http://www.values.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/78-reach• Peer Pressure (30 sec.): http://www.values.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/115-peer-pressure• Your Brain on Peer Pressure Infographic• RAK Journals• Kindness Concept Posters: Assertiveness, Responsibility, Respect, Self-Discipline and Integrity
Lesson 3: Ways to Respond to Peer Pressure	Students will explore different ways they feel pressure, strategies for responding to peer pressure and ways of being an upstander.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large, self-adhesive poster sheets; write the following on the top before class: Negative Ways People Pressure Others (on one sheet), Ways to Respond to Peer Pressure (on the other sheet)• RAK Journals
Lesson 4: Real Time Response	Students will think of realistic ways they can respond to common pressures they may face, both positive and negative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What Would You Do? Situations, (p. 9),• A soccer ball with situations from activity sheet cut out and taped onto ball before class.• Kindness Concept Posters: Assertiveness, Responsibility, Respect, Self-Discipline and Integrity
Optional Language Arts Extension: Facing Tough Situations Book Report	Students will read a novel and explore how the characters face tough challenges with integrity, respect and assertiveness, then relate the story to their own lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novels about teens facing tough choices or being pressured in a negative way. See list below or allow students to choose a novel• Kindness Concept Posters: Assertiveness, Responsibility, Respect, Self-Discipline and Integrity
Optional Research Project: Standing Up for the Rights of Others	Students will research people in history who have stood up for the rights of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Websites for research project• Kindness Concept Posters: Assertiveness, Responsibility, Respect, Self-Discipline and Integrity

Unit Notes

The lessons in this unit focus on a central theme and connect to different academic curriculum areas.

The lessons are intended to be easy to teach and fun to use while helping to develop social and emotional skills.

Lesson activities use a variety of modalities to address different learning styles and build on each other.

Each lesson includes choice of evaluation or reflection questions, which can be written, discussed or used as journal entries. Consider writing these on the board before the lesson begins.

The activities also incorporate key Kindness Concepts, which can be introduced before teaching the lesson or as the concepts are discussed in the lesson. Consider displaying the [Kindness Concept Posters](#) during the unit. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) and [Building Trust in the Classroom](#) for information about using Kindness Concepts to create a healthy classroom environment and help students develop pro-social behaviors.

Each activity includes tips for how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners.

[The Kindness Tool Kit](#) is another way to meet the needs of diverse learners. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) for how to create and use this tool kit.

RAK also has developed [Focusing Strategies](#) and [Problem-Solving Strategies](#) to help students better regulate their emotions, think through challenging situations, and build healthy relationships, friendships and community. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) for more information about incorporating those strategies into the unit.

Establishing kindness as the norm in your classroom positively influences classroom culture. By setting kindness as the expected behavior and having everyone agree to that norm, your students gain responsibility for maintaining an environment that is kind to everyone

Revisiting the topics or questions raised during discussions regularly will expand student understanding of the concepts. Scripted explanations are provided, but feel free to use language that feels natural for you.

The Common Core, 21st Century, SEL and Colorado P-12 Academic Standards met in this unit are listed at the start of each lesson. A [Learning Standards Key](#) is provided on the website for your reference.

