

## PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure is a pretty lame term for how friends, school mates, siblings or other people try to make their peers feel about being, or not being, sexually active. Below are just a few examples of different types of peer pressure you might come across.

### *"Everyone's doing it"*

#### **What's this?**

This is the idea that every teenager in Australia is having sex.

#### **Some ideas about it**

A truly ridiculous idea! Many teenagers are sexually active in Australia but studies show that just as many teenagers aren't.

### *"If you loved me, you'd have sex with me"*

#### **What's this?**

This is a line that is used by a person who wants to have sex, to pressure their partner who does not want to have sex.

#### **Some ideas about it**

If they love you, then they'll wait until you're ready!!

This is a great example of someone emotionally manipulating someone into having sex, even if the other person doesn't want to. **NEWS FLASH:** Love and sex are entirely different and separate things. You can love someone and not want to have sex with them. You can also not love someone and decide to have sex with them.

The point is that you need to want to and be ready to, and that choice is yours.

### *Sluts and studs*

#### **What's this?**

This is where a girl who has sex is condemned by her peers and gains a reputation as a 'slut'. Whereas a guy who does exactly the same thing is rewarded and congratulated.

#### **Some ideas about it**

It is a ridiculous and archaic double standard based on the construction of gender. This type of labelling can have very serious affects on young women including isolation within school and peer groups, and resulting in internal feelings of low self-esteem or guilt.



## Friends with benefits

### What's this?

Two friends who have a sexual relationship without getting emotionally involved

### Some ideas about it

Great idea where each person has made an empowered choice based on the desire to have a strictly sexual relationship. However, in reality, a lot of people do it because they want more and they hope, eventually, it will turn into more than a sexual relationship – this doesn't usually happen. These relationships often have one person making the decisions and the other person going along with those decisions. It can be a very unbalanced and unsatisfactory relationship for the person without the decision-making power.

## What can we do about peer pressure?

Peer pressure can feel pretty intense and can influence people to do things they don't really want to do. These are a couple of ideas about ways to try and overcome peer pressure and support your mates:

1. **Get strong about what you want in a relationship**
2. **Stand by your friends – true friends will withstand gossip**
3. **Don't get involved in continuing the peer pressure**
4. **Don't judge other people by the school rumour mill**

**If you are worried about peer pressure talk to a trusted friend or family member, or call the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.**

