

Discussion Starters on Peer Relationships

Friends play big roles in our lives, whether we're teenagers or adults. These discussion starters encourage teenagers and parenting adults to talk together about friendships that matter to them and how friends have influenced them.

NOTE: Family members are all encouraged to respond to each question from their own perspectives. Just answer the questions that are comfortable for your family.

1. If you were going to a different country for a year with just two or three friends outside of your family, with whom you would want to go? Why?
2. Who would you consider to be your closest two or three friends outside of your family? What qualities do you most enjoy or appreciate about these close friends?
3. What is something important you've learned from one or more of your close friends? (It could be a skill, an attitude or something about yourself.) What worries, if any, do you have about these friends and how they might influence you?
4. Who are friends from your past who you don't think were good influences on you? What did they do that made you have questions about them?
5. Think of a time when a friend or peer tried to get you to do something you didn't want to do. (It could be big or small.) How did you respond? As you think back on it, how might you respond differently now?
6. Based on your past experiences, what are some of the ways you can be a positive influence on your friends and other people around you?
7. What are some ways friends or other peers have pushed or encouraged you to try or do something new that, in the end, really brought out the best in you? How did they encourage you?
8. Think about your school, workplace or other place you spend a lot of time. Are there a few people (roughly your age) who have a lot of influence over how other people act and what they do (either good or bad)? What is it about these people that gives them a lot of influence?
9. Suppose you suddenly had the power to influence all your peers to do something, what would you have them do? What are ways you already influence them to do that?
10. Based on your past experiences, what are the best ways to resist negative pressure from peers to do something that you know is harmful or dangerous to yourself and others?