

# LESSON FOUR

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## ● INTRODUCTION TO PRESSURES

### GOALS

1. To help students resist drugs by showing them how to identify different pressures to use drugs
2. To motivate resistance by showing students that most teenagers do not use drugs
3. To help students resist media pressure by learning how to counter advertisements

### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

1. Introduce Lesson (2 min.)
2. Introduce Pressures (12 min.)
3. Discuss Prevalence of Substance Use (10 min.)
4. Discuss Substance Advertising (5 min.)
5. Identify Ad Messages (3 min.)
6. Rewrite Substance Ads (11 min.)
7. Wrap-up (2 min.)

### DESCRIPTION

This lesson marks a transition from building information (Lessons 1-3) to practicing resistance skills (Lessons 5-7 and 9). However, before students can resist pressure, they must first learn how to identify it. While students certainly have experienced pressure, they are not always able to articulate it (sometimes the word *influence* instead of *pressure* works better with students). This lesson focuses on two forms of social pressure before focusing on examples of interpersonal pressuring in subsequent lessons.

Using the sample visuals *Where Does Pressure to Use Drugs Come From?* (Lesson Plan, page 4.2) and *Typical Student Responses* (Teacher Reference, page 4.8), you will lead a discussion in Activity 2 that helps students identify both internal and external sources of pressure. In Activity 3 (Discuss Prevalence of Substance Use), you will talk about social pressure and the pressure we put on ourselves (internal) to live up to “social norms.” You’ll have the opportunity to enlighten your class about a common misperception that “everybody is doing it” (using drugs).

A second form of social pressure, substance advertising (external), is challenged in advertising message identification and rewrite exercises in Activities 4-6. Students are asked to bring in current advertisements, identify their messages, and rewrite them to tell the truth.

## PREPARATION

- Review Lesson Plan
- Read: *The Prevalence of Substance Use Activity* (Teacher Reference, pages 4.9-4.10)
- Collect and prepare materials, as indicated below

## MATERIALS NEEDED

Assemble the following materials:

- Completed visual: *Ground Rules: Students* (saved from Lesson 1)
- 10 ads for tobacco and alcohol gathered from periodicals (or go to [www.projectalert.com](http://www.projectalert.com) and login for recent ads.)
- Chart paper, masking tape, and thick, felt-tip, nontoxic markers (6 blue or black, 1 red)

Prepare the following materials:

- Partial chart paper visuals:

*Where Does Pressure to Use Drugs Come From?* (Write title on top and draw illustration in center - word “friends” doesn’t go on visual until class time. See Activity 2C. Note: this visual must be done on paper and not on the board, as it will be saved to use again in a future lesson.)

*Drug Use Estimates* (Write title and headings, leave space to record students’ estimates. See Activity 3B.)

- Copy *Advertisement Count Sheet* (Student Handout, page 4.11) for each student
- Copy *Let’s Clear the Air: Straight Talk About Teenagers and Smoking* (Student Handout, pages 4.12-4.13) for each student

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. Introduce Lesson (2 min.)

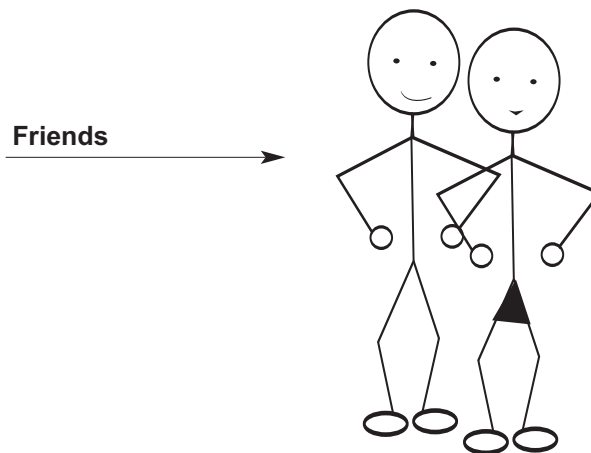
- A. Display visual: *Ground Rules: Students.*
- B. Have students turn in their homework: *Alternatives to Drinking.*
- C. *“Today we’re going to talk about pressures to use drugs. We’ll also learn some ways to resist these pressures.”*

### 2. Introduce Pressures (12 min.)

- A. Display partial chart paper visual: *Where Does Pressure to Use Drugs Come From?*
- B. *“In our first Project ALERT lesson we talked about reasons why some people use drugs. One of the reasons many of you mentioned was ‘because my friends do.’”*
- C. Write the word “Friends” on the visual, and draw an arrow to the illustration.

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#### Where Does Pressure to Use Drugs Come From?



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- D. Ask, *“Where else do pressures come from?”*

Refer to your *Typical Student Responses* for *Where Does Pressure to Use Drugs Come From?* on page 4.8. Listen for (probe for) the headings “Friends,” “Adults/Family,” “Ads/Media,” and “Yourself.” Leave room under each heading for examples you’ll be asking for in a few minutes. As students name each additional source of pressure, write it in on your illustration visual and draw an arrow to the illustration. Remind students to think about pressures that may be unique to their community. If students say “school,” ask, *“Who at school pressures you to use drugs?”* probing for “friends.”

- E. After the four sources of pressure are named, ask students to give an example for each, ending with “Yourself.” *“What would (pressure source) say to pressure you? Give me a sentence.”* Write these in.
- F. Save the completed visual *Where Do Pressures to Use Drugs Come From?* for use in Lesson 9.

**3. Discuss Prevalence of Substance Use (10 min.)**

- A. Point to the “Yourself” category. Say, *“Many of us put pressure on ourselves because we think everyone else is smoking, drinking, or using marijuana. Let’s find out just how many teenagers actually do use these drugs.”*
- B. Display the *Drug Use Estimates* visual you have prepared on chart paper or on the board (sample below):

**Drug Use Estimates: Past month**  
(Percentage of 8th graders in the United States)

Percentage	% that did	% that didn’t
<b>Smoked Cigarettes</b>		
<b>Used Marijuana</b>		
<b>Used Alcohol</b>		

- C. *“Guess what percentage of 8th graders in the United States smoked cigarettes in the last month. What percentage used marijuana in the last month? What percentage used alcohol?”*
- D. With a red marker, record at least four students’ estimates for each substance under the substance name. As you do, concretely portray some of these percentages. (“X students in this class,” “four out of five students in this class,” “two out of three students”).
- E. *“A recent study surveyed eighth graders throughout the United States. These are the percentages that were found.”*
- F. Above the substance name, write and circle the correct percentages in large numbers. The correct percentages for 2006 are:
  - 8.7% smoked cigarettes in the last month\*
  - 6.5% used marijuana in the last month\*
  - 17.2% used alcohol in the last month.\*

\*National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), *Monitoring the Future*, 2006. Note: See [www.projectalert.com](http://www.projectalert.com) for annual updates.

- G. Use the example of cigarettes to portray what the correct percentage means: 9.3% means about one out of 11. Count off every eleventh student and have him or her stay seated (they represent the smokers). Have the rest of the class stand up.

Say, *“The students standing up represent the proportion of nonsmokers among 8th graders.”*

- H. Repeat for Alcohol and Marijuana.

- I. Discuss the prevalence data.

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### Discussion Goals

1. To help students realize that although it sometimes seems like “everyone is smoking and drinking,” it’s not true. It seems that way because we repeatedly see the same people using these drugs.
2. To help students understand that teens who are not using drugs are often less obvious.
3. To help students recognize that some people exaggerate.

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If student estimates exceed the actual percentages, say, *“Most of us estimated that more students use drugs than actually do. But not as many students smoke cigarettes, use marijuana, and drink as we thought.”* If the estimates approximate the actual percentage, reinforce students’ knowledge that “not everyone’s doing it.”

*“Can you think of any reasons why we might have guessed too high?”*  
Ask the following questions as needed.

1. *“Do the smokers (drinkers, marijuana users) hang out together? Are they more obvious?”*
  2. *“Do the smokers have a certain place at or near school where they get together?”*
  3. *“Do nonsmokers hang out in the same way? Are they less obvious?”*
  4. *“Do people who drink at parties talk about it?”*
  5. *“Do nondrinkers talk about not drinking?”*
- J. *“You may find yourself feeling out of it because you think you’re the only one not drinking or using other drugs. But actually, most people your age don’t use these drugs.”*

#### 4. Discuss Substance Advertising (5 min.)

- A. Refer to the *Pressures* visual. Say, *“Now we’re going to focus on another kind of pressure. This one is big business in America - advertising. We’ll learn how to identify and resist the messages advertisers put out.”*
  - B. Display one tobacco ad and one alcohol ad.
  - C. Ask students:
    1. *“How much do you think this ad costs?”* (A single-page ad in one issue of *Time* or *Newsweek* may cost as much as \$240,000.)
    2. *“Why would a tobacco (or alcohol) company spend so much?”*
    3. *“What do the advertisers get if they are successful at persuading us?”* (money and higher sales)
  - D. *“How do ads work?”* Stress the following important points sometime during your discussion.
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#### How Ads Work

1. Ads are very powerful. Advertisers use many sophisticated techniques to get us to drink or to smoke cigarettes. It’s not easy to resist these messages. They make drinking or smoking look very appealing. Huge amounts of money are spent to convince us.
  2. Cigarette ads link smoking with things we all want. Cigarette ads suggest that smoking helps you be popular and sexy and live in a wholesome, clean environment. For men, they link smoking with being tough, macho. For women, they link smoking with being independent, liberated. But it’s not true.
  3. Alcohol ads link alcohol with happy times, being sexy and rich. But alcohol doesn’t make you popular or rich. It makes you drunk.
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#### 5. Identify Ad Messages (3 min.)

- A. Select 2-3 of the ads you collected. Try to present a variety, including cigarette, smokeless tobacco, beer/malt liquor, or liquor.
- B. Hold up each in turn and read it aloud. Describe its setting, and restate its key slogan.
- C. For each ad ask, *“What is this ad trying to make us believe about this product?”*

## 6. Rewrite Substance Ads (11 min.)

### A. Demonstrate ad rewriting.

1. Tape two ads to the board or chart paper.
2. *“Pretend there is a new law requiring all tobacco and liquor companies to tell the truth about their products. How could we rewrite this ad so it says what is really true?”*

#### Examples:

- a. Ad: “It’s a woman thing.”  
Truth: “It’s an unhealthy thing.”
- b. Ad: “Alive with pleasure!”  
Truth: “Dead with cancer!”

3. List next to each ad the rewrites from one or two students.

### B. *“Now we are going to rewrite ads in groups as the whole class just did. I will give each group one ad to rewrite. Pick a Recorder for your group. Tape your ad to the chart paper or board. The Recorder should write on the chart paper or board what the group thinks the ad is really saying. You’ll have 5 minutes to rewrite your ad, so start immediately.”*

### C. Divide the class into five or six groups. Provide each group with one ad that lends itself to rewriting, a sheet of chart paper and a marker.

### D. Circulate as needed.

### E. Ask the Recorders to bring their ads to the front. Read and praise each of the rewrites. The ad rewrites will vary in level of creativity. Since the purpose is to teach resistance skills, any act of resistance, however simple, should be reinforced.

### F. Summarize: *“Ads try to link drugs to things we want, like money, friends, good times, glamour. But drinking or smoking are not how you get those things.”*

## 7. Wrap-up (2 min.)

### A. Praise students for their good ideas. Indicate how well they have learned to identify and resist pressures in ads.

B. Homework:

1. Hand out *Advertisement Count Sheet*. *“Between now and the next Project ALERT lesson, make a list of the slogans of all the ads for alcohol and cigarettes you see or hear on radio, billboards, magazines, or television. Look for places these products are promoted (car races, sporting events, on clothing). See if you can find any anti-smoking or anti-drinking messages. Bring the list to the next Project ALERT class. If you need more room, write on the back or use plain paper.”*
  2. Hand out *Let’s Clear the Air: Straight Talk About Teenagers and Smoking* and tell students to read it.
- C. Refer to the *Pressures* visual. Say, *“In the next lesson you will learn how to identify and resist pressures from friends and other students at school.”*

# WHERE DOES PRESSURE TO USE DRUGS COME FROM?

(TYPICAL STUDENT RESPONSES)

## FRIENDS/STUDENTS AT SCHOOL

*“Come on. It won’t hurt you to try.”*

*“I got these drugs just for us.”*

*“All the kids are drinking.”*

*“The coolest kids smoke.”*

## ADULTS/FAMILY

“We forbid you to smoke marijuana.” (rebellion)

When parents use drugs (smoke, drink), teens may feel it’s okay to do it, too. (parental modeling)

“Do you want a sip?”

## ADS/MEDIA

“Drinking will make you look sexy.”

“Smoking is glamorous.”

“Smoking makes you tougher.” (macho, empowered, independent)

## YOURSELF

“I’ll feel out of it if I don’t smoke.”

“I’m bored. Maybe I’ll get drunk.”

# THE PREVALENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE ACTIVITY

The Prevalence of Substance Use activity is in the Introduction to Pressures lesson because researchers have found that perceived drug use norms are powerful influences on the onset of drug use behavior. If students think everyone is doing it – using tobacco, marijuana, alcohol or inhalants – they will feel more pressure to use them, too.

When students overestimate how many peers are involved in drug use, they are less likely to perceive social support for refusing offers to use drugs. This is why teaching resistance skills alone is not enough. Hansen and Graham<sup>1</sup> found that establishing conservative drug use norms is critical to the success of any drug prevention effort.

In this activity, we ask students to guess the percent of 8th graders in the United States who have used cigarettes, marijuana and alcohol in the last month. Virtually all students overestimate (by a significant amount).

Common guesses for 30-day prevalence of alcohol use are: 100%, 80% and 60%. Students are genuinely surprised to hear the actual percentage: 17.1% (NIDA, 2005).

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

There are several teaching techniques that help this activity have a powerful impact on students:

- **Know the latest prevalence data**

To make sure you always have current prevalence rates, we provide you with data from the University of Michigan's *Monitoring the Future* study every year. Funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), this study has been tracking high school students (10th and 12th graders) for twenty years. More recently, the study has included 8th graders. The value of this particular study is that data is always current. Annual prevalence rates are released every December from a survey conducted in the Spring, and are published in the Winter issue of the *ALERT Educator*.

They are also posted on the Project ALERT web site ([www.projectalert.com](http://www.projectalert.com)) or you can visit [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org). Project ALERT uses 30-day prevalence statistics because they are a good indicator of regular use, whereas annual prevalence rates include one-time-only experimenters.

If you can access it, local data can be very persuasive, also. Just make sure it has been collected using methods that ensure representativeness and validity.

<sup>1</sup>Hansen, W. and Graham, J., Preventing Alcohol, Marijuana and Cigarette Use Among Adolescents: Peer Pressure Resistance Training versus Establishing Conservative Norms, *Preventive Medicine*, 20, 1991.

- **Demonstrate the percentages**

Many students often need help in understanding the concept of a percentage. In this activity, teachers are asked to have the appropriate number of students stand up to represent the proportion of nonsmokers, and then the nondrinkers in the class. The visual impact of the students standing translates the teacher's comment, "The students standing up represent the proportion of nonsmokers among 8th graders" into something they can believe. The concept of "majority" is also demonstrated in this way. This concept is crucial to the establishment of conservative drug use norms, as demonstrated in Lesson 4.

- **Don't argue with students about the data**

Because the actual prevalence statistics are usually substantially lower than the students' guesses, some students will challenge the data by saying that the kids in the surveys lied. The discussion questions outlined in this activity are designed to diffuse or prevent this challenge. You are asked to help the class recognize that some people exaggerate and lead them into a discussion by asking, "*Can you think of any reasons why we might have guessed too high?*" They'll probably think of some obvious reasons on their own, and the lesson plan offers acceptable reasons about why their guesses were so off the mark:

- Do the smokers (drinkers, marijuana users) hang out together? Are they more obvious?
- Do nonsmokers hang out in the same way? Are they less obvious?

It is wise to prepare a response in case a student challenges the validity of the substance use statistics ("*Those kids lied.*"). Any response should be delivered in a nondefensive, matter-of-fact way. This is also a good place to practice validation ("*Yes, I know it may seem as though students lied because the numbers are so different. However...*" Or, "*That's possible, but the people who conducted the survey promised confidentiality and made sure parents and teachers would not see students' answers, and many surveys found similar results – so we're pretty confident in these statistics.*")

- **Impress upon students the meaning of "majority"**

The activity wraps up with the teacher respecting and recognizing students' perceived realities. "*You may find yourself feeling out of it because you think you're the only one not drinking or using other drugs.*" This is meant to reinforce the idea that "feeling out of it" is an example of an internal pressure. The next statement, "*But actually, most people your age don't use these drugs,*" is a reminder of the actual prevalence data. Because sixth/seventh graders are concrete thinkers, for the most part, it wouldn't hurt to remind them of the visual representation of the data by saying, "*Just think of all the students who stood up in this class to represent the percentage of kids who don't smoke or drink. Remember, nonusers are in the majority.*"

# ADVERTISEMENT COUNT SHEET

Fill in with ads you see or hear that promote cigarette or alcohol use or ads that discourage use. Use back of sheet or additional sheets of paper if you are seeing/hearing lots of ads.

<p><b>Ad I saw or heard:</b> _____ (Name of Product)</p> <p>Message _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Where I saw or heard it _____ (television, billboard, radio, event, magazine)</p>	<p><b>Ad I saw or heard:</b> _____ (Name of Product)</p> <p>Message _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Where I saw or heard it _____ (television, billboard, radio, event, magazine)</p>
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<p><b>Ad I saw or heard:</b> _____ (Name of Product)</p> <p>Message _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Where I saw or heard it _____ (television, billboard, radio, event, magazine)</p>	<p><b>Ad I saw or heard:</b> _____ (Name of Product)</p> <p>Message _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Where I saw or heard it _____ (television, billboard, radio, event, magazine)</p>
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# LET'S CLEAR THE AIR: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT TEENAGERS AND SMOKING

Everyone knows cigarettes and smoking are bad for you, but many teenagers ask, "How bad?" Here is what really happens when you smoke:

## The first time

Here is what happens when you smoke a cigarette for the first time:

- ▲ Your heart beats faster and has to work harder.
- ▲ Your breath smells bad.
- ▲ It is likely you will start coughing.
- ▲ You may feel dizzy.
- ▲ You may get in trouble with parents or at school.

## After a while

Here is what happens when you smoke regularly:

- ▲ You become addicted to nicotine. If you smoke only a few cigarettes every day for a week, you can get hooked. Your body physically needs a cigarette to feel okay.
- ▲ It is harder to breathe. You can't perform as well in sports, and you are more likely to get infections in your lungs.
- ▲ You smell bad.
- ▲ Your teeth start turning yellow.
- ▲ You have less money. Being addicted to cigarettes is expensive!

## After a long time

Here is what can happen if you smoke for a long period of time:

- ▲ Lung cancer and other cancers: When you start to smoke before you are fifteen years old, you have a four times greater chance of getting lung cancer (almost everyone who gets lung cancer has smoked cigarettes).
- ▲ Heart disease: Smokers have more heart attacks.
- ▲ Lung disease: Smokers get other lung diseases, like emphysema. Some of these diseases can kill you.
- ▲ Wrinkles: Smoking causes the skin on your face to wrinkle.
- ▲ Death: As long as you smoke, each cigarette takes ten minutes off your life.

### ▲ If smoking is so bad for you, why do teenagers do it?

Teenagers start smoking for different reasons:

- Because their friends smoke
- To look cool or sophisticated
- Rebellion

They keep smoking because they are *addicted*.

### ▲ Is it bad to be around people who smoke even if you don't?

Yes. Secondhand or passive smoke (smoke from other people's cigarettes) increases your chance of getting cancer and lung diseases. The risk of death from lung cancer and heart disease is increased 30% among those regularly exposed to secondhand smoke at home.

### ▲ I've heard that if you chew tobacco it is not dangerous.

*Wrong.* Smokeless tobacco (chew, dip, snuff) still contains nicotine, so you can become addicted just as with smoking cigarettes. Here are some problems associated with smokeless tobacco:

- Bad breath
- Stained teeth
- Cancer: You can get cancer of the mouth, gums, larynx (voice box), and esophagus.
- *Addiction*

### ▲ If you are already smoking, does it help to quit?

Yes. This is the good news: when you quit, your lungs begin to repair themselves very soon. After a while, your risk of having a heart attack or getting lung cancer or other respiratory diseases goes way down.

When you quit, your breath smells good, your teeth get white again, and you have more money to spend on things other than cigarettes. You also feel good about yourself because you accomplished a difficult thing that you wanted to do.