

# 4-H Grab and Go: Influence On Me

**Concept:**

Family, peers, and culture influence and affect decisions.

**Age/Grade Level:**

Middle school: Ages 12-15

**Education Standard:**

National Health Education Standard 2: Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behavior.

**Life Skill:**

Decision Making, Healthy Life Choices, Self-Discipline, Self-Responsibility

**Success Indicator:**

Youth will understand social influences and their affect on their decision-making process.

**National 4-H Curriculum:**

**Health  
Rocks!**

4-H ■ HEALTHY LIFE SERIES

**PREPARATION**

**Time:** 30 – 45 minutes

**Space:**

Large open classroom with table

**Materials:**

- Chalkboard/chalk or flip-chart/marker
- Pencils/pens

**Background Information:**

The social world of youth is very complex. During adolescent years, social relations undergo remarkable transitions and reorganization. Youth social relations are very important because they are expanding social networks and developing many important social skills. Furthermore, the increasing complexity and structure of the youth social world play a key role in youth development. Youth spend twice as much time with peers as they do with family and other adults. It is important to understand the structure and purpose of youth relationships, and how they might or might not influence youth to engage in tobacco, alcohol, or other drug use.

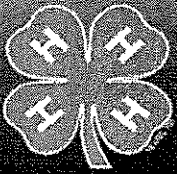
Youth relationships are organized at multiple levels. Each level plays a role in how youth think, act, behave, and influence each other and in the development of their own identities. This identity helps them carve out their place and sense of meaning for themselves as they approach adulthood.

It is important for youth to recognize the extent to which friendships and the rest of their social world can influence behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. Encouraging and assisting youth in developing positive friendships and identifying positive role models can be protective factors that help them develop in healthy and productive ways.

**Instructions:**

1. Ask participants to take off their right shoe and put them in a row on the table in front. Have them look at all the shoes and ask the following:
  - Are there any that look alike?
  - Are most of them different?
  - Share why you bought the shoes you did.
  - How do the different shoes reflect how each person is unique or different?
  - Even with the differences, how are all of the shoes the same (go on feet, all have soles, etc.)?

Now, think of each person in the group. How are they alike? How are they different? How do the similarities and differences help each person belong to specific groups at school, faith-based, home, or other activities? (Following the discussion, youth can get their shoes.)



# Influence On Me

## Youth Development Tip:

To help youth develop leadership skills, review each activity for opportunities when they can be the teacher or take an active role in helping lead an activity.

## Open Ended Questions:

- What things do you do that you think might be influenced by others?
- Why is it sometimes okay not to go along with social influences?
- Why is important to do what others are doing? Wear the same clothes, etc.?
- When might influence be positive?
- How might social influence affect you when it comes to using tobacco, alcohol or drugs?
- What do you think is the norm in your school for tobacco, alcohol, or drugs use? Why?

2. Share what you have done from the time you got up this morning until the present time. Encourage detail. If you watched TV, what show(s)? Did you talk on the phone or text someone? Who was it?
3. Think about why you did what you did. Who or what influenced you to do what you did? Who influenced you to get up? How did they do that? Who influences you to watch a certain TV show?
4. What do you think influence means? What does social influence mean? Discuss how we are all influenced in some ways by what others think and do. Do you think some people are more easily influenced than others? Why?
5. Read the following questions.
  - Who is your favorite recording artist?
  - What is your favorite brand of jeans?
  - Where do you like to go to eat?
  - What is the 'in' hairstyle?
  - What is your favorite food?
  - What is your favorite thing to do on Friday night?
  - Where do you like to shop?
6. Did you have some of the same answers? Why might they be different answers? Why did you choose the answers you did? How might social influence have been involved in your answers?
7. For example, brand of jeans. Who else likes to buy that brand?
8. Review the **Open Ended Questions**.

## Additional Notes/Extension/Glossary

**Influence** - persuasion, swaying, or convincing.

**Social influence** - the effect others have on a person to persuade, sway, convince them in the way they think, act, etc.

## Learn More

The following website provides additional information:

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g1751/build/g1751.pdf>