

THE SOCIAL NORMS APPROACH

LESSON #2

REFLECTION GUIDE



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Teenagers are asking two developmentally appropriate questions:
Who am I? Can you tell me where I belong?

Primarily, they're looking for answers to those important questions not from their parents or their teachers, but from their peers.

Research shows that teens always overestimate the percentage of their peers who engage in substance use, and they extrapolate their misperception to assume that substance use is a social norm. In other words, they falsely assume that 'everybody's doing it'. When their desire to fit in overrides their caution or personal values, they can make life-altering decisions with substances without realizing what they're doing.

We need to be aware of the social norms our kids perceive. Social norms are the perception they have of what's okay and acceptable — and they drive our kids' lives more than anything else.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. *What were the social norms when you were a teenager? How are they different from what you observe today?*
2. *How do you gauge your kids' sensitivity to social norms and their desire to fit in?*



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