



## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD RESIST PRESSURE TO TAKE DRUGS?

**Glenn Williams**

Psychologist and CEO, Focus on the Family® Australia

Young people use drugs for many different reasons, and there are some who feel pressured to use drugs by their friends.

There are volumes of research on what we call 'peer pressure'. They report on why some young people are more influenced than others, why young people do the opposite of what they know is right or have been taught by their parents, and how peer pressure for a teenager occurs at a time when there are many other physiological and emotional changes taking place.

In recent times there has been a significant focus on reducing *risk factors* and the strengthening of *protective factors* to help children become more resilient in life. It is also acknowledged however, that a child's exposure to a greater number of risk factors does not necessarily mean that drug use or other problem behaviours will automatically follow. One reason for this is the presence of protective factors that balance and buffer the risk factors.

What are some protective factors parents can focus on to help their child become more resilient and better able to resist peer pressure?

1. Building your child's self-esteem and confidence in various activities
2. Helping your child to develop strong interpersonal skills
3. Giving your child a loving, affirming and supportive home environment
4. Encouraging your child to get involved in recreational, cultural and sporting activities

At a time when there are many changes and stresses for your child, building these protective factors into your home life and relationship with your child will help him conquer many things that others don't.