



LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Pressure Points - Peer Influence & Group Dynamics

SEQUENCE TITLE: Protective Behaviours – Navigating Risk in a Mobile World



LEVEL

Years 9-10



LESSON NUMBER

4 of 7



LESSON LENGTH

60 minutes

CURRICULUM AREAS



LEARNING AREAS

- Health and Physical Education



CAPABILITIES

- Personal and Social Capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students investigate how peer influence, social norms and group dynamics can shape travel behaviour and contribute to unsafe decisions. Students explore why people may take risks in group settings even when they know the safer choice and examine how belonging, social approval, confidence and risk-taking can affect decision-making in travel environments. The lesson builds awareness of the difference between knowing safe behaviours and consistently applying them, while highlighting the role of protective behaviours and positive influence in shared travel spaces. Students deepen their understanding of the social factors contributing to unsafe behaviour and consider how behaviour change, awareness and positive peer influence can help create safer communities.

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Creating a Safe Social Space for Participation and Learning



In alignment with the Department of Education's **Respectful Relationships** (RR) [teaching and learning resources](#):

- Establish class agreements that help all students and staff to feel safe and respected.
 - Notice, name and address sexist or inappropriate behaviour, utilising classroom agreements and school codes of conduct.
 - Be clear about what is appropriate to share in a group space and what is better suited to a private setting.
 - Provide content advice and help-seeking reminders to support the wellbeing of students when engaging with sensitive material prior to and at the beginning of lessons.
 - Remind students that they are not expected to disclose personal experiences and use protective interrupting to redirect students to a conversation with a teacher in a more private and safe space.
 - Let wellbeing staff know the lesson is running in case students seek support afterwards as discussions may bring up concerns about harassment, disclosures of gender-based violence, unsafe environments, or anxiety about travel.
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Achievement Standard (Extract)



Health and Physical Education:

Students evaluate how attitudes and beliefs about equality, respect, diversity and inclusion influence the nature and quality of relationships. They evaluate personal strategies to manage emotional responses to different situations and reflect on the impact of their ability to manage these responses on health and wellbeing. Students propose and evaluate strategies to manage online and offline situations where their own or others' health, safety, relationships or wellbeing may be negatively impacted. They synthesise health information from credible sources to propose and justify strategies that can enhance their own, others' and the community's health, safety, relationships and wellbeing.

Personal and Social Capability:

Students analyse and evaluate emotional complexity in personal and social contexts from different perspectives. They identify, analyse and reflect on strategies for responding to challenges and for supporting independence and responsible decision-making, considering personal and social enablers of and barriers to success, and making adaptations.

Critical and Creative Thinking

Students select, justify, use and reflect on a range of strategies to generate new ideas and possibilities and critically reflect on suspension of judgement when generating and evaluating alternative ideas and possibilities from different perspectives.

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Victorian Curriculum Content Descriptions



LEARNING AREAS

Health and Physical Education

VC2HP10P01 Evaluate factors that shape identities and evaluate how individuals influence the identities of others.

VC2HP10P04 Evaluate the influence of respect, empathy, power and coercion on establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

VC2HP10P08 Plan, rehearse and evaluate strategies (including first aid and CPR) for managing situations where their own or others' health, safety or wellbeing may be negatively impacted at home, school and in the community.

VC2HP10P09 Critique health information, services and media messaging about relationships, lifestyle choices, health decisions and behaviours to evaluate their influence on their own, others' and community's attitudes and actions.

CAPABILITIES

Personal and Social Capability

VC2CP10O03 Personal, social and cultural factors that influence the ability to experience respectful personal and group relationships; the rights and responsibilities of individuals in relationships.

VC2CP10S04 How to identify and adapt strategies for improving confidence, adaptability and perseverance in response to challenges in different contexts, considering personal and social enablers and barriers.

VC2CP10S05 The significance of individual responsibility and adaptability in decision-making when completing challenging tasks and planning for the future.

Critical and Creative Thinking

VC2CC10Q02 When and how to critically reflect on suspension of judgement when generating and evaluating alternative ideas and possibilities from different perspectives.

VC2CC10Q03 Strategies for generating new ideas and possibilities including identifying links and patterns across multiple information sources and perspectives.



PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students:

- understand basic travel safety expectations and road rules.
- have explored a community travel safety issue in previous lessons.
- can recognise examples of peer pressure or social influence.
- have participated in group discussions and evidence-based investigations.
- have experience reflecting on personal choices and behaviours.

VOCABULARY

Peer influence – the effect other people have on someone's behaviour or choices.

Peer pressure – feeling encouraged or expected to behave a certain way to fit in.

Social norms – behaviours considered "normal" within a group.

Risk-taking – engaging in behaviours that increase the chance of harm or danger.

Group dynamics – the ways people behave and interact in groups.

Positive influence – encouraging others to make safe, respectful or responsible choices.

False confidence – feeling safer or more capable because others are doing the same behaviour.

Behaviour change – actions aimed at improving safety or reducing risk

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MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Student [Travel Investigator Logbook](#).
- Devices for Mentimeter/Kahoot (if available).
- Printed evidence station resources and articles.
- Short approved videos for investigation stations.
- Butcher's paper or chart paper for group summaries.
- Sticky notes or markers.
- Project focus notes from previous lessons.



LEARNING INTENTION

Students will investigate how peer influence and group dynamics contribute to unsafe travel behaviours and apply this understanding to their chosen community safety issue.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain how peer influence can affect travel behaviour and decision-making.
- I can identify situations where people may feel pressure to take risks.
- I can analyse how social factors contribute to unsafe travel behaviours.
- I can apply my understanding of peer influence to my Street Safe Action Project focus.
- I can identify ways positive influence could improve safety in my community.

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure discussions remain focused on behaviours rather than judging individuals or friendship groups.
- Acknowledge that peer influence can be both positive and negative.
- Use age-appropriate examples that are relevant to teenage travel experiences.
- Be sensitive to students who may have experienced trauma related to accidents, unsafe behaviour or harassment.
- Allow anonymous participation opportunities during polls and scenario responses to encourage honest engagement.
- Reinforce that understanding why unsafe choices happen is essential for creating realistic and effective safety solutions.
- Encourage respectful discussion when students share differing perspectives or personal experiences.



USEFUL LINKS

[Vic Dept. of Education: Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Level 9-10](#)

Topic #1 - Emotional Literacy

Activity #1: Understanding complex emotions

Activity #2: Thinking from different perspectives

Optional activity: Who is Leading the Motion?

Topic #2 – Personal and cultural strength

Activity #1: Is respect a human right?

Activity #3: Using strengths in ethical dilemmas

Activity #4: Recognising and challenging hate speech

Topic #4 – Problem solving

Activity 1: Using a logical model for problem-solving.

Topic #6 - Help seeking

Activity #1: When should we ask for help?

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ASSESSMENT

- Observation of student participation in scenario discussions and evidence-station investigations.
- Contributions to group discussions analysing peer influence and risk-taking behaviour.
- Quality and depth of reflections recorded in the [Travel Investigator Logbook](#).
- Student ability to connect peer influence to their chosen travel safety issue.
- Draft purpose statement demonstrating understanding of behavioural and social factors contributing to the issue.



LEARNING CONTINUUM

Learning Continuum	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Students investigate how peer influence, social norms and group dynamics shape travel behaviour and contribute to unsafe decisions. They explore why people may take risks in social settings, analyse how pressure operates in different environments, and consider strategies that encourage safer, more responsible behaviour in the community.	Students identify simple examples of peer influence and recognise that people may make unsafe choices to fit in. They describe basic examples of risky travel behaviour with support.	Students explain different types of peer influence and describe how social pressure can affect decision-making in travel situations. They use examples and evidence to explain why unsafe behaviour may occur in groups.	Students analyse how peer influence, social norms and group dynamics contribute to unsafe travel behaviour across different contexts. They evaluate contributing social factors and propose informed strategies or interventions to promote safer decision-making and positive peer influence.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Understanding of Peer Influence	1. Explain how peer influence affects travel behaviour and decision-making.	1.0 Limited or no understanding of peer influence shown.	1.1 Identifies basic examples of peer influence or pressure in travel situations.	1.2 Explains how different forms of peer influence can contribute to unsafe decisions using relevant examples or evidence.	1.3 Analyses how social norms, group dynamics and pressure shape behaviour in different travel contexts and explains why these behaviours can be difficult to resist.
Critical Thinking and Investigation	2. Investigate and analyse factors contributing to unsafe group behaviour.	2.0 Minimal participation or limited connection to the inquiry focus.	2.1 Identifies simple reasons why people may take risks in groups.	2.2 Uses evidence from discussions, research or case studies to explain patterns of risky behaviour and social influence.	2.3 Evaluates contributing factors across multiple contexts and justifies conclusions using evidence and reasoning.

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ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (Cont'd)

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Application and Reflection	3. Apply understanding of peer influence to the Street Safe Action Project.	3.0 Reflection or project response incomplete or unclear.	3.1 Identifies how peer influence relates to their chosen issue.	3.2 Explains how social pressures or beliefs contribute to the issue and suggests a realistic response or focus area.	3.3 Develops a clear project direction that demonstrates insight into behaviour change, positive influence or reducing peer-driven risk.
Personal and Social Capability	4. Demonstrate respectful participation and consideration of different perspectives during discussions and investigations.	4.0 Rarely contributes appropriately or shows limited respect for others' viewpoints.	4.1 Participates in discussions and listens to others with prompting.	4.2 Contributes respectfully and considers different opinions or experiences during activities.	4.3 Demonstrates empathy, thoughtful collaboration and an awareness of how different people may experience pressure or risk differently.
Problem-Solving and Behaviour Change	5. Suggest strategies that could reduce unsafe peer-influenced behaviour.	5.0 No realistic strategy suggested or response unrelated to the issue.	5.1 Suggests a simple strategy to improve safety or reduce risky behaviour.	5.2 Explains how a strategy could positively influence behaviour or decision-making.	5.3 Proposes a well-considered strategy, campaign or intervention that targets peer influence and promotes safer group behaviour in realistic settings.

Structure of lesson:



INQUIRY QUESTION: How does peer influence shape travel behaviour, and why can it lead to unsafe decisions?

GOAL: To build awareness of peer pressure and social influence and explore why people take risks even when they know better?

PROJECT STEP: Investigate the role of peer influence in contributing to the chosen problem.



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1

LESSON PHASE: Introduction (Hook)



TIMING: 10 mins

Place four signs around the room:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

Explain to students that they are not answering based on what *they* would do, but what they think **most teenagers** might do in these situations. This creates emotional distance and reduces pressure or judgement.

Read out a series of short travel-related statements one at a time:

1. "Most teenagers would cross the road early if their friends already started crossing."
2. "Most teenagers think it's okay to look at their phone while walking near traffic."
3. "Most teenagers would feel awkward telling a friend to slow down on an e-bike."
4. "Most teenagers would stay quiet if someone was acting unsafely on public transport."
5. "Most teenagers know the rules, but don't always follow them."

After each statement, students move to the area that matches their opinion.

Pause briefly after each movement and ask:

- What makes people think or act this way?
- Why can it be difficult to make safer choices in groups?
- Does knowing the safe choice always mean people will do it?

Facilitate a short discussion highlighting:

- The difference between awareness and action.
- How peer influence, confidence and social pressure affect decision-making.
- Why protective behaviours are important in shared travel environments.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Allow students to stand between signs if unsure.
- Provide examples or rephrase statements for clarification.
- Students may discuss with a partner before moving.

Extend

- Ask students to justify why they think certain behaviours are becoming more common.
- Invite students to identify which statements relate most strongly to responsibility, respect or risk-taking.

2

LESSON PHASE: Explicit Teaching & Modelled Learning



TIMING: 10 mins

Framing the Concept - Peer Influence & Risk

Explain: Many unsafe travel behaviours are influenced by *social pressure*. This can be:

- Direct - someone encouraging or daring you.
e.g., "Just do it - you'll be fine."
- Indirect - wanting to fit in or not stand out.
e.g., everyone else ignores the road rules so you feel weird following them.
- Unspoken - copying what others are doing.
e.g., going along with unsafe shortcuts because "that's what this group always does."

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Introduce key ideas:

1. Social Norms – What people believe is “normal” behaviour in a group.
2. Peer Influence – The influence to act in a certain way to be accepted.
3. Risk Amplification – Risk-taking increases in group settings.
4. False Confidence – Feeling safer because others are doing it.

Explain: Across ALL project themes - public transport, shared paths, intersections, e-bikes and e-scooters - unsafe decisions often start with group dynamics, thrill-seeking or wanting to fit in.

Highlight: Teenagers are more likely to take risks in groups due to:

- Desire for belonging.
- Developing decision-making skills.
- Sensitivity to social approval.

Understanding why behaviours happen is essential before trying to change them.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide students with a clear visual summary of the three types of peer influence (direct, indirect, unspoken).
- Pre-highlight definitions of key terms (social norms, peer influence, risk amplification, false confidence) so they can focus on understanding examples rather than decoding terminology.

Extend

- Ask students to connect each type of peer influence to a real or observed travel situation from their own experience.

3

LESSON PHASE: Guided Practice



TIMING: 30 mins

Investigation Carousel – Why Do People Take Risks?

Students investigate different aspects of peer influence through evidence-based stations.

Groups explore one of the following topics - becoming an 'expert' group after their research.

Students record findings in their [Travel Investigator Logbook](#).

Each 'expert' group then shares their findings with the rest of the class.

Evidence Stations:

** continued overleaf*

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Station A – The Psychology of Peer Pressure

Inquiry prompt: Why does being in a group change behaviour?

Sources:

- Short explainer video on peer influence - [Peer Group Influence \(Explained in 3 Minutes\)](#)
- Simple research summaries (teen brain, decision-making)
 - [Raising Children - Brain development: pre-teens and teenagers](#)
 - [Melbourne Uni - Teen brains are wired to take risks, but that can be a good thing](#)
- Examples of group risk-taking -
 - [Australian Road Safety Foundation - Peer Pressure, Young Drivers & Road Safety in Australia](#)
 - [TAC - E-Scooters Underage 15sec \(PAR\)](#)

Station B – Social Media & Risk Trends

Inquiry prompt: How does social media influence unsafe behaviour?

Sources:

- Examples of viral risky behaviours (age-appropriate) - [The Conversation - From selfie injuries to viral stunts, social media can be risky for children. Could a ban help?](#)
- Discussion of filming, attention and validation - [Beyond Blue - Social media comparison and validation](#)
- Articles on trends and online influence - [University of Qld - How does social media affect teenagers?](#)

Station C – Real-World Case Studies

Inquiry prompt: What happens when peer pressure leads to unsafe decisions?

Sources:

- News stories (e-bikes, trains, unsafe crossings) - [Teen charged after allegedly mowing down police officer with e-motorbike in Melbourne CBD](#)
- Incident summaries - [The Guardian - 'Peer influence is no joke': Australian government to fund research into youth vaping prevention](#)
- Consequences for individuals and others - [Royal Children's Hospital - Taking risks - teens and young people](#)

Station D – Resisting Pressure & Positive Influence

Inquiry prompt: What helps people make safer choices?

Sources:

- Strategies for speaking up or opting out - [Kids Helpline - Peer pressure and fitting in](#)
- Aspects of positive influence - [Australian Road Safety Foundation - Small Habits, Big Impact](#)
- Examples of peer-led safety initiatives - [ABC News - Horsham College inspiring more students to get active through Move it! Mondays program](#)

Teacher Role:

Circulate and prompt deeper thinking:

- What patterns are you noticing?
- When does influence become pressure?
- Which situations feel hardest to resist?

** differentiation strategies overleaf*

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DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Support students with structured note-taking scaffolds at each station and provide simplified summaries of research and case studies to assist comprehension.

Extend

- Challenge students to compare across stations to identify patterns in how peer influence operates in different contexts and evaluate which environments most strongly amplify risky behaviour, justifying their reasoning with evidence.

4

LESSON PHASE: Independent Application



TIMING: 15 mins

Students return to their chosen issue from the initial lessons.

Students record the following reflection responses in their logbooks:

1. How does peer influence contribute to this issue?
2. When are people most likely to make unsafe choices?
3. Who is most affected by these behaviours?
4. What beliefs or pressures might be driving this?

Students refine their project direction by adding a new layer. For example:

Title: My issue + the role of peer influence.

Students add to their project focus:

- Why this issue happens (not just what happens).
- The social factors behind it.
- Who they may need to influence in their solution.

Students begin considering:

- If doing a campaign → What message challenges peer norms?
- If looking at behaviour change → How can peers influence each other positively?
- If focusing on design solution → How can environments reduce risky group behaviour?

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide a structured reflection scaffold that breaks each question into prompts and offer examples of how to connect peer influence to a chosen issue.

Extend

- Challenge students to deepen their analysis by mapping the chain of influence in their issue (e.g. who influences whom, in what settings, and how).
- Ask students to justify which intervention approach (campaign, behaviour change, or design) would have the greatest impact on reducing peer-driven risk, supported by evidence from earlier lessons.

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LESSON PHASE: Reflection / Review



TIMING: 5 mins

Exit Reflection – “What Influences Us?”

Students complete a quick written or verbal reflection:

1. What is one strategy that could help someone resist unsafe pressure or positively influence others?

Invite a few students to share responses with the class.

Reinforce key message: Understanding why unsafe behaviour happens is an important step towards creating realistic solutions that improve safety for everyone in the community.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide sentence starters or allow students to discuss responses with a partner before sharing.
- Students may respond using dot points instead of full sentences.

Extend

- Ask students to explain which type of peer influence (direct, indirect or unspoken) they think has the greatest impact on teenagers and justify their reasoning.