



THE DISPATCH

Safety | Health Services | Chaplain Corps



July 2024

The Dispatch is for informational purposes. Unit Safety Officers and Health Service Officers are encouraged to use the articles in The Dispatch as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions. Members may go [eServices - Learning Management System](#), click on "Go to AXIS," search for this month's The Dispatch, take the quiz, and receive safety education credit.

In This Publication

- ✚ Positive Peer Pressure – Shaping Tomorrow
- ✚ Understanding Peer Pressure and Integrating Safety
- ✚ Peer Pressure – What Is It and Why Is It So Strong?
- ✚ Protecting Workers in Extreme Heat
- ✚ Heat Emergencies
- ✚ Recognition
- ✚ Communications From Safety, Health Services, and Chaplain Corps

The Theme for This Month's Dispatch is Peer Pressure. These articles from Health Services, Safety and Chaplain Corps offer guidance to cadets and senior members on the challenges of peer pressure, coping techniques and exploring the positive impact of peer pressure.

Primary Articles on Peer Pressure

Positive Peer Pressure - Shaping Tomorrow

By: Ch Maj. Michael Morison, PCR-001

"Peer pressure is the direct influence on people by peers who get encouraged to follow their peers by changing their habits, values and behavior." (Poonam Dhull and Rajesh D. Beniwal) We are very aware of the negative impact of peer pressure. We understand when peer pressure leads us to make poor decisions that are detrimental to our personal safety, health, and values. At these times one has a strong sense that what one is being asked to do is not right. And, at this time, one is challenged to listen to their inner voice whispering that this goes against my values, against what I believe is right.

If I embrace two CAP core values, these values can guide us through these negative and challenging situations – Respect and Integrity. Core values define what we believe, guide our decisions, and motivate our actions. First, respect begins with respect for self. It is a

commitment to being my best possible self in any situation. Secondly, based on my self-respect and self-worth, I am willing to take a stand and act with integrity in any situation. It is a commitment to doing the right thing even when unseen.

Peer pressure can also be leveraged to provide positive, and growth filled experiences for individuals and groups.” Peer pressure can also have a positive impact, we can be pressured into making the right choices. It can teach us to be mature, responsible and do what’s right all the time for ourselves. Positive peer pressure is often overlooked but does exist and may be described as an influence to do what is right.” (Poonam Dhull and Rajesh D. Beniwal)

As wingmen, each of us is called to provide an environment of positive peer pressure that creates a culture of caring and respect. Our core values should define who we are as individuals and as part of something bigger than ourselves. We share these core values in common, we can support each other, and we can trust that our fellow wingmen will support us as well.

Below are two recommended articles to review for additional information.

- [Dealing with Peer Pressure \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- [What to Know About Peer Pressure \(verywellmind.com\)](#) - Definition, examples, and ways to cope.

Understanding Peer Pressure and Integrating Safety

By: Damen Therkildsen, CAP Activity Safety Program Manager



Photo by [Jake Pierrelee](#) on [Unsplash](#)

I remember my teen years with angst as I think about some of the situations I encountered, that led to many negative decisions but also positive ones too. Peer pressure was almost always at the center of my bad decisions that helped refine me. I thought as I advanced in age much of the peer pressure I experienced as a teen would disappear. Yet peer pressure has remained a part of my adult life as well, I am just more measured in how I approach it and lean into understanding the reason why the pressure is there.

Peer pressure is a powerful social influence that can persuade individuals to conform to the behaviors, attitudes, and personal habits of their social group. In my youth it was my friends and parents. As an adult it has been my coworkers, friends, family, and even situations I have encountered. Peer pressure is a force that can shape decisions and actions, often without our

awareness. While peer pressure can lead to positive outcomes, such as encouraging healthy habits or motivation for successful endeavors, it can also have negative consequences, especially when it compromises personal safety or our well-being.

Peer pressure operates through various mechanisms, including explicit suggestions, implicit expectations, and the desire to fit in. Our cadets are particularly susceptible to peer pressure due to their developmental stage and the importance of social relationships during this period. The need for acceptance and fear of rejection can drive cadets to engage in behaviors they might otherwise avoid.

When it comes to safety, peer pressure can lead to risky behaviors such as reckless driving, substance abuse, and dangerous stunts. The desire to be perceived as brave or adventurous can overshadow the assessment of risks and their consequences. Additionally, peer pressure can contribute to cyberbullying, where individuals may participate in or become victims of online harassment due to the influence of their peers.

Strategies for Coping with Peer Pressure

To navigate peer pressure effectively, it's essential to develop self-awareness and the ability to make independent decisions. Here are some strategies to consider:

- **Know Our Values:** Understanding our CAP values and your beliefs can help you make decisions that align with your principles, rather than succumbing to external pressures.
- **Practice Assertiveness:** Being able to assertively communicate your boundaries and decisions can empower you to resist unwanted influences. The ability to speak up and say "no" or "knock it off" are huge steps for our organization.
- **Choose Your Peers Wisely:** Surrounding yourself with supportive and respectful friends can reduce the likelihood of encountering negative peer pressure. And having positive peer pressure is huge in our lives in achieving our goals and aspirations.
- **Seek Support:** If you're struggling with peer pressure, talking to a trusted adult, counselor, chaplain, or friend can provide perspective and guidance.

Peer pressure is an inevitable part of our lives, but it doesn't have to dictate our actions. By recognizing its presence and understanding its effects, each of us can take proactive steps to ensure our health/safety and maintain our integrity. Life is about finding balance between social belonging and our personal autonomy and making choices that reflect our true self.

****It's important to remember that peer pressure can be both positive and negative and learning to manage it is a crucial life skill. ****

Peer Pressure - What Is It and Why Is It So Strong?

By: Lt. Col. Jill Silverman, PhD, National Health Services Advisory Team, NY-001

As I was writing this, I mentioned it to a friend and her immediate response was, "oh...dreadful topic." Peer pressure is generally associated with negative behaviors and outcomes. In reality, peer pressure is a neutral term, and one that is defined by the context in which it is used.

Peer pressure is defined as "the influence exerted by a peer group on its individual members to fit in with or conform to the group's norms and expectations. Peer pressure may have positive socialization value but may also have negative consequences for mental or physical health." (Dictionary [APA.org](https://www.apa.org), 2018). It is important to note that peer pressure can and does exist at multiple levels, for example, within people of the same age group, same work group, same religion, same experiences, etc.

Some of the most important aspects when considering the potential impact of peer pressure, is to be able to define who/what is the group, and what is at risk. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the effects of peer pressure as they are learning and testing how to go about life (somewhat) independently of their parents. This leaves a potential void as they are strongly driven to become independently socially adept. The individual will align themselves with the group that most strongly reflects their views at that moment, and their goals. To maintain membership in the group becomes paramount to that person's sense of self and well-being, that's what gives power to the concept of peer pressure, if membership in that group wasn't so strongly established and/or sought after, the pressure of the group members would be far less powerful.

The length to which someone will act in ways not typical of their usual behavior in response to the demands of the group demonstrates the strength within the pressure exerted by the group. People will often act in ways that one would think they never would, just to maintain membership in that group. For that reason, the concept of peer pressure and the inherent strength within it is something of which to be aware whenever working with groups of people, and especially people who are in a vulnerable position.

Remember:

Peer pressure will exist as long as there is a need for people to be safe and included. And these are needs most of us have at one time or another. Peer pressure can be used in a positive manner by supporting groups that use healthy, adaptive behaviors and support the same for inclusion.

Protecting Workers in Extreme Heat

Along with participating in CAP activities and missions, extreme heat can also lead to an increase in workplace injuries. The article below discusses how heat stress happens, monitoring heat health and preventing heat risk for workers. According to a study by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, heat stress on the body can also lead to an increase in falls and vehicle or machinery mishandling due to lack of concentration. These incidents lead to an additional 20,000 workplace injuries each year in California alone.

Recommended article - [Protecting Workers in Extreme Heat \(rmmagazine.com\)](http://rmmagazine.com)

Heat Emergencies

By: Capt. Larry Cohen, Safety Officer, CDI, FL-116

While working a 4th of July Parade outside of Baltimore, on a sunny, hot (100 degrees F) and humid day, I was asked to respond to a possible medical emergency outside of the bingo hall. I encountered a cadet sitting in a chair, intermittently losing consciousness, and sweating profusely.

What heat emergency category was this and what was the appropriate treatment?

This article will review the various heat emergencies and the appropriate treatment options. First, we must discuss what happens to the human body when it is faced with elevated temperatures and fails to adequately provide fluid replenishment. The human body will sweat to remove heat from the body, as this occurs, the body loses sodium, potassium, other electrolytes as well as water.

The first stage of a heat emergency is heat cramps, this is the result of losing salt and water from the body. Treatment for ALL HEAT EMERGENCIES begins with the airway, breathing, circulation and with moving the person to a cool area if possible. You can give the patient sips of any fluid slowly, water with a small amount of salt or electrolyte replacement such as Gatorade or Powerade, but do not give anything by mouth if the patient has nausea.

The second stage of a heat emergency is heat exhaustion, in this case, the patient displays signs and symptoms of shock. The patient may have periods of loss of consciousness, profuse sweating, and rapid pulse and breathing. Again, initial treatment begins with moving the patient to a cool environment. You can place a cooling towel over the forehead of the patient. If possible and in a private area (only if safe and appropriate for yourself and the patient) remove some of the patient's clothing to allow heat to dissipate. If the patient is conscious and does not have nausea, allow them to drink small sips of fluids. However, if the patient's condition does not improve, they should be transported to the emergency room and preferably by EMS.

The third and most dangerous stage of a heat emergency is a heat stroke, in this case, the patient will no longer be sweating. The pores of the skin close, not allowing the heat to be released. As a result, if a person's temperature rises as high as 110 degrees F, the person will lose consciousness and their skin will be hot and dry. This is the primary way of distinguishing heat cramps and heat exhaustion vs. heat stroke. Treatment includes moving the person to a cool area, removing some clothing (again only if safe and appropriate for yourself and the patient), and placing ice packs on the forehead, neck, armpits, groin and under the ankles. Cool towels can be used for the rest of the body. This person must also be taken to an emergency room immediately and if possible, by EMS as well.

Some common tips to prevent a heat emergency include keeping yourself hydrated, drinking plenty of fluids, knowing when your body is telling you that you have reached your limit of being out in the heat. Know where the cooling centers are located and seek medical attention when fluid replacement isn't working. Keep in mind, sometimes old air conditioning systems can also contribute to putting people at risk for heat emergencies as well. In this specific heat emergency all protocols were followed, and thankfully this cadet responded very well to treatment.

Reference:

Emergency Care, 13th Edition - Brady Books - Section 5.7 Environmental Emergencies

This article is also available on our **CAPSAFETY Website** - [Heat Emergencies \(pdf\)](#)

*****Recognition*****

Congratulations Members on Achieving Their Master Rating in the Safety Officer Specialty Track!!



- *Capt. Albert Sawyer, OK-002*
- *Capt. Billy Wilson, SC-110*
- *Capt. Zachary Lam, WA-001*

**** Communications From Safety, Health Services, and Chaplain Corps****



Request for The Dispatch Articles

We would like to solicit your valuable input for The Dispatch articles.

For consideration, please submit your article to the following editors/groups:

[Safety](#) - [Health Services](#) - [Chaplain Corps](#)

Upcoming Edition and Theme:

August - Core Values for Seniors and Cadets, please submit your article by **July 22nd**.

Current and Previous Issues: [Safety Beacon / The Dispatch](#)

CAP Safety Communications: [Website](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Email](#)