

A 'norm' is something that is usual, typical, or standard.

**Societal Norms** are things that are typical for all groups of people in our society. Below is a word-cloud of societal norms. Fill in the three blanks with other examples of your own!



*sleeping when the sun is down*    *eating food at lunch*

*walking facing forward*    *wearing clothes the right side-out*

*typical*    **NORMS**    *usual*

*wearing two shoes*

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*taking off shoes when coming inside*    *saying hello to people*

# Peer Norms

**THINK-PAIR-SHARE:** *where do you think we get our norms from?*

Sometimes, though, we can confuse a norm with a **stereotype**. A stereotype is a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing. Our brains create stereotypes as a shortcut to help us make decisions, but often our brains play tricks on us! Believing that stereotypes are true can be very harmful!

**Examples might be:** *Boys have short hair and girls have long hair. Tall people can run faster than short people. Old people get confused.*

### THESE THINGS ARE NOT TRUE!

Stereotyping can be harmful to people when those ideas become negative (*Like, if people believe that younger people aren't as smart as older people*) or when those beliefs make you judge a person based on what they look like or who they remind you of instead of based on who they really are.



**Peer Norms:** A 'peer norm' is what is 'normal' for a group of people.

This can be actions, gestures, clothing they dress in, things they do, places they go, things they like, phrases they use, music listened to, online platforms used, ways to communicate, clubs they are part of, people they listen to, and even more!

Think about your peer group. What are some of your norms? (hint, if you're having trouble thinking of some, look at the examples of kinds of norms above)

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**NORTHERN TOBACCO**  
STRATEGY

name:

When we follow most or all of those norms, we have a strong sense of belonging. We feel like we 'fit in'.

These norms are a type of peer pressure, and they can be positive! For example, if it's a norm with your friends to work out together, be on a sports team, or to eat healthy foods together, then you are far more likely to work out, play sports, and eat healthy yourself.

**But sometimes those norms can be negative things.**

For example, if a norm of your peer group was to smoke commercial tobacco, it would mean that you are far more likely to use commercial tobacco too.

*What could happen if you resisted a norm to smoke commercial tobacco?*

**Negative Things**

**Positive Things**

