



**Your Brain Wants You to Be Happy (🧠 An Emotional Health Story)
(1st – 6-7 yrs.)
Craft: Emotion Wheel**



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDES 16-18 (Approx Time: Part I 15-20 mins; Part II 20-25 mins)

Too much of a good thing can be bad. It turns out that “too much” of anything can be bad for your body and your brain. Eating too much food, drinking too much water, exercising too much, sleeping too much – these are all things that can hurt your body and your brain. If you are doing too much of one thing, then you will not be doing the other things that you need to do to help your body and your brain stay healthy. When you need something, the brain makes your body get what it needs, it turns on your “happy place,” so you feel happy when you get what you need and then your brain turns off your “happy place.” Once you get what you needed from an activity to make your brain happy, it is time to move on to something else. Maybe set a timer, or use a stopwatch, or tell someone to stop you after a short time.

Materials needed:

- Paper plates (2 per student)
- Pencil or pen
- Scissors
- Paperclip
- List of things that can be harmful in excess (included below)
 - Use some of these ideas or present your own based on your knowledge and understanding of your student(s).
 - ***NOTE: The column with possible harmful effects is for adult use and will need to be adapted and modified for use with 1st graders. They are provided just to give an idea of some off the harmful effects that too much of the behavior or activity can cause. The student(s) will most likely come up with their own more “kid friendly” answers. ***

Preparation needed:

- Create an Emotion Wheel for student(s) to see the finished product
- Have materials ready for you to model how to complete each step as the student(s) make their own.
- Determine which scenarios you will use.

Instructions:

- In this activity, student(s) will work together to come up with reasons why certain behaviors can be harmful. They will also explore the concept of moderation and ways to limit behaviors that can be harmful to their brain health.

- The craft for this activity is an Emotion Wheel (Part I). Once completed, student(s) will move the arrow to different emotions to explore how some things that make us happy at first end up making us feel differently if we have too much of it (Part II). Moderation is key!
- Model each step with the student(s). Make your own Emotion Wheel as they make theirs.

Part I

1. To make the wheel, have student(s) take one of the plates and draw a line down the middle to make two halves. (*image 1 below*)
2. Next, have the student(s) draw an X on the plate to divide the plate into 6 triangles. (*image 2 below*)
3. After the plate is divided into 6 sections, have student(s) label these emotions with a word, emoji, or both:
 - a. Happy
 - b. Sad
 - c. Angry
 - d. Scared or stressed
 - e. Disgusted
 - f. Surprised
4. Next, on the other paper plate, have the student(s) draw an arrow. (*image 3 below*)
5. Cut out the arrow.
6. With a pencil, make a hole in the middle of the paper plate and then a hole in the arrow. (*image 3 below*)
7. Have student(s) open the paperclip, bend it in half, and then twist the two ends together.
8. Student(s) will then take the paper clip and put it through the arrow and the paper plate.
9. Next, open the two ends of the paper clip. You may need to twist the top of the paper clip. Just make sure your arrow can spin.

Part II

10. You will now present the whole group with a scenario or a behavior. Read the scenario out loud.
For example: "The behavior is eating pizza." (*A list of ideas is included below.*)
11. After presenting the behavior, ask student(s) the following question and have them respond:
 - How can this behavior make us happy?
For example: "You are hungry, so you start eating yummy pizza. You are happy because pizza is your favorite, and this is a really good pizza."
Have the student(s) turn their Emotion Wheel to happy because they were hungry and now they are eating yummy pizza—makes them happy!
12. Then, have them think about how they would feel if they kept doing that behavior.
For example: "What if you kept eating the pizza until they had eaten the WHOLE thing? By the way, it was an extra, extra-large pizza. How would they feel then?"
Have them turn the arrow on their Emotion Wheel to show how they would feel after eating the WHOLE pizza.
13. Have some student(s) share where they pointed their arrow. Some might say "disgusted" because they now feel like barfing. Others might say "sad" because they would feel bad that they did not save any pizza for the rest of their family.
14. Explain to student(s) that the behavior of eating the pizza started out making us happy because we were giving our body and our brain food to make it healthy. However, since we continued eating even though we had had enough, it turned into a bad thing and our brain turned off our "happy place" and other emotions popped up.
15. Continue the activity with the behaviors below. Remember, start by having student(s) move their arrow to happy to begin with and then think about how their emotion would change and what it would change to if they had too much of that behavior. They will then move their arrow to that new emotion.
16. After each behavior is presented, give a couple of student(s) the opportunity to share what they changed their emotion to and have them tell why.
17. In closing, remind student(s) that too much of anything (even good things) can be harmful to our brain health. They need to be mindful of when it is time to move on to something else. They can do this by listening to their body, setting a timer, using a stopwatch, or having someone remind them to stop after a certain amount of time. By doing these things, they will be keeping their brain happy and will be able to turn on their happy place when doing the activities they enjoy.

Image 1:

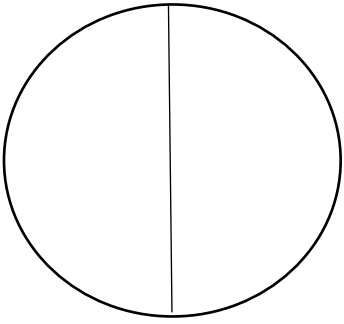


Image 2:

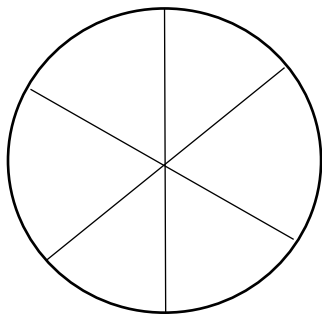


Image 3:



Behavior or Activity	Possible Harmful Effects
exercise	Damage to joints, tendons, bones, ligaments, heart
sleep	Can lead to chronic illness, obesity
medicine	Counteract each other, potency, harm organs
handwashing	Skin damage leads to place for germs to thrive
Food (same food over and over)	Sick, overweight, unhealthy, variety/nutrients
water	Kidneys cannot get rid of fluids fast enough, drops sodium levels in blood to unhealthy levels, nausea, weakness, fatigue, headaches
work	No time for other people/things, stress
screen time	Eyesight, not moving, not interacting with others
video games	Eyesight, not moving, not interacting with others, expensive
homework	No time for other activities, stress/frustration, fatigue
chores	No time for other activities, stress/frustration, fatigue
reading	No time for other activities, not moving, not interacting with others
sports	Injuries from overuse of body, injuries from repetitive movement, collisions, expensive
information	Overloaded with information, what is true and what is not, misinformation
money	Spend frivolously, people take advantage of you, do not appreciate things you have
freedom	No boundaries, can be unsafe or dangerous, irresponsible
choice	Hard to make a decision, indecisive, second guess decisions
toys/stuff	Lose track off things, do not appreciate what you have, forget what you have, do not use/play with, takes up too much space, expensive
friends	Cannot do things with everyone, people get their feelings hurt, not as close with each other, quality or quantity?
pets	Cannot care for and feed all of them, take up too much space, cannot give enough attention to all of them, expensive