



Story General Information

Being Afraid Can Help You – WHAT?!? (🧠 An Emotional Health Story) (2nd Grade – 7-8 yrs.)

This story describes how fear can actually help you to learn and stay alive.

- 🧠 Fear is a natural emotion and all animals have it.
- 🧠 When you are afraid of something, your body tells your brain. Your brain then helps you to get ready to deal with the situation. It is good to learn what scares you, so you can figure out how to deal with it.
- 🧠 Different things scare different people. Too much fear can hurt both your body and your brain.

The facilitator begins by introducing themselves, neuroscience, and the program: Brain Health: It's SPECTacular. The facilitator breaks down the meaning of SPEC for the children and discusses how the letter **E** represents Emotional Health. Emotional Health is an important part of keeping the brain healthy and happy. In this story, the children learn more fear, the body's response to fear, and how to handle scary situations.

Fear is a natural emotion and all animals experience it. When fear is felt, the brain signals to the body the potential for a dangerous situation. The brain activates the **Automatic Nervous System (ANS)**, which controls vital organs in the body (heart, lungs, stomach, etc.) to work quickly to protect the body. A zebra is able to escape a lion because their **ANS** kicks their body into action to run fast!

The facilitator shares relatable scenarios with the children, such as being afraid of heights, seeing a snake in the woods, or smelling smoke. They discuss how someone's body might physically respond in those situations because of the **ANS**. The brain is trying to protect the body from harm.

Understanding why fear is felt is important for improving Emotional Health and overall brain health. It helps to know what situations to stay away from. It is also important to learn how to use coping mechanisms when something scary cannot be avoided. The facilitator offers the children a few suggestions for handling fear in these scenarios: fear of heights- focus attention straight ahead; fear of snakes- learn more about these animals. The children also discuss how different people have different fears. They may even want to share their personal fears as the facilitator does with them.

Overall, when faced with fear, the brain is equipped to protect the body from dangerous situations. The more someone understands their fear, the better prepared they are to handle it. Fear is part of the brain's Emotional Health. The greater the awareness of the fear and the stronger development of coping mechanisms, the happier, healthier, and SPECTacular the brain can be!

Story Objectives:

- Students will define *fear*.
- Students will identify different emotional responses to fear.
- Students will define Autonomic Nervous System (ANS).
- Students will describe how ANS helps people and animals respond to fear.
- Students will explain how understanding fear is important for Emotional Health.
- Students will discuss why communication is an important part of Emotional Health.