

Making Neuroscience Fun

A Brain Awareness Program for All Ages



Brain Health: It's SPECTacular

Story General Information

What Am I Feeling? (🌈 An Emotional Health Story) (Kindergarten – 5-6 yrs.)

The story introduces emotional health to younger children. The focus is on identification of emotions and understanding how our emotion affect how we “see” the world.

- 🌈 We all have emotions and being able to recognize them in ourselves and in others is what makes up our emotional intelligence.
- 🌈 The emotions we have can change the way that we see the world around us.
- 🌈 We can change how our emotions make us “feel”.

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 about keeping their brain healthy through understanding their emotions and how to handle them.

The children are posed with the question, “*What are feelings?*” and the facilitator walks them through the process of elimination. The goal is for children to recognize that there are two different kinds of feelings: sense and emotion. This lesson focuses on the emotional feelings and how they are felt with the brain and the body. The children discuss three major emotions: happiness, sadness, and anger. They share situations when they felt these emotions.

Different feelings can make someone behave or act in different ways. The facilitator shares examples of several coping mechanisms for each of the three emotions, stressing that it is okay if one person acts differently than someone else.

The facilitator describes a birthday party scenario for the children. They are excited to attend a party, but become ill. They quickly feel sad or angry. By discussing this situation, the children identify different reasons they may feel sad or angry: not seeing their friends, not getting to eat cake, and being sick. Knowing why an emotion is felt is very important to understanding Emotional Health.

Once someone understands how and why they are feeling a certain way, being able to share that with someone else is also a key component in creating a healthy brain. The facilitator encourages the children to share with family or friends exactly how they are feeling and what is making them feel that way. This could lead to a solution for making them feel better. Another important part of Emotional Health is building and maintaining relationships with others. The facilitator discusses the significance of understanding and accepting how other people are feeling.

Sometimes, people can choose how they decide to see the world by putting on a pair of “feeling glasses.” The facilitator introduces the metaphorical glasses and compares it to someone's attitude or mindset. Different feeling glasses allow someone to see situations in a positive manner or a more negative light. People can change their “feeling glasses.” Completing tasks with “happy glasses” on usually makes someone feel better.

Scientists even have research that supports pretending to be happy, by wearing a smile, makes the body and brain feel better.

Finally, the facilitator helps the children review the major points of the story. Knowing what emotion is being felt, why that emotion is being felt, and being able to talk about it are very important to creating and maintaining Emotional Health. Understanding that people can feel and act differently are keys to maintaining friendly relationships. A strong grasp on Emotional Health contributes to a happy, healthy brain overall.

Story Objectives:

- Students will define *feelings* and *emotions*.
- Students will recognize the difference between feeling (touch/sense) and feeling (emotions).
- Students will identify and name different types of feelings/emotions (happy, sad, angry...).
- Students will discuss times they felt happy, sad, or angry.
- Students will recognize different coping mechanisms for different feelings (laughing, crying, screaming...).
- Students will identify why understanding how they feel and why they feel that way is important to brain health.
- Students will identify why understanding how others feel and why they feel that way is important to building and maintaining relationships.
- Students will describe why it is important to talk about feelings/emotions.