

Making Neuroscience Fun

A Brain Awareness Program for All Ages



Brain Health: It's SPECTacular

Story General Information

Lean On Me (🌍 A Social Health Story) (3rd Grade- 8-9 yrs.)

Everyone needs someone sometimes. Understanding that a support system is important and that it can constantly change is important to your social health.

- Humans are social animals and they need other humans in order to survive in the world. This means that you need to learn that asking for help is a good thing that will help keep your brain healthy.
- A support system is made up of one or more people who you count on to help you (family, friends, caregivers, teachers, doctors, counselors, coaches, etc.). Your support system can be made up of different people at different times in your life.
- People in your support system help you with your basic survival needs and with your social and emotional needs. Choosing people to be part of your support system is dependent on your ability to trust and confide in those people to help you when you need it.

The facilitator begins by introducing themselves, neuroscience, and the program: Brain Health: It's SPECTacular. The facilitator defines SPECTacular for the children as meaning "great" and discusses how having a SPECTacular brain means having a healthy and happy brain. They share that the letter **S** represents Social Health. In this story, children learn why support systems are an imperative part of Social Health and the value they provide to their overall brain health.

To grab the children's attention, the facilitator first describes how and why different animals are social beings (lions/bees). Survival is their priority and they use one another to stay alive. It is a skill they are born with. When humans are born, their need of other people is imperative. Babies are immature and cannot care for themselves. They cannot provide food, shelter, or protection for themselves. Therefore, reliance on older human beings is the only way babies can survive. Needing other people is part of Social Health.

The facilitator describes scenarios from birth (diapers, food, clothes) in which a *support system* is necessary for survival. Babies and young children cannot provide those things for themselves so their family or caretakers must do it for them. This is the first support system a human will connect with, but support systems grow as the human grows. Eventually, teachers, friends, coaches, counselors, doctors, etc. can all be a part of a support system. Each of these individuals plays an important support role for a developing human. The facilitator and children discuss the roles of different people in their support system. Each person can provide advice, wisdom, and teach skills to the child as they continue to grow and learn. The facilitator also identifies groups of people that provide support the children may not even think about (sales clerks, truck drivers, farmers, firemen, etc.)

After discussing how support systems change, the facilitator helps the children understand why support systems change. As humans grow and mature, they are able to meet more of their basic needs on their own. Yet, humans need to fulfill social and emotional needs. Some people find comfort in their pets. Although family still plays a role, friends tend to become a vital part of helping maintain healthy Social and Emotional Health. True friendship has a reciprocal relationship, where someone generally gives as much as they receive. Being a

friend is just as important as having friends. Quality friendships include trust and the ability to confide in each other. Quality over quantity allows someone to truly nurture a friendship.

The facilitator and children review the significance of support systems in the lives of humans and why it is imperative to build a strong one to maintain a happy, healthy SPECtacular brain!

Story Objectives:

- Students will describe different ways animals benefit from social relationships.
- Students will explain how humans need social relationships from birth for survival.
- Students will identify scenarios where humans need help or should ask for help.
- Students will define *support system*.
- Students will identify people (and animals) who can be a part of a support system.
- Students will explain the role of these people.
- Students will describe how social and emotional needs change as people grow older.
- Students will explain how they can be part of someone's support system.
- Students will define *trust* and *confide*.
- Students will describe why a support system can change over time.
- Students will explain how a support system improves Social and Emotional Health.