



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.

🌈 **SLIDE #1 - INTRODUCTION:**

Good Morning (Afternoon)!

My name is _____ and I (describe who you are and give your relation to neuroscience – ex. you are a Neuroscientist, you study neuroscience, you have a friend that is a neuroscientist or you have recently been learning a lot about neuroscience).

Neuroscience, that's a really big word! But, a neuroscientist is a person who knows a lot about the brain.

I am here today to talk to you about how you can help to make your brain healthy – feeling good. It is REALLY easy and anyone can do it.

I love to talk about Brain Health because it's SPECTacular!!! SPECTacular means "GREAT". When your brain is SPECTacular, you are a happy and healthy person.

This story is about Social Health – which is the S in SPECTacular. Social Health means you are keeping your brain healthy by being social.

“Being social” means you love yourself and you are nice to yourself.

It also means that you like and are nice to other people.

When you are nice to yourself and others, that makes your brain healthy.

So, let's see how you can keep your brain healthy.

🌈 **SLIDE #2 – LEAN ON ME**

Humans, like a lot of other animals, are social animals.

If animals are social, that means that at different times in their lives and for different reasons, these animals need help from other animals like them to survive in the world.

This story will describe how understanding how and why we all need a support system will help to keep our brain healthy.

SLIDE #3 – SOCIAL ANIMALS

In the wild, there are many examples of social behaviors that help to keep animals alive.

Many animals work together to get food for themselves and others.

Female lions hunt together in a group to get food for the “pride” of lions that live together.

Bees have worker bees in the colony that take care of food collection.

Animals help each other and this helps them to survive.

SLIDE #4 – HUMANS ARE BORN SOCIAL

When humans are born, they are born immature.

Babies cannot walk, talk, or use their hands to get things that they need.

Babies need to be fed, given shelter, and protected because they cannot do any of this by themselves.

So, from the day that we are born we need other people to survive.

Now, while you may think that being born immature is a bad thing – it is actually because we are born immature that we are able to learn so much about the world around us.

This is what actually gives us the advantage over other animals in terms of our ability to think.

But, being born immature means that in order to survive, we need to be social – we need other people to help us.

SLIDE #5 – SUPPORT SYSTEM

In our world, there are a number of different times in our lives and different reasons when we need help from other people.

Being able to ask for help, while some people think that this makes us weaker – actually makes us a stronger person. And, it definitely makes our brain stronger and healthier.

That is why the people that we have in our lives that help us make up what we call our “support system”.

The people in our support system support “support” us the way the frame of house supports the house. The frame on a house makes it stronger and the people in our support system that help us also makes us stronger.

Having a support system means that we do not have to do everything alone.

When you realize that you do not have to do everything alone, that actually relieves a lot of stress.

Too much stress can hurt your brain, so having a support system definitely makes our brain healthy.

SLIDE #6 – WHO MAKES UP A SUPPORT SYSTEM?

The people that help us make up our support system.

A support system can be made up of family, friends, caregivers, teachers, doctors, counselors, and coaches. There are lots of people that support or help you to live your life.

A support system can have lots of people or just a few people and the people in your support system can change over time.

SLIDE #7– SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR BABIES

When we were babies, our support system was made up of adults either in our family or caregivers who helped us with our **basic survival needs**.

These people made sure we had food to eat, cleaned us when we got dirty and gave us a safe place to sleep.

We did not have to choose who we got help from when we were babies – because remember we could not do anything for ourselves.

We could not talk when we were babies, so the people that helped us had to know us enough to know when we were crying because we were hungry or because we were tired or because we had a dirty diaper.

SLIDE #8 – SUPPORT SYSTEM

As we got older, we could help ourselves a bit more, but we still need help with our basic survival needs.

We could feed ourselves, go to the bathroom and clean ourselves, and we could put ourselves to bed at night.

But, we still needed our family members or caregivers to provide us with food, clothes, and a place to live.

SLIDE #9 – FRIENDS

When we started interacting with other people who were closer to our own age, we found that it was a lot of fun. Younger family members (sisters, brothers, cousins) and friends from the neighborhood, or daycare - became part of our support system.

These were people who liked to do the same things that we liked to do. They liked running around, playing games, doing crafts, and pretending.

Being around friends was not only fun, but it also helped us to learn about the world from a different point of view.

SLIDE #10 – TEACHERS

When we started school, potentially more people were added to our support system.

Learning about the world around us and learning skills that we will need to survive in the world is a child's job. Luckily, there are teachers who can help us with this job.

When we are at school, there are also nurses, counselors, classroom helpers, janitors, lunchroom workers, coaches and all kinds of other people who are there to help you get through your day.

All of these adults are there to help you if you need it, which is why they could be part of your support system.

SLIDE #11 – HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

There are also other people, such as the doctors and other health care professionals, who are there to help you to teach you about how to take care of your body (and your brain).

These people can also be added to your support system.

SLIDE #12 – OTHER PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT YOU

So, as you can see, everyone needs a lot of help to live every day – even if you did not realize it.

We did not even mention all the people that help you to live your life that you do not even know.

There are people who work at the grocery store that sell the food, at the farms that grow the food, and people who drive trucks to deliver the food. These people help you to eat by making sure there is food.

There are people who keep you safe, like firefighters, police officers, and members of the military.

There are people who help you to get where you need to go, like bus drivers, people who work at subway stations, train stations and airports.

There are so many people helping you that you do not know – so, when we say that people are social animals – even if you like to be by yourself – most likely you have people supporting you that are helping you to live your life.

SLIDE #13 – NEEDS CHANGE

As your brain grows and matures, there are other things in your life – not just your basic survival needs - that will necessitate you having a support system.

Most of these are **social and emotional needs** – which we know are important for your SPEC health.

While family is still important, friends are definitely becoming more important to you. Remember, people are very social animals.

Having someone who you like and support and that likes you and supports you is very important for your brain.

We know that “helping or supporting” is a 2-way street. While it is good for your brain to have help and support, it is also good for your brain to **be** supportive and help others.

Having someone that you trust and can talk to about things also helps to relieve stress and helps your brain stay healthy.

There are a couple of things for you to remember when choosing people for your social and emotional support system.

You need to be able to trust and confide in the people that are part of your social and emotional support system.

You also do not need to have a lot of people in your social and emotional support system – quality not quantity is what is important.

SLIDE #14 – TRUST

You need to have people in your support system that you can trust.

Trust means that you have confidence that the person in your support system will do what they say they will do to help you to the best of their ability.

So, let's say you have a favorite pet – dog, cat, hamster, fish, snake – would you trust your friend to care of your pet while you are away? Would your friend feed them, walk them, clean up after them, and love them?

Having someone in your support system that you trust means that you have confidence in that person to help take care of the pet you love while you are away.

SLIDE #15 – BEING ABLE TO CONFIDE IN THEM

You also need to have people in your support system that you can confide in.

Confiding in someone means that you can tell them something private and they would not repeat it others - unless it was to help you.

There are some people, like counselors, teachers or doctors, who may share things that you tell them – but only if you or someone you know is being hurt.

SLIDE #16 – QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

Having a good support system is not a popularity contest and you do not need a lot of “likes” to have a really good support system.

Quality not quantity means that you feel truly supported by the people in your system, even if that means your support system is just a few people. It is better to have confidence, trust, and like the people in your support system than to have a huge group of people you aren't sure you can trust or tell things too.

The fact that you do not need a big support system is an important thing to remember.

Our society sometimes places a lot of emphasis on having lots of friends or being popular.

What is most important to your social health is you liking yourself and being nice to yourself. When you like yourself, it makes it easier for others to like you too.

A support system can be made of lots of different people – so your “friends” are not limited to just other kids at school or in your neighborhood.

SLIDE #17 – PETS ARE SUPPORTIVE TOO

In fact, your support system does not even have to be limited to people. Pets can be great additions to your support system.

You can trust your pets to help you – the best that they can.

If you take care of your pet, your pet will take care of you.

Plus, there is nothing like being able to hug pet (unless it is a fish). Pets give you unconditional love and acceptance.

You can confide in your pets.

You can tell them anything and they will definitely not tell anyone!

Saying things out loud – even to a pet – will help get it out of your head.

A lot of times saying things out loud helps you to see problems more clearly and it may even help you stop worrying about things. This definitely helps your brain to be healthy.

SLIDE #18 – SUPPORT SYSTEM CHANGES OVER TIME

As you continue to grow up, both your basic survival needs and social and emotional needs are going to change. This means that the people that you will have in your support system will also change.

There may be some people that stay the same and there may be new people that you add to your support system.

Remember, we all need help at some point in our lives.

Sometimes the things that we need help with are with our basic survival needs – while other times they may just be social and emotional needs that make life easier and more fun.

The important thing to remember is that people are all social animals.

Good social health begins with you liking yourself and understanding that needing help is what makes you a social animal.

When you like yourself and are willing to ask for help when you need it, that makes it easy for others to be members of your support system. That also makes it easy for you to be helpful and supportive of others – which also helps to make your brain healthy.

SLIDE #19 – CONCLUSION

Thank you all for letting me talk to you about what being a social animal is all about.

I have enjoyed spending time with you today talking about the brain. I hope that you have had some fun and learned something about your brain.

REMEMBER, asking for help when you need it is something that is going to make you stronger. Having a support system made up of people that you trust and can confide in will help with your basic survival, social and emotional needs and will make your life happier and healthier. And, we all know that helping your brain stay healthy is SPECTacular.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL OF YOUR HELP!!! Brain Health is not just SPECTacular...it is FUN!!!