

Making Neuroscience Fun

A Brain Awareness Program for All Ages



Brain Health: It's SPECTacular

Story General Information

Social Media: Be Real & Be Healthy (🌍 A Social Health Story) (5th Grade – 10-11 yrs.)

This story describes how social media can have both positive and negative effects on your social health.

- When social media is used as a tool to enhance our social networks, it is beneficial.
- When social media is used to compare yourself to others or you are using it to build your self-esteem, then it can be harmful.
- When you keep your virtual “self” congruent with your real life “self” then it can be helpful – otherwise, it can be very damaging to your sense of self and self-esteem.

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. This story focuses on social media, its benefits, the dangers, and how to carefully use and manage it as not to hinder personal Social Health.

Humans have been developing tools since the beginning of time. Tools help humans accomplish tasks and have evolved with innovation. Tools are not necessarily “good” or “bad.” The intent in which they are used determines that. The facilitator emphasizes that social media is a tool. Social media was developed to share thoughts, ideas, and information across the world through devices. The intent of people using the social media platforms determines if that experience is good or bad.

Using social media for good can be beneficial to someone's Social Health. It is a fun way to share exciting news, stay connected with people far away, stay informed on current events, or just relax with silly videos. All of these uses can be beneficial and fulfill a person's social needs. However, if someone is not careful, social media can affect not only their Social Health but other areas of their SPEC health negatively.

The facilitator stresses important things to remember about social media to the children. First, do not let what is seen on social media define who they are. It can be easy to want to mimic what is portrayed online, but it is wise to remember that what is depicted on social media is not always reality. Therefore, trying to imitate a false reality can be taxing mentally. Prioritizing oneself and maintaining a high level of self-esteem can also be a tricky task when navigating social media, especially for young adolescents. There are many avenues within social media for someone to want to compromise their gut feelings, beliefs, or even morals. The facilitator shares with the children that if something online or someone makes them feel uncomfortable, then they should not proceed or follow through. It is not healthy for the brain to engage in behaviors that make the person feel uncomfortable.

Overall, when social media is used for learning, staying connected, or entertainment (turn on that happy place), it can rejuvenate or “fill the cup” for someone's Social Health. It is imperative to set personal boundaries so not to cross over into unfamiliarity, to understand how easy it is for social media to be manipulative, and to always

trust oneself when deciding what is best. The best choice is the healthy choice. It is how the brain stays happy and SPEctacular!

Story Objectives:

- Students will identify what *social media* is and give examples.
- Students will describe how social media is a tool and why it was developed.
- Students will identify beneficial uses for social media platforms.
- Students will identify negative/harmful uses of social media platforms.
- Students will recognize the importance of self-worth to their overall brain health and describe ways to “be nice” to themselves.
- Students will define *self-esteem* and describe its role in their Social Health.
- Students will define *compromise* and explain how it is important to friendship.
- Students will explain how not being their authentic-self can be harmful to their Social Health.