



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 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.

🌈 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 – SOCIAL MEDIA

We all know that our brain is constantly changing, but what we do not think about is how those changes in our brain affect how we feel about ourselves.

The way you feel about yourself affects your Social Health. We know that feeling good about yourself is one way to keep your brain healthy.

This story will look at how social media – like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok – can have both positive and negative effects on the parts of your brain that control how you feel about yourself.

SLIDE #3 – SOCIAL MEDIA IS A TOOL

The first thing that we need to know about social media is that it is a tool.

A tool is something that humans developed to help us with a particular behavior.

Social media is a tool that was originally developed to help people share their thoughts, ideas and information with one another using computers, tablets and cell phones.

Being able to share your thoughts and ideas with lots of people at the same time is a good thing.

A tool is designed to “help” us. A tool is not good or bad. The way that people use a tool can be good or bad.

Let’s think about a hammer. When using a hammer to put in a nail, the outcome is something good. Therefore, the tool was used for good. But if someone is angry or wants to be destructive a hammer can be used to break something. This is a negative outcome. The tool did not change, but the intent and outcomes did.

SLIDE #4 – SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS

When social media is used in a good way, then there are definite benefits.

You can share things with people who are far away or that you do not see all the time... that makes people feel connected.

You can get information that you would not have access to which could help you...like about potential problems with the weather, what is new at the movies or about additions to your family.

Social media can also be entertaining...who doesn’t like cute animal videos?!?

SLIDE #5 – NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When social media is used in a bad way, there can be a bunch of negative consequences.

You do not know if the information you are getting is real or true.

You cannot “see” the effects of what you are sharing with others – you may be hurting someone’s feelings when you did not intend to do that.

Takes time away from you actually interacting with people in real life.

Sometimes social media trends encourage you to participate in very dangerous behaviors...it’s like getting a dare from someone you don’t even know!!! And, we know that when you are “dared” or “challenged” – there is usually something that can be potentially dangerous involved.

Oh...as a professor – I have always worried about the way social media tools are affecting our ability to read and write. There is a whole other language!!!

SLIDE #6 – DON’T LET SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINE YOU

So, social media is a tool and there are some good ways to use it and there are some potentially bad ways to use it.

One way that social media is different from other tools is that people use it to define who they are or who they should be.

People see other people on social media and they want to be like them, act like them or look like them.

We should decide who we are and what we like. We should not let social media tell us.

SLIDE #7 – SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT ALWAYS REAL

Remember, social media is a tool and you can use to find out what others are doing, saying, and feeling. Or, you can use it to see what others are wearing or what they look like.

You can then use that information to see what you want to do, say or feel. Or, you can use it to see what you want to wear and look like.

One thing that you need to remember, is that what you see on social media – may not be what is real. This means that you may be trying to be like, or look like or act like things that are not real.

There is LOTS of software to change what you see and hear on social media.

You can add filters to pictures. You can take pictures or videos from certain angles to appear a certain way. You can edit and touch up photos and videos.

You can change what is around you, what you look like or where you are.

SLIDE #8 – BE NICE TO YOURSELF

At your age, what your friends think is important to you, BUT, you need to realize that what you think is even more important.

Who you are and what you think about yourself is going to change a lot during your lifetime.

It is important to learn now how important how you think about yourself is to having a healthy brain.

You all know that it is important to be nice to other people.

What you may not have learned is that being nice to yourself is maybe even more important.

When you are nice to yourself, you feel good and that makes it easier to be nice to other people.

There are lots of ways that you can be nice to yourself, which will make your brain healthy.

Like when you make a mistake- don't get angry at yourself, you step back and think about why it happened and how to fix it.

Make time for yourself and do something you enjoy (read, ride a bike, paint a picture, listen to music)
Be excited about your successes and share your good news (did well on a test, learned a new skill)

When you are nice to yourself, it is easier to be nice to others and your brain is healthy.

SLIDE #9 – SELF-ESTEEM

Trying to be or do things that you see on social media is not good for your self-esteem, unless they are things that you feel comfortable doing.

You need to feel good about yourself and what you are doing is important for your self-esteem. Your self-esteem is how you feel about yourself.

When you do things to the best of your ability – trying your hardest – then you will feel good about what you are doing...even if what you are doing is not perfect.

When you are trying your best and you are not feeling good about what you are doing – you should ask for help. That is a way to be nice to yourself.

But, when it comes to doing things just because it is on social media and you don't feel good about it...you can ALWAYS just not do it. Just because other people are doing something, does not mean that you have to do it too.

When you are feeling good about yourself and what you are doing, then your self-esteem will be good and your brain will be happy.

SLIDE #10 – FRIENDS COMPROMISE

Using social media as a tool to find new things that you like to do or new ways that you like to look will help your self-esteem, if you are not trying act like or look like someone that you do not want to be.

Hmmm...why would you try to act like, look like, or even talk like someone that you do not want to be?

Remember when I told you that at your age what your friends think is important to you?

Well, sometimes you will do things just so your friends will like you.

Being friends means that you do sometimes have to do things that your friends want to do and that you may not want to do. That is compromising – which is when you do something that you might not want to do, but someone you care about does want to do it.

Let's say that you want to play a video game and your friend wants to go outside and play at the playground.

People tend to like friends who can talk about what they want to do and compromise...so, you might decide to play outside for a little while and then you can come in and play a video game.

Or, you could decide to play outside today – but, then you could play a video game the next time you get together.

Compromising is a way to be nice to yourself and to be nice to your friend – and that makes your brain healthy.

SLIDE #11 – TRUST YOURSELF

It is important for you to be your best self and to find the things that are right for you – that make you feel good about yourself. Sometimes you can use social media as a tool to see what others are doing and you can try it to see if that will make you feel like your best self.

But, you need trust yourself and how you feel. If you do not feel comfortable – even if your friends are all doing it – then stop doing it. You need to be comfortable with yourself and your choices.

When you feel uncomfortable, then your brain is not happy and if you keep doing things that are uncomfortable then your brain is NOT going to be healthy.

SLIDE #12 – SOCIAL MEDIA AND SELF-ESTEEM

When you see something on social media and you do it – but, you do not feel good doing it – but, you continue to do it because your friends are all doing it – then you may not even recognize who you are anymore – and that is NOT good for your self-esteem.

Scientists have done experiments and they find that when someone acts, looks, or says things on social media that do not match the way that they like to act, look, or think, then those people do not have very good self-esteem and they do not feel good about themselves.

When you do not feel good about yourself, then your brain is not going to be happy or healthy.

So make good choices when it comes to social media and use it when it makes you feel good and you are being true to yourself. That will make your brain healthy.

SLIDE #13 – USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO LEARN

Social media can be a wonderful tool to explore lots of different ideas, thoughts and information.

You can use social media to find things that you like to do and are good at doing.

Remember, you do not have to be good at everything and it is ok to make mistakes – just learn from them what you are good at and what you are not good at – everyone has talents.

Using social media to learn will help your brain stay healthy.

SLIDE #14 – FACETIME IS IMPORTANT TOO

You need to also remember that social media is a tool and it should not replace in person interactions.

So, if you find yourself spending more of your time with “screen” time than you do with “face” time, it is time to turn off the screen.

Unless you are actually using facetime or zoom or one of the many platforms where you can actually see and talk to a person – then you are actually increasing your human social interaction – seeing and talking to people that are far away.

Face time rather than screen time is what our social brain needs to grow and be healthy.

SLIDE #15 – CONCLUSION

Thank you all for letting me talk to you about social media and your brain.

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, social media is a tool that is meant to help you get access to lots of different thoughts, ideas and information. Social media can be a good tool to use, but be smart. Listening to yourself and what makes you feel comfortable with your social media choices is more important than what people are doing on social media or even what your friends think about what people are doing on social media. This is good for your self-esteem.

You need to realize that everything that you see on social media may not be real or true. This can make you feel uncomfortable, which may not be good for your self-esteem or your brain health.

When it comes to social media, you need to be nice to yourself and make sure you are comfortable with your choices. This is good for your self-esteem. If you are being the best that you can be, then your brain will be happy and healthy. 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!!!