

LESSON 5:

CEREBRAL CORTEX



OVERVIEW

Grade Level: 1-5

Topic: The Brain

Objective: Students understand the dangers of alcohol use.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Vocabulary: Cerebral Cortex, Alcohol

Materials Needed: Memory cards (can be handmade.)

STARTER:

Review the meaning of SADD and the Brain Song from lesson 1. Ask the students, “at what age is your brain fully developed?” Answer: 25

Remind students that this does not mean we stop learning at 25. It only means the brain’s development is complete and it’s finished growing.

Today we are going to talk about a very specific part of the brain, called the cerebral cortex.

- Reinforce students’ understanding by having them repeat the words ‘cerebral cortex’.
- Explain the cerebral cortex is the part of the brain that is in charge of your decision-making skills.
- Ask the group, “can anyone tell me what decision-making means?” (Wait for responses.)
- Explain decision-making is the process of making choices and understanding their consequences.
- To better understand decision-making skills we are going to do some skits. A skit is an act, like being in a play, where we do some role-playing.

ACTIVITY

Put the students into small groups.

Give each group a topic for a skit that has a problem that they have to solve. See the list below for ideas.

Allow the students to make props and come up with a skit in their group.

Each group will then perform their skit in front of the class.



WRAP UP:

The cerebral cortex is extremely important because we have to make decisions all day long.

- These decisions could lead to good or bad consequences.
- Explain that consequences are the result of a decision.
- Alcohol affects the brain (specifically how a person thinks) which means it affects a person's decision-making ability. This is very dangerous for young people because someone whose brain is not fully developed reacts to alcohol very differently than a grownup. Remember, alcohol is a chemical substance that can alter the way your mind and body functions. You need to be able to make smart and safe decisions. We can do this by not drinking alcohol or using other drugs.

Scenario 1: Your sibling wants to eat cookies before supper. You know your parents wouldn't approve. Create a skit of what would happen if you ate the cookies or if you would not eat the cookies.

Scenario 2: Your friend has asked you to sneak into the zoo after hours. Create a skit of what would happen if you did or did not sneak in.

Scenario 3: You go over to a friend's house to study for a test. They decide they would rather play video games.