

Summer Brain Health Activity Guide Grade 6-12



Know Your *Neuro*

Video Quiz & Discussion Questions

1. What high-risk issues increase during the summer months? Answer: Boredom, loneliness, isolation, body image issues, and substance use.
2. What issues decrease during the summer months? Answer: Self-esteem, self-worth, and academic performance.
3. Why do risky behaviors like substance use experimentation increase during the summer months? Answer: The brain's fully formed limbic system (accelerator) may get curious about risky things before the frontal lobe is fully formed and can apply impulse control or rational thinking (brakes).
4. How does lack of supervision and structure affect young people during the summer? Answer: Youth may stop engaging in organized activities, lose skills, and engage in risky behavior.
5. Why is scheduling in-person time with peers so important over the summer? Answer: In-person time with peers increases dopamine, our body's natural reward chemicals, more than time with peers online. In-person peer activities help maintain good self-esteem and self-worth.
6. What are some negative aspects of social media to watch out for? Answer: Some social media sites glamorize unhealthy body images or drug and alcohol use. Some social media influencers display negative behavior or try to get people to do dangerous online challenges.



Classroom Activities

Summer Learning Loss

Read this statistic aloud:
Research shows that children lose 1-3 months of reading and math skills during summer vacations.

In pairs, ask students to discuss and plan how to combat summer learning loss. Ask each pair to share their answers with the class.

Some ideas include:

- Set a summer reading goal.
- Ask parents to pay \$ for every book read.
- Calculate mileage and expenses for a summer trip.

Risky Behavior

In pairs, small groups, or as a whole class. Ask students to discuss how drugs, alcohol, or mood problems may affect youth over the summer.

Laziness Hacks

Watch the video about how to stop being lazy. In share pairs or small groups, ask students to make a list of the ways they are lazy over the summer. Then, ask them to brainstorm ways to combat summer laziness. Remember, relaxation and self-care are NOT lazy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tT0k_e9W480

Online Challenges: Why?

Why do people do silly or even dangerous challenges they see online? Research indicates that boredom, social isolation, and attention-seeking are the main reasons. The psychology of being challenged is hard to resist! How can you have fun and connection with others without risking injury or making a trip to the ER?

Discussion Questions

- How do you spend your summers?
- Do you think you lose learning during the summer? Why?
- How does being out of school and away from school friends affect you and your mood?
- How do you combat isolation and loneliness during the summer?
- Have you ever been tempted to try drugs/alcohol over the summer? How do you keep your brain safe?
- What keeps you from reaching out to peers for in-person activities during the summer?
- Do you have online friends? What is the difference between your online and in-person relationships?
- If you use social media, how does it affect your thinking and mood?