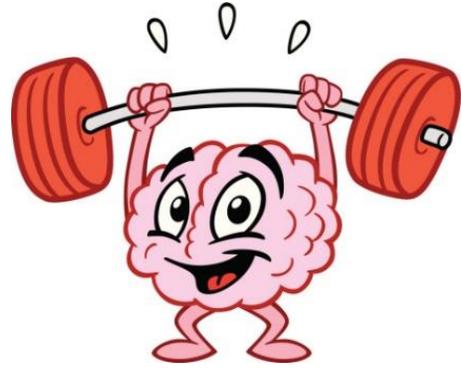


# Protect Your Brain



## Student Activity - What would you do?

These activities are intended to engage students in the critical thinking process regarding safe behavior currently confronting middle school students. The real life scenarios below are designed to generate dialogue around issues they might face day to day. These may be used in either a classroom discussion format or in small group discussion. You may also choose to incorporate role plays in these exercises as these scenarios easily fit this format as well.

### Scenario A: Don't Play Games with Concussion

A soccer player who is a forward on your team is the lead scorer on the team and often scores more than one goal in a game. During practice, he/she collides with another athlete. The coach asks if he/she has any symptoms and since the player is feeling fine after the impact, he/she remains on the field. Within a few minutes the player has a headache but doesn't tell anyone and continues with practice, knowing that the soccer team has a game scheduled for the next day.

#### **Activity A: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

- Have the kids discuss the *player's* decision to continue with practice.
- Have the kids discuss what they think is going through the *player's* mind as the *player* decides what to do.
- Have the kids discuss what they think the *player* should have done.
- Ask the kids if anything would be different if the collision had occurred during a game and not in practice.
- What if this happened during a tournament?
- A championship game?
- What if the *player* is being looked at by a high school scout?

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### Activity B: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions

The Player confides in a teammate that they have a headache and are experiencing some concussion symptoms but asks the teammate not to tell anyone and continues playing soccer.

- What should the teammate do?
- What would you do if you were the teammate?

### Activity C: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions

*After the impact, the player isn't feeling any concussion symptoms but teammates notice that the player seems confused, slow on the field or off balance. When asked, the player still says everything is fine.*

- What should the teammate do?
- What about the coach?

## Additional Points for Discussion:

- Why would an athlete want to continue to practice or play while experiencing concussion symptoms?
    - Athlete's pressure on self
    - Teammates' pressure
    - Coach's pressure
    - Parental pressure
  - Culture among athletes
    - Walk it off/play through it
    - Your team is counting on you
    - It's just a headache and not a big deal
  - Would you feel that you're letting down teammates/coach/school/parents?
  - Is pressure different for male vs. female athletes?
  - What are the risks of playing/letting someone play, when there are signs or symptoms of concussion?
    - Longer recovery time
    - Second Impact Syndrome, which is, in very rare circumstances, catastrophic injury or even death when the brain does not fully recover before there is another injury - considered to be a teen/adolescent phenomenon and not usually seen in adults.
    - Cumulative brain injury
  - Discussion should include the following:
    - What is the best course of action for the player?
    - What is best course of action for the team?
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### **Scenario B: Safety in the Car**

You mom is working late, so she asks your older sister, Betsy, to pick you up after school. Betsy just picked you up with one of her friends and now you are on the way home. Betsy is texting her boyfriend while she is driving. You make a joke about how unsafe this is, but she tells you that she does this all the time and that she is keeping one hand on the steering wheel. Below are some activities that depict hypothetical situations that can be derived from the above scenario.

#### **Activity A: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

- Have the kids discuss if they've ever been in this situation before and how they have handled it.
- Have the kids discuss the pros and cons of getting involved in and speaking up around safety issues.
- Have the kids discuss what they think they should do as the passenger.

#### **Activity B: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

The next day, you are riding with your mother to softball practice, and your mother is texting your father while driving.

- What should you do?

#### **Activity C: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

Your friend's mother is driving you to the mall on the weekend, and you notice her texting while driving.

- What should you do?

### **Additional Points for Discussion:**

- What are some distractions you have seen as a passenger and/or driver?
    - Texting while driving
    - Eating while driving
    - Checking social media while driving
    - Playing a phone game while driving
    - Searching for something in your bag while driving
    - Driving when fatigued and tired
  - What is the best course of action to making sure the car is distraction free?
  - Have you ever been in or almost been in a crash because of a distracted driver?
  - How do you feel when you see someone driving erratically and then see that they are on their phone?
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### **Scenario C: Walk This Way**

You're on your smartphone when you see that there is a Pikachu down in the center of town. You throw on your shoes and head downtown with your smartphone. You're looking at your phone when you hear a car horn blasting. You look up and realize that you're in the middle of the street trying to catch Pikachu. You realize that you are so engrossed with finding Pikachu that you walked into the street without checking out the traffic.

#### **Activity A: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

- Have the kids discuss how often and where they walk outside
- When they are walking outside do they use their phones?
- Have the kids discuss pedestrian rules they are aware of:
  - If there is no sidewalk what side of the road do you walk on? (the side facing traffic)
  - What is the safest way to cross the street? (at the crosswalk, make eye contact with the driver, etc.)
  - When do cars have to yield to pedestrians?
- What else could happen if you aren't paying attention while walking?
- Have the kids discuss why it's always important to be aware of your surroundings
- Have the kids discuss potential consequences of distracted walking

#### **Activity B: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

Let's have you take another perspective. You are paying attention while walking and make sure to use the crosswalk when crossing a busy street. However, the driver doesn't notice you because they are on their cell phone while driving.

- Have the kids discuss what the driver's role is.
- What should you do when you come to an area where there is a lot of traffic and crosswalks?
- Can they identify areas of town they know as having heavy foot traffic combined with heavy motor vehicle traffic?

#### **Activity C: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Group Discussions**

- Have the kids discuss areas of town where there are a lot of pedestrians.
- Are areas of town where there are a lot of pedestrians considered pedestrian friendly?
- What makes an area pedestrian friendly?

### **Additional Points for Discussion:**

- What are the pedestrian laws for Connecticut?
- Do you consider your school pedestrian friendly?

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- Do you consider your town pedestrian friendly?
  - What are ways you could improve pedestrian safety around your school? Around your town?
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### Scenario D: Bullying and Violence

Jack is the smallest boy in your class. He is new to the school having recently moved to the area. He does not dress like the other kids, does not play sports and he is not what the other kids consider as 'cool'. You are in the hallway and you see several older kids, following him into the bathroom. You hear yelling and lots of noise coming from the bathroom. You peek into the bathroom and see 3 other guys hitting Jack, banging his head to the floor. You also notice one of the guys trying to record everything with his cell phone.

#### **Activity A: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Groups**

- Have the kids discuss what they would do?
- Do they witness fighting and bullying in their school?
- What can happen if no one steps in and a fellow student is beaten, particularly in the head?
- What would they do if that was a sibling or a friend getting beaten up?
- If it was you what would you want others to do?

#### **Activity B: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Groups**

- Does their school have a policy regarding bullying?
- Does their school have a policy regarding physical violence?
- What are the consequences for bullying?
- What are the consequences for fighting?
- What should the consequences be? Would those consequences prevent further bullying?

#### **Activity C: Classroom Discussion Format or Small Groups**

- What does bullying and fighting have to do with preventing brain injury?
- What are other ways you can sustain a brain injury?

### **Additional Points for Discussion:**

- Why do you think some kids bully and/or fight?
- Why do you think some kids are always the victim of bullying and/or fighting?
- What can you do to prevent bullying and fighting in your school?
- What can the school and/or community do to prevent bullying and/or fighting?