

Anchor Skit – “It’s About Your Brain...”

(under ten minutes in length)

This skit is designed for **Anchors to present to an audience ages (11-14)** The Anchors may choose costumes; create dance steps, sounds, etc. The goal is to capture the attention and imagination of your young audience. We encourage Anchor teams to make it their own.

You will need:

A Director and perhaps an assistant director to help rehearse and direct actors (*one on-stage, one off-stage*)

A Narrator · A group of as many actors available; parts may be repeated in the sharing or assigned or just have more for backup interest ALL HAMS! Let group brainstorm what kind of props and costumes, if any, they would like to choose. Props do make it more fun!

Narrator: Hello, my name is _____... I am a member of the _____ Anchor Club. We are here to bring you important news about your brain and to help deliver that message...

(Sweep arm toward curtain or other side of the room... indicating group)

This is THE (create a name for your theatrical group - Example: Mighty Wilson High School of Actors, Dancers and Cute People)

Group takes a bow.

Narrator: Has your brain been a mess lately? Are you feeling confused, fuzzy, a little out in left field? Have your teachers been trying to stuff your brain to capacity? Have you ever hit your head hard enough to see stars? WE are here to help you ...

Group: *(Strikes pose or does a little dance)*

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN FOR LIFE!

(After some fanfare group moves to one side of the stage as a group)

Narrator: When you were born your brain was the size and texture of a little jar of jelly. *(Person walks across stage with a small jar of jelly... and displays it with flourishes)*

Narrator: However... your brain was making over one billion brain cell connections of every sight, sound, taste, texture, and experience. *(group could pantomime with wiggling fingers... making connections)*
It was in the process of wiring your software and hardware – equal to about five billion computers... It will take about 25 years to complete this basic wiring into an adult brain. *(Group could stop... exhausted, and wipe brows)*

Narrator: Why are we telling you this? Brain injury is the leading cause of death in people our age. Every year the Center for Disease Control reports that over one and a half million people injure their brains. AND... they estimate that 2.5 to 6.5 million have survived a brain injury. The range is so large because not all brain injuries are reported. A real problem with a brain injury is that it is invisible and sometimes the damage is delayed for a year or more. The injury may not even be remembered or show up for years and suddenly the person will have a stroke or seizure. That is why we are here to...*(wave hand at group...group strikes pose or does a little dance)*

Group: PROTECT YOUR BRAIN FOR LIFE!

Narrator: There are many more symptoms but any symptoms resembling these are cause for concern and require fast action. A brain injury could quickly lead to permanent damage or death.

Here are a few other tips about brain injury...

Actor I *(use fist to knock on skull)*
The skull is hard... it protects the brain... BUT... it is rough inside and... has razor sharp edges... if your head gets hit... the brain moves around and can rub against the rough edges inside the skull and cause serious brain injury. A helmet can help... but if you are hit hard enough... even a helmet is not enough protection. This is why we tell little kids to play safe and play smart.

Actor II Your brain looks like a big, wrinkled walnut... It has two halves that control your body. The left side of the brain controls the right side of your body and the right side of your brain controls the left side of your body.

Actor III *(Walks in shaking head)* Great! Fine! But what has this got to do with me? We've all got brains... big deal!

Actors I, II and narrator look at Actor III with shocked expressions

Actor I *(Hands on hips... amazed expression)* Well... it probably won't mean much to you at all until you walk into a wall or you get hit in the head! But, boy howdy! If you damaged the left side of your brain it could affect the whole right side of your body from movement to speech, same goes for the other side. *(nods head with enthusiasm)*

Actor III *(Looks thoughtful, scratches head)* Hmm... what if I just hit the front of my head? Then what?

Actor II Oh, if you got hit in the front of your head it would just affect your ability to organize anything... might mess up your personality... your behavior... your emotions... I guess you would either cry a lot or lose your temper because you couldn't pull it all together.

Actor III *(said a little weakly)* Oh... is that all?

Actor I *(indicating temple area with finger)*
Now... if you happen to have a blow to what they call the temporal lobes you probably wouldn't remember or understand too much, and maybe you wouldn't be able to speak, depends on how hard you got hit.
(Actor smiles as if ready for a question)

Actor III *(said a little weakly)* Oh...?

Actor II *(smiling, indicate back of the brain)*
Back here, in the back of your head ... a really hard whack in the head would probably affect your ability to read and write and maybe you would have a hard time understanding spatial relationships, sizes, perspectives, stuff like that.

Actor III *(said a little weakly)* Oh...?

Actor I Also... did you know that if your head was mashed in back here, these it could affect your sight?

Actor III *(said a little weakly)* Oh... I think I've heard enough about that. I see your point. *(Actor walks to the side, head down, shaking his head.)*

Narrator: *(Said in the tone of a newscaster)*
Some exciting news... scientists have now discovered that when our brains are about ten or thirteen years old they not only produce raging hormones, they start growing even more... it's kind of like an extreme makeover of our brain without the crews, trucks and surgery. Certain parts of our brain actually get confused and it is very hard to read emotions in situations. In fact... it is pretty darn hard to figure out a LOT of situations!

Actor I *(indicate side of the head, back from temple)*
You have so much brain growing around here what they call your executive functions for planning and organization are temporarily like... out-of-order. Like... somebody asks, "What do you want to be when you grow up or what are you going to major in at college?" *(looks exasperated)* WHO KNOWS!?! Cut me some slack...

I'm still under construction, man! I'm waiting for lightening to strike!
(Actor walks off in what looks like a really bad mood)

Actor II *(walks on... watching Actor I walking off stage- shakes head... leans over speaking confidentially to audience)*
By the way... it can really give you bad moods. There are a couple of other parts of your brain that can really fuzz your thinking too. Let's just say you can honestly become forgetful... Your brain is going through this whole process of growing and pruning... Man, you are a work in progress!

Narrator **Speaking of work... you've heard use it or lose it... some neuroscientists say that NOW is the time your brain is being hardwired for the future. Whatever activities you are doing sports, studying, music, video games, or just watching TV... those are all the cells and connections that are going to survive in your hard-wired program. The good news is that you are in control of developing your brain...
The bad news... you are going to have to work at it...
BUT... WE have some hints to help you exercise your brain...
*(sweep hand toward actors to come forward with their hints)***

Narrator can read the hint while Actor 1 steps forward to demonstrate

Narrator **Have you ever tried to study and you really can't concentrate? Here is an easy exercise that helps both sides of your brain to start working together so that you too... can experience that whole brain feeling... Stand up, breathe deep, oh... uh... drink a glass of water...**

(someone hands actor a glass of water... while actor slowly drinks water narrator explains...)

**Did you know that jelly brain of yours is 85% water? So, many times your inability to concentrate may be because you need to drink a glass of water... *(look around audience, actor is finishing or has finished glass of water... narrator shrugs shoulders)* Hey... everybody stand up...
*(wait for audience to all stand)***

**Okay... here's the hard part *(looks toward Actor I)* Still standing... slowly lift your left leg... bend at the knee and put your right hand on it... lower your left leg and raise your right leg, bending the knee and place your left hand on the right knee... now repeat this, at your best pace.... *(Actor repeats at least three times)* This wakes up both halves of your brain and allows you to experience that whole brain feeling when you sit down to study.
(nod to actor) Thank you.**

(Indicates that Actor I may leave and signals to Actor III to demonstrate next...)

Narrator *(To audience)* **Don't sit down yet... If your brain requires an awesome brain workout try this one... Standing... Put your arms straight out... cross your wrists and clasp your fingers together... that's right lace your fingers together and bring your hands to your chest... take a couple of deep breaths... now... balancing on your right foot... cross your left ankle over your right foot and balance... now balance on your left foot and cross your right ankle over your left foot, hold for a few seconds and do it until you feel that whole brain feeling kick in... or at least until you want to sit back down...**

Actor III *(Really pumped)* **Man, Oh, Man!!! My brain feels great!** *(rubbing head with both hands)* **I can tell my brain is kicking into overdrive!**

Narrator **Hey... let's be realistic here! The whole secret is in how you think and then how you act. You have to think positively first.**

It's all about those little talks you have with yourself in your head all day long, twenty-four, seven. If you are thinking "I can't do that," "... someone else is to blame for this." "It's not fair." "I'll never have anything." Man, you are well on your way to a losing streak! On the other hand if you think like this... (two actors enter talking to each other)

Actor I *(Smiling, happy... lots of energy)* **I've got a great idea! And after college, I am really going to work on making it happen. One of these days it will be the greatest thing since sliced bread!**

Actor II **What will you do if it doesn't work?** *(looks worried)*

Actor I **Well, I'll have a plan B and maybe a plan C!** *(even more enthusiastic!)*

Actor II **What if those don't work?** *(still skeptical)*

Actor I *(Looks questioningly at Actor II)* **I WILL make it work! You always learn from your mistakes, and sometimes, they do happen. You just have to move on to bigger and better ideas.**

Actor II **Well... I have heard (pause) that persistence is the key. Do you think that's what it takes? I don't know... I just can't see it happening...**

Actor I **Man... that's what I'm talking about! It's attitude! It's flexibility! It's imagination. You have to know it, feel it, and see it happening. Tap**

into all of your brain resources. And... don't let anybody tell you that you can succeed with very little effort on your part. That's a real con!
(Actors walk off stage... shaking heads)

Narrator It sounds like *(he or she)* really has *(his or her)* head together. How is your brain feeling right now? If it is confused, forgetful, not sure what you want to do tomorrow or the next day, or the next. Don't worry about it! Your brain is in the process of becoming exactly as you want it to be over the next few years. Yeah, you'll have to do some programming, no, computer games don't build your brain. They help keep your brain active but you need to focus on building your brain with your interests, learning new skills, and studying subjects that will help you survive and thrive into your future years. **Most** *(said very loudly, as a cue for other actors to enter)* important...

(Actors – as a group – very quickly-enter and take positions, center stage)

(said with emphasis) **“Protect Your Brain for Life!”**

As each actor says their lines they should look around the audience as if speaking to each person... delivering a personal message

Actor I The facts... Alcohol **does kill** brain cells.

Actor II Drugs **do kill** brain cells.

Actor III **Not** wearing a seat belt can **be harmful to your brain.**

Actor I **Not** wearing a helmet when you need it can damage your brain.

Actor II Did you know...Suicide is the third greatest cause of death among teenagers? Scientists think in many cases it may be frustration because...

Actor III Your brain is making major wiring changes, everyone goes through it. If you are frustrated... and who isn't? Find someone you can talk with about your feelings. It really helps!

Actor I If you don't know anyone you feel you can talk with... call a help line. What you feel today will be different tomorrow... your brain is changing and so are you. It is important that you discuss your feelings out loud for you to hear and understand your issues too.

Narrator Remember... when you were a baby your brain was making one billion connections a day. It is still in the process of making close to a

billion connections a day. However, you are also now in an important growing stage and your brain is hardwiring what you choose as essential information and pruning out non-essential information. No... your television is not going to give you the quality learning experience your future needs... Your brain is your future... Your brain is the most important organ in your body. Take care of it...

(Group stands center stage final positions -)

“Protect Your Brain for Life!”

(bow)

If time allows... group can then open the floor to discuss ways to protect the brain, discuss any questions, concerns. May want to plant some questions with audience members to motivate discussion.

This skit is not designed for adult presentation.