

PURPOSE

To help students understand the importance of practicing excellent habits of thinking and to critically evaluate media in order to make decisions that support their overall health.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand the relationship between our choices and the development of the brain.
2. Understand excellent and non-excellent habits of thinking.
3. Understand the importance of critically evaluating media and information online.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Lesson 7 teenMEN** powerpoint
- **Feel. Think. Act. + Answer Key**
- **Case Studies: teenMEN Advertising Agency**

VOCABULARY

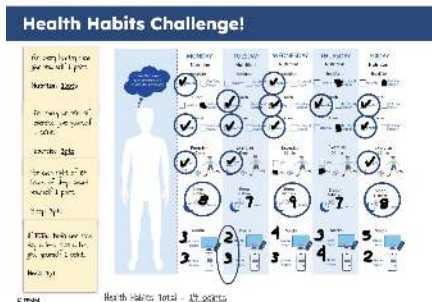
- **Hormones:** Chemical signals that travel in the bloodstream, directing the activity of every system in the body.
- **Testosterone:** A hormone that stimulates the development of male characteristics.
- **Self Awareness:** Having a strong understanding of who you are, how you feel and think, and the reasons for your actions.
- **Health Pillars:** Nutrition, exercise, and sleep are three essentials in maintaining good health.

PREPARATION

- ☐ (Suggested) Prize for winners of the **Health Habits Challenge**
- ☐ Print a copy of the **Feel. Think. Act.** worksheet for each student.
- ☐ Print the **Feel. Think. Act. Answer Key**

- ☐ Print a copy of the **Case Studies: teenMEN Advertising Agency**, one for each group of students.

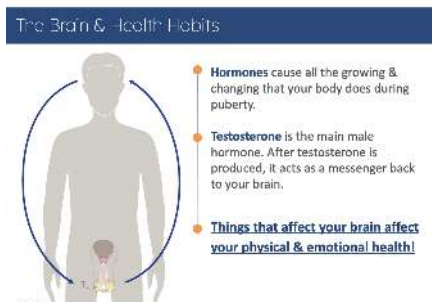
Step 1 (5 minutes): Health Habits Challenge!



Have students get out their **Health Habits Challenge** worksheet from the previous class.

Let's see how you all did with the Health Habits Challenge and tally the points! For every meal that's healthy, give yourself one point. For every day that you achieve 60 minutes of exercise, give yourself one point. For every night of 8 hours of sleep, award yourself one point. For media, add up your total time (phone and/or tablet, computer, screen) and for every day that is fewer than 6 hours, give yourself one point. *See slide for example of adding up the points. Offer a prize to the winner(s).*

Step 2 (5 minutes): The Brain: Health Habits Matter



As we have learned, hormones cause all of the growing and changing that the body does during puberty. Testosterone is the main male hormone. After testosterone is produced, it acts as a messenger back to the brain. This is called hormonal feedback. The brain and the body are in constant communication. This is why **things that affect your brain affect your physical and emotional health**. And the reverse is true, too!

Your choices affect your gray matter



Your **choices** matter.

The cerebral cortex is the outer layer of the brain. It is made up of tissue called "gray matter". Gray matter is wrinkled in appearance, from its many folds and grooves.

Choices that increase gray matter:

- Getting enough sleep
- Exercising
- Good nutrition
- Reading, learning new skills and hobbies that challenge yourself

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Your choices matter. To be precise: your choices are not only important but they increase or decrease your brain's *gray matter*. The outer layer of the brain is called the cerebral cortex; it is made up of tissue, called "gray matter". Gray matter is wrinkled in appearance, as the more you learn new things, the more folds and wrinkles you put in your brain. Gray matter increases rapidly during adolescence until around age 25.

Lifestyle choices that build or increase gray matter, include: getting enough sleep, exercising, eating healthy food, reading, learning new skills and practicing hobbies that challenge your brain.

Your choices affect your gray matter



Your **choices** matter.

The cerebral cortex is the outer layer of the brain. It is made up of tissue called "gray matter". Gray matter is wrinkled in appearance, from its many folds and grooves.

Choices that decrease gray matter:

- Lack of sleep
- Drinking alcohol
- Drugs
- Pornography
- Too much screen time

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Lifestyle choices that *decrease* gray matter and can even do damage to a healthy brain, include: lack of sleep, alcohol, drugs, smoking, pornography and too much screen time.

Under Construction ⚠



impulse control

predict consequences of action

regulate thoughts and emotions

25

The adolescent brain is still “under construction”, growing and developing. The choices you make now will shape your brain for the rest of your life. Alcohol and marijuana use decrease memory and mental performance, damaging brain cells. Getting in the habit of the three pillars of health: nutrition, exercise and sleep, increase mental performance, build brain cells and support your hormonal and overall health.

Step 3 (10 minutes): Self-Awareness and Excellent Habits of Thinking; **Feel. Think. Act.**

Part of becoming a mature person is becoming more self-aware.

Self-Awareness

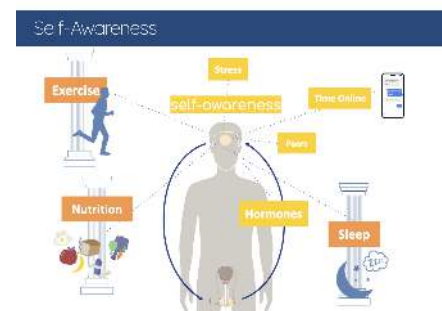
VOCABULARY

self-awareness

Noun

Having a strong sense of who you are, how you feel and think, and the reasons for your actions.

Self Awareness means having a strong understanding of who you are, *how you feel and think*, and the reasons for your actions.



Self-awareness is understanding how our nutrition choices, exercise and sleep (or lack of) all contribute to our mood, ability to think and make good decisions. There are other factors, too, like who you spend your time with (peers) and how much time you spend online. All of these things play a big role in our emotional and physical health. Having the self-awareness to check-in with ourselves about how we are feeling and why we are behaving in a certain way, is a sign of **maturity** in a person.

Want to develop and mature your prefrontal cortex? Excellent thinking!



Here are five **excellent habits of thinking**:

1. Listening to different points of view.
2. Making a judgment based on good reasons.
3. Considering if you might be wrong.
4. Asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience than you have.
5. Thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.

Here are five **non-excellent habits of thinking**:

1. Rushing to conclusions.
2. Ignoring valid criticism just because it makes you feel bad.
3. Not listening to different opinions because you don't like the person saying it.
4. Letting anger blur your judgment.
5. Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.

*Divide students into three groups and give each group one of the **Feel. Think. Act.** scenarios.*



Give groups a few minutes to read, discuss and write down their responses to the

questions. Then, discuss the answers with the class using the **Answer Key** provided.

Step 4 (5 minutes): Self-Awareness and Online Information

Self-awareness is vital when it comes to navigating the many different kinds of influences we are bombarded with online.

Choose good sources of information online

1. Ask a parent or trusted family member.
2. Make sure you're getting all the facts.
3. Watch out for ads that don't look like ads.
4. Avoid clickbait!
5. Protect your privacy!



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In seeking out reliable sources of information online, here are some key things to consider:

Ask for help. Ask a parent, trusted family member, teacher or librarian which resources they would recommend. For school work, make sure the internet isn't your only research tool! There are great books, encyclopedias, and more.

Get all the facts. If you're reading an article from a news site, check the original source that the news article mentions; sometimes the original source is *entirely different* from the headline!

Watch out for ads. Sometimes it says "Ad" beside an ad, but other times paid advertising fits seamlessly into a web page. Getting your information from Instagram or Tiktok can also be problematic, since anything can be posted on social media.

You'll never believe... **how to avoid clickbait!**

"**Clickbait**" is just what it sounds like: a link with a sensationalized headline to make people click on them. It's usually a link to a website page trying to sell you something.

"Achieve Results With This One Trick!"

Sometimes it can also infect your computer with viruses.

"He Didn't Know... Then This Happened."



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Avoid clickbait! Clickbait are links that sensationalize article headlines to make people click on them. Most are trying to sell you something and sometimes, they can infect your computer with viruses.

*Last but not least, **protect yourself online!***

Protect yourself online!



- It is not safe to send photos of yourself to someone you don't know. It is also not appropriate to share photos of someone else.
- Don't let yourself be scammed.
 - Sites that are poorly made, have spelling mistakes, or ask for a lot of information.

Don't trust a website asking for:

- Age/identity
- Address
- Phone number
- Credit card or bank info

Always ask a parent or trusted adult if you are unsure.

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It is not safe to send photos of yourself to someone you don't know online. It is also not appropriate to share photos of anyone else online, in a group chat, etc. It can even lead to legal charges. Don't trust a website or a person online asking you to provide a lot of personal information. If a site looks poorly made, has spelling mistakes or asks for a lot of information, it's probably a scam and you should check with a parent before continuing.

Step 5 (10 minutes): Advertising Types; Case Studies: teenMEN Advertising Agency

There are lots of messages out there, telling us: "Do this!" "Be this!" "Try this!" Let's look at four common types of advertising:

4 Ad types:

1. **Clickbait:** sensationalized thing you can't resist.
"The money making secret that banks don't want you to know!"
2. **Bandwagon Effect:** everyone else is doing it.
"Eight out of ten homes are equipped with Eyespy Security system. Don't let your house be the target."
3. **Pseudo-science:** invented or exaggerated scientific claims.
"Phyto-Dorphine™ Skin Booster by L'Oréal."
4. **Endorsement:** a celebrity uses this product, so you want to.
"Be like Mike" was a Gatorade campaign featuring Michael Jordan.

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1. **Clickbait:** these are sensationalized headlines containing a "hack" or "secret" to make people want to check them out. "The money making secret that banks don't want you to know!"
2. **Bandwagon Effect:** this type of advertising may play up the fear of missing out. Or, the message may claim that you should try something because everyone else is! "Eight out of ten homes are equipped with Eyespy Home Security system. Don't let your house be the target."
3. **Pseudo-science:** this is when advertisers exaggerate claims or make up scientific names to sell a product. "Phyto-Dorphine™ Skin Booster by L'Oréal."
4. **Endorsement:** this type of ad usually shows a celebrity using the product, so that consumers will want to buy the product: "Be like Mike" was a Gatorade campaign featuring Michael Jordan.

Divide students into four groups. Give each group one of the **teenMEN Advertising Agency** case studies. Give groups a few minutes to come up with their ad to present.

Case Studies

Presentations by groups from:



Then, have each group present their ad to the class. If groups run out of time to present, they can present their ad at the beginning of the next class.

CONCLUSION

Growing up and becoming a mature person means taking responsibility for our choices. As we discussed today, practicing excellent habits of thinking and being self-aware when it comes to what you're seeing and doing online is an important step to growing in maturity. Excellent, healthy choices, not only shape and develop your prefrontal cortex, but they shape your life!

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