



Issue 38

Teen Mentors Reinforce Wise Way#1



Students hold brain drawing during review of Wise Way #1

This lesson uses the human hand to represent the physical parts of the brain we teach in Wise Way #1. The hand brain parallels the brain drawing in the curriculum and depicts the relay center/thalamus (blue), the lizard brain/limbic system (red), and wizard brain/prefrontal cortex (green).

For this activity, teen mentors reviewed Wise Way #1 with fourth graders. They went over how the five senses send signals to the brain's relay center and trigger the lizard brain's emotion and fight, flight and freeze centers to react without thinking. The teens emphasized that in order to stop and think before they react, the children need to learn the 10 Wise Ways in order to build connections to the wizard brain behind the forehead.



Teen Mentor uses a photo of the brain for Wise Way #1 review

The Hand-Brain



The review set the stage to introduce the hand brain. The picture shows the rapt attention given by fourth graders as they watched a teen mentor teach the lesson. The teen mentors told the students that they could remember this process by using their hand as a representation of the brain.

Teen Mentor Demonstrates Hand Brain

She put blue duct tape across the top of her palm and under her fingers to represent the relay center (thalamus).

She put red duct tape around her thumb to indicate the lizard brain. She folded the lizard brain thumb under the relay center to show the two areas are hardwired.

She put green duct tape across her fingernails to represent the wizard brain but kept the green out of sight as shy held up her four fingers in a stop position. She told the children that space between the relay center and the top of her fingers is where they will build brain connections to their wizard brain.



**Hand Brain Showing
Lizard Brain (red) and
Relay Center (blue)**



Next, she flipped over her fingers to show the green wizard brain and placed them over her red thumb and the blue relay center.

This demonstrated how thinking skills replace the lizard brain's impulse and emotions.

**Hand Brain showing
THINK and Use
Your
Wizard Brain**

BrainWise teaches executive function (EF) skills, including inhibitory control and emotional control. EF deficits are a hallmark of psychopathology and [last month's newsletter](#) on the upcoming documentary on the Columbine school suicides/murders mentioned how stealth behaviors can mask red flags that usually indicate mental illness.



**"AMERICAN TRAGEDY"
(2019) OFFICIAL**

The film, *American Tragedy: Love Is Not Enough*, will have premier showings on April 18th, 2019, at the University of Colorado and Stanford University.

Former National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) director Tom Insel, MD, will speak at the Stanford screening. His somber statement in the film reflects the challenges

facing mental health: **"The whole mission [of NIMH] is to improve diagnosis and therapeutics and reduce the burden of mental illness. In the 13 years I was there, I spent about 20 billion dollars of taxpayers' money to try to deliver on that mission, and I think we failed."**

BrainWise addresses this challenge by teaching prevention skills. I know you will enjoy teaching and having students teach the BrainWise Hand Brain. Thank you!



Dr. Pat

On a lighter note . . .

The benefits of teen mentors teaching younger students are a win-win for both students. The following short YouTube video reinforces this powerful teaching method. Here is a link to a newsletter article on teens reinforcing BrainWise concepts with younger students. Please click [here](#).

A Washington nonprofit's idea - having kids who need to improve their reading skills tutor younger students who also have trouble reading - has turned out to be a surprising success.



Struggling Students Learn - by Teaching



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