



EMPOWER
COALITION

THE POWER OF PEER CONNECTION IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION

Presented by
Martin County West Empower



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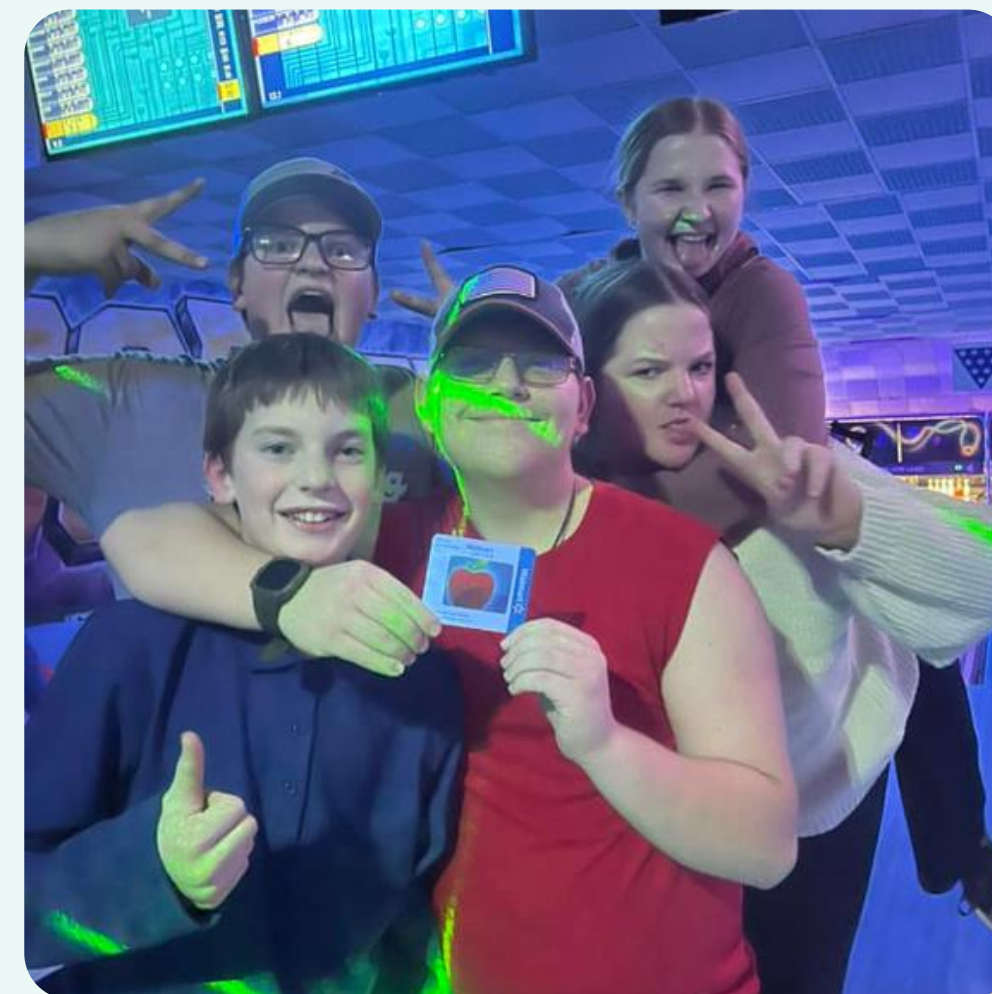
WHO WE ARE

We're part of the Empower Coalition, which works to support youth and families in Martin County. Along with the adult coalition, there are Empower youth groups in five schools. Together, we focus on leadership, mental well-being, and preventing substance misuse. We are members of the Martin County West Empower group.

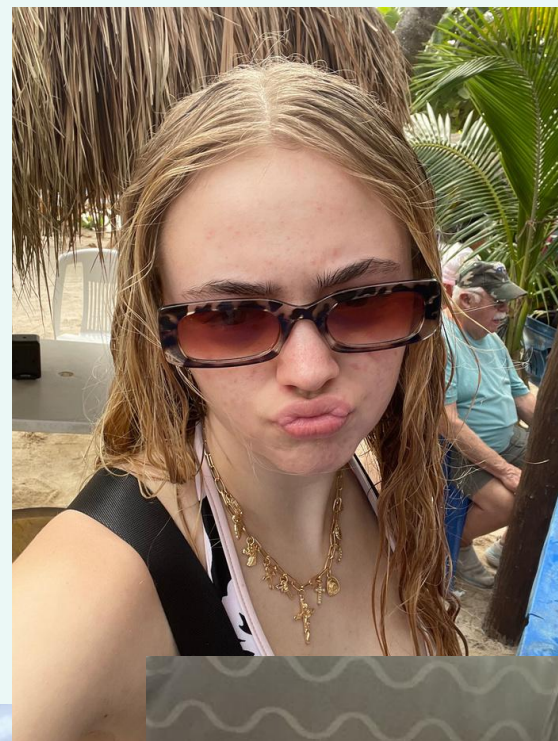


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EMPOWER IN ACTION: EVENTS, EDUCATION, & ADVOCACY



MORGAN
MCCORKELL



CLARE STRIEMER



Briggs Helmets





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SESSION ROAD MAP



**WHY PEER-TO-PEER
MATTERS**



HOW WE TRAIN AND PRESENT



WHAT WE'VE SEEN HAPPEN



**EXPERIENCE A PEER-TO-PEER
LESSON YOURSELF**



ACTIVITY



Q & A





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WHY PEER-TO-PEER?

Youth listen to youth!

Peer-led prevention = relatable, credible, powerful.

Younger students look up to older peers.





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PEER-TO-PEER BUILDS PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Peer-to-peer prevention helps
strengthen the things that
keep students safe and
support healthy choices.



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WHAT ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

Protective factors = supports
that help us make healthy
choices and give us
confidence.

MCW Empower Member, Hannah :)





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PROTECTIVE FACTORS SET US UP FOR SUCCESS

Spotters, coaches, and
training → fewer mistakes
+ more confidence





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PROTECTIVE FACTORS WE BUILD

Peer-to-peer boosts **protective factors**:

- Leadership development
- Positive peer modeling
- School connectedness





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PEER-TO-PEER REDUCES RISK FACTORS

—the pressures and
challenges that make
unhealthy choices more
likely.



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WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS?

Risk factors = challenges in a student's life that raise the chances of unhealthy choices.





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EXAMPLES OF RISK FACTORS

- Low perception of harm
- Peer pressure
- Poor coping strategies





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HOW PEER-TO-PEER HELPS

Peer-to-peer prevention...

- Raises awareness of risks
- Builds refusal skills
- Teaches healthy coping tools



WHY IT WORKS — CREDIBILITY



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- Closer in age →
“They get me”
- Peer norms shape
choices
- Local data: ↑
perception of harm
after vaping
presentations



WHY IT WORKS— CONNECTION

- Builds trust
- Students ask more questions
- Real connection: games & fun after presentations
- Local data: ↑ awareness of risks & digital safety





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WHY IT WORKS — EARLY INTERVENTION

- Reaches kids before habits form
- Builds refusal skills & coping strategies
- Local data: Confidence to say no stayed strong



HOW WE DO IT



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TRAIN → BUILD → PRESENT → REFLECT

TRAIN



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- Annual Youth Leadership Training
- Monthly Empower meetings
- Practice + mentoring from older students
- Advisors & teachers provide classroom support



BUILD

- Evidence-based curricula (Stanford, Screenagers, Natural High, Erika's Lighthouse, Be Vape Free)
- Adapted to school needs
- Games & interactive activities (Jeopardy, Blooket)





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ADAPT TO SCHOOL & TEACHER NEEDS

- Fit within teacher/class time
- Adapt to what's already being taught
- Keep peer connection central





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EXAMPLE — FIFTH GRADE DARE

- DARE covered prevention topics
- We shared our personal “why”
- Attended graduation & cheered them on



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS TO GET INTO CLASSROOMS

- Started small, built trust
- Worked around teachers' time
- Grew as schools saw the value



EVERY SCHOOL LOOKS DIFFERENT

- Each Empower group has its own setup
- Different buildings = different challenges
- Transportation & scheduling can be tricky
- We work with what we have and keep growing



REFLEC

T

- Reflect at monthly Empower meetings
- Share what went well & what to improve
- Use student & teacher surveys for feedback



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PRESENTATION TIPS



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1

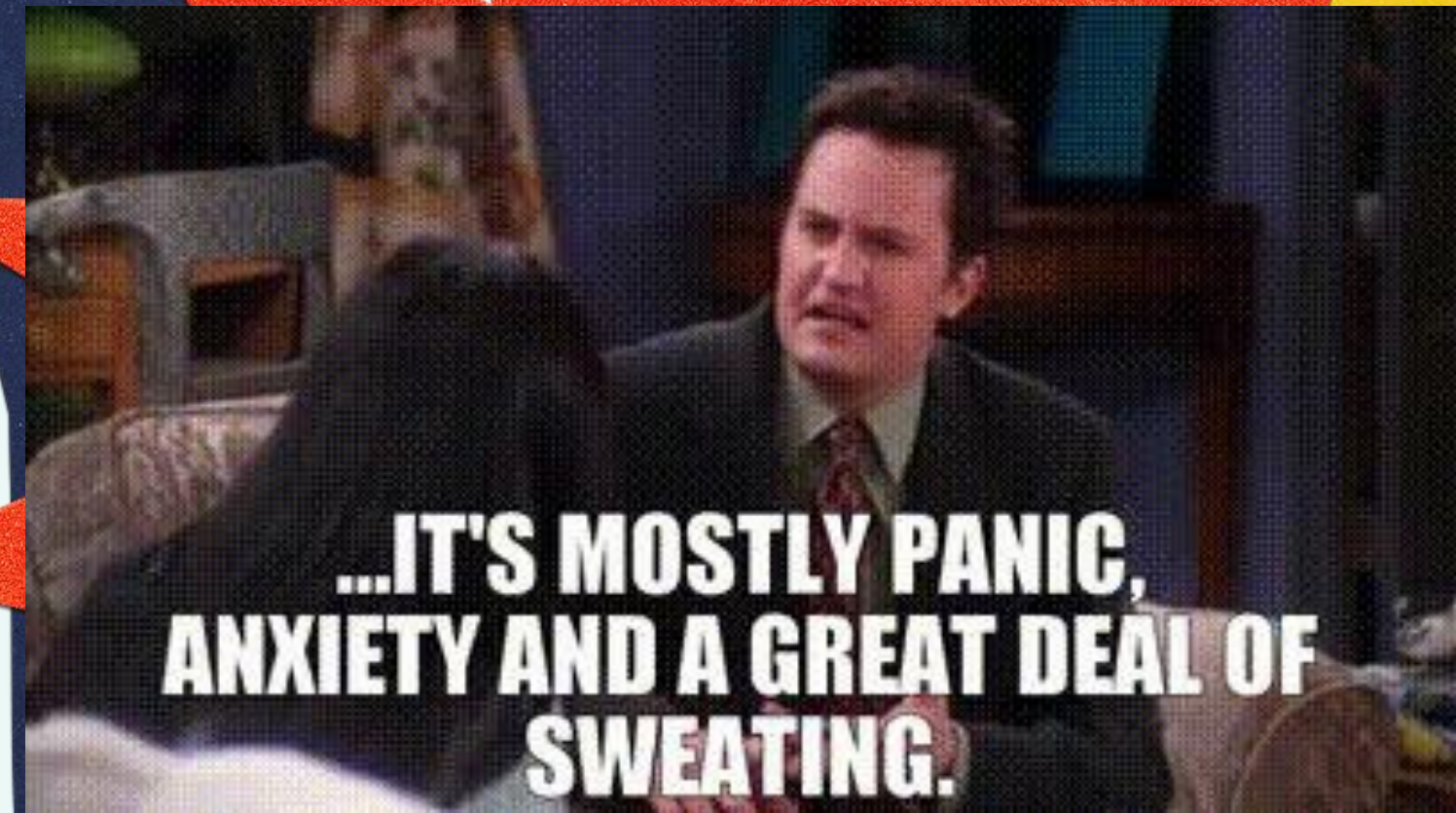
Practice with
friends

2

Don't just read
slides

3

Know how to handle
tough questions





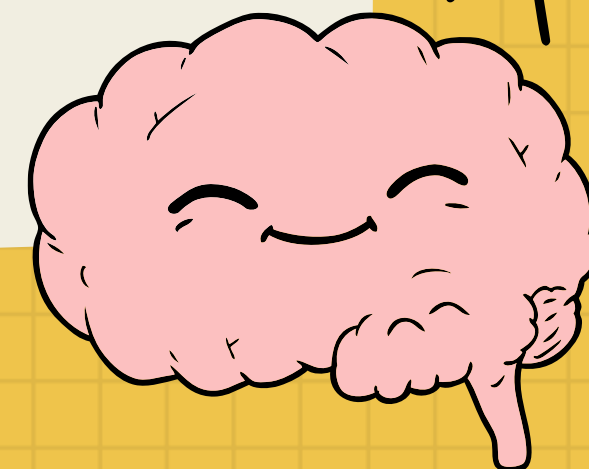
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PEER-TO-PEER IN ACTION

- Experience a Peer-to-Peer Lesson!
- Topic Example: "Full of Potential: Your Brain Nicotine-Free"
- Adapted from the Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit (Free, Evidence-Based)

**FULL OF POTENTIAL:
YOUR BRAIN
NICOTINE-FREE**

PRESENTED BY EMPOWER



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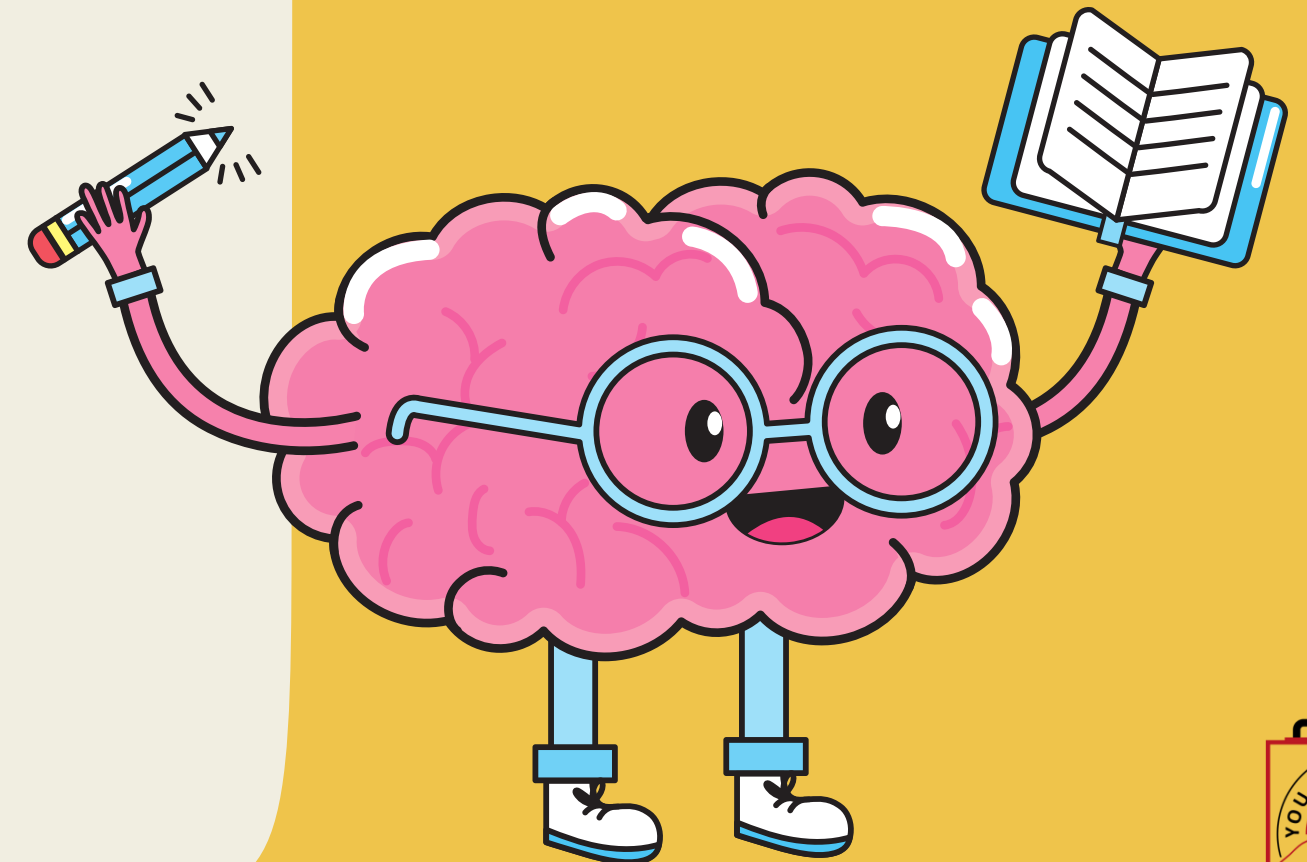
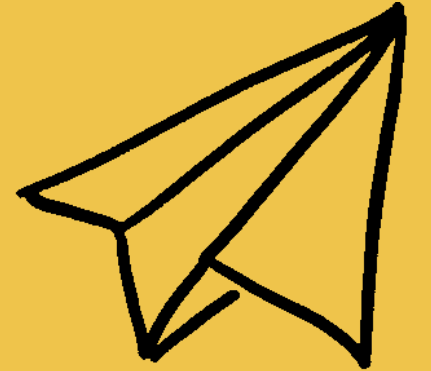


I WILL LEARN...

1. WHAT MY BRAIN'S JOB IS AS A TEEN

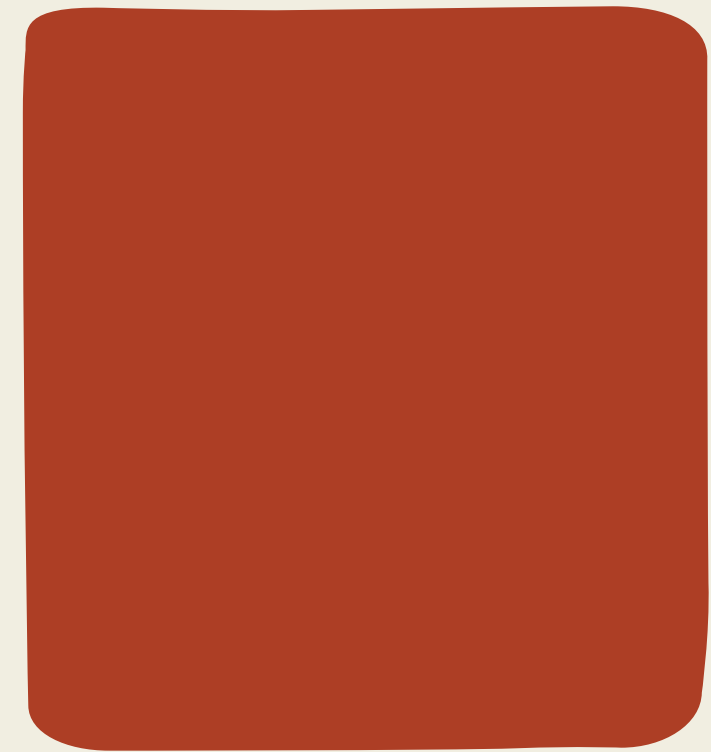
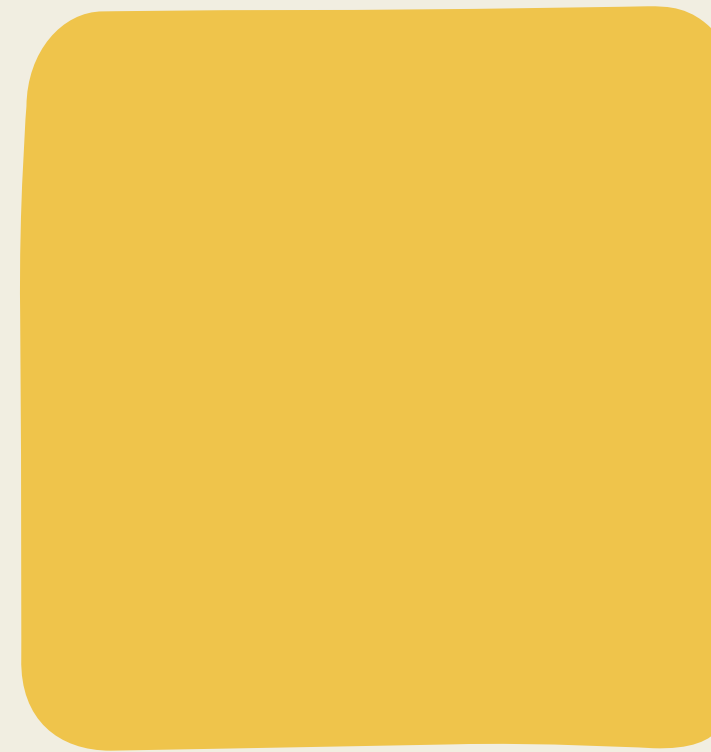
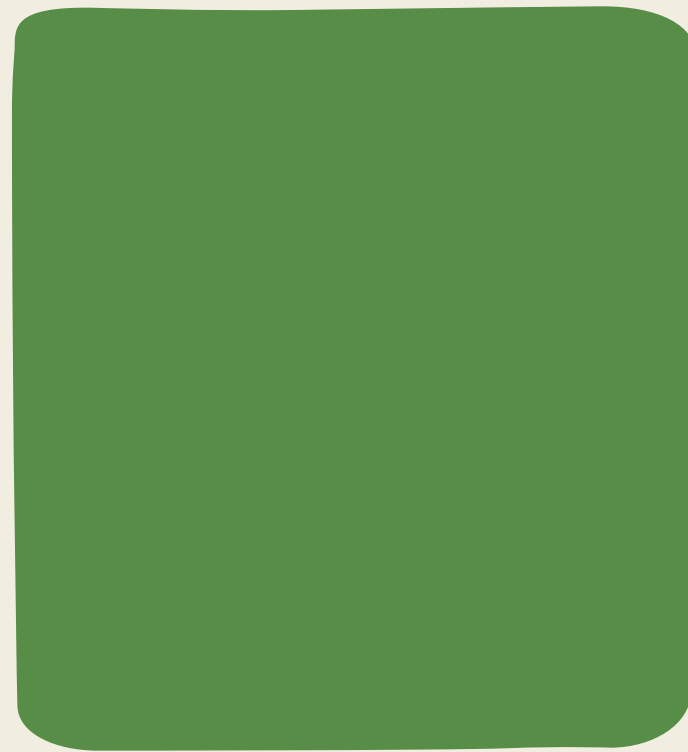
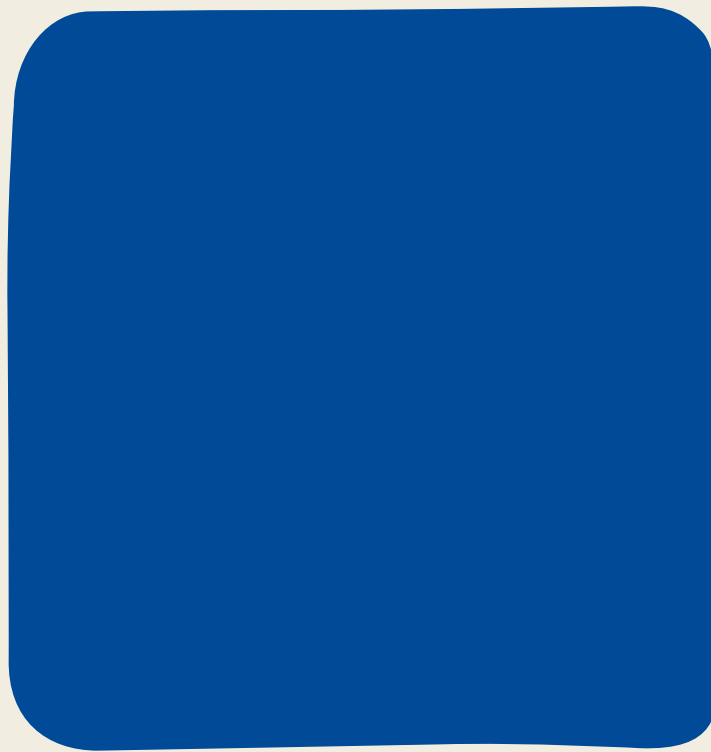
2. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU INTRODUCE NICOTINE TO A GROWING BRAIN

3. ABOUT ADDICTION AND THE PROBLEMS THAT CAN ARISE FROM IT

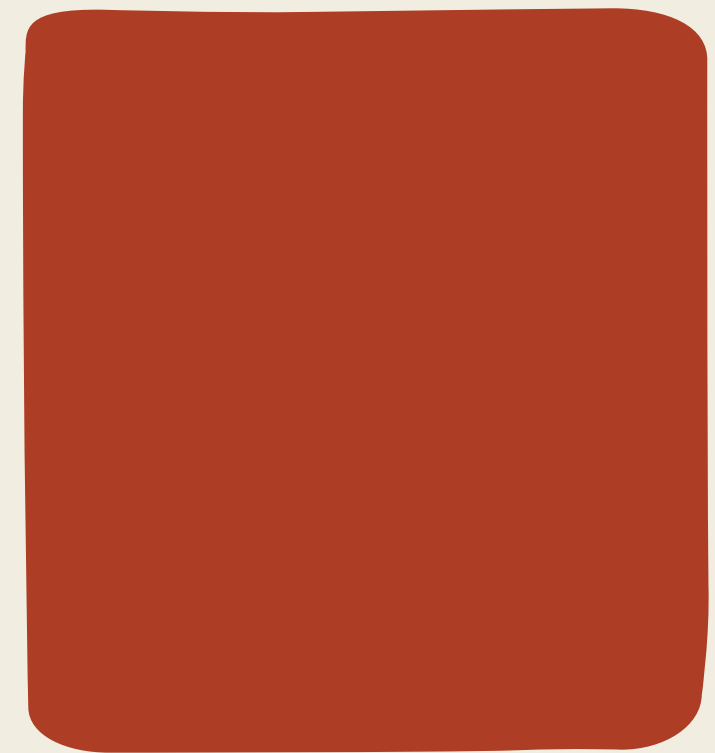


THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN!

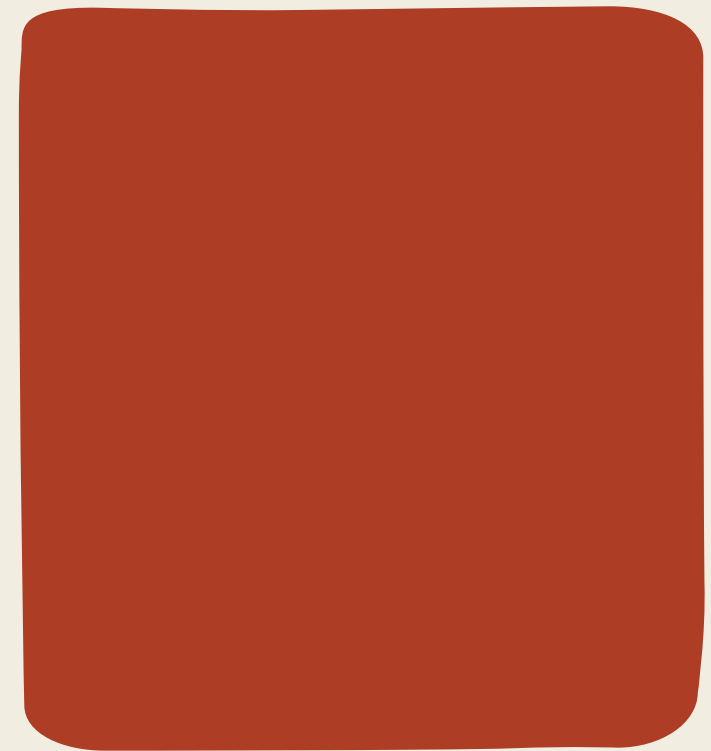
Give me a thumbs up if you LIKE it,
and a thumbs down if you don't
like it.



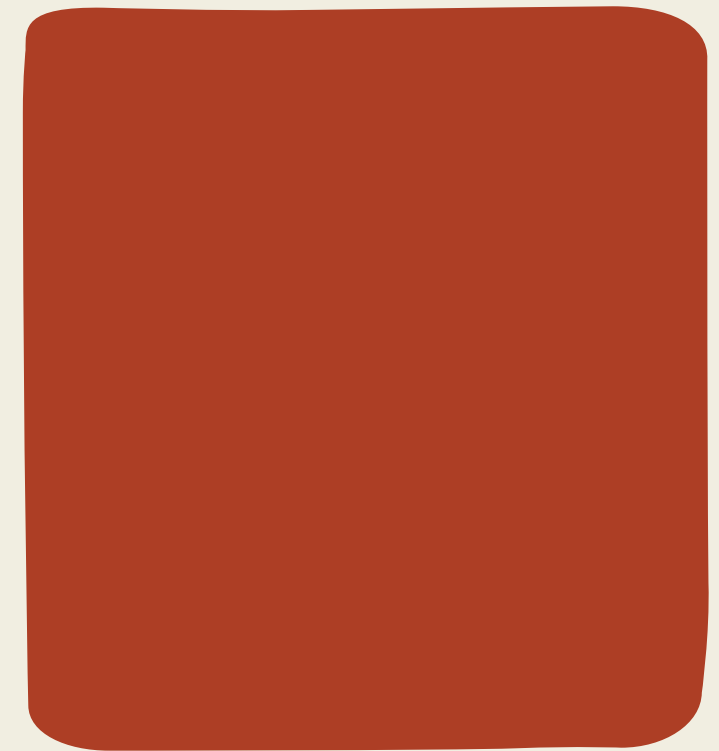
THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN!



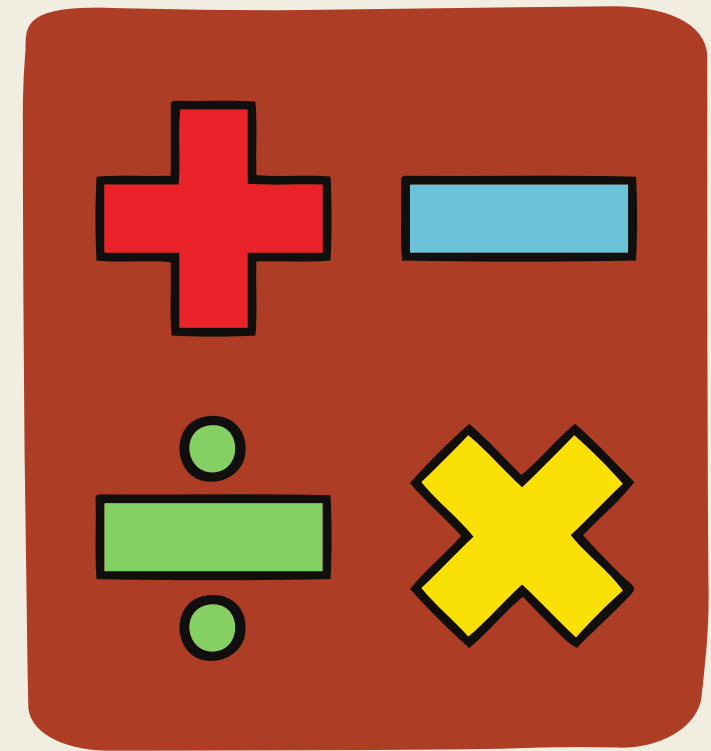
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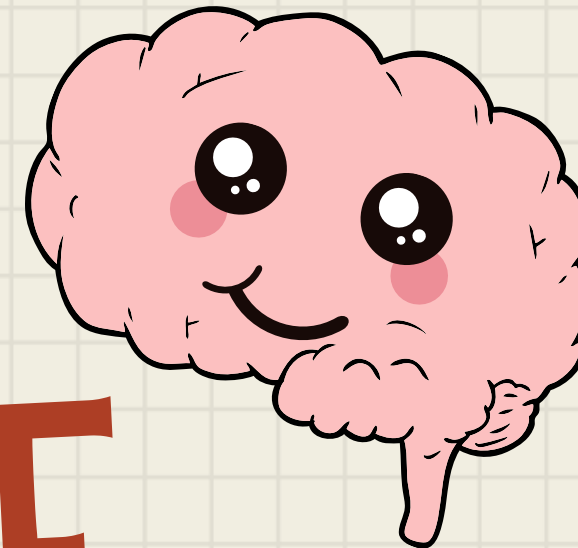
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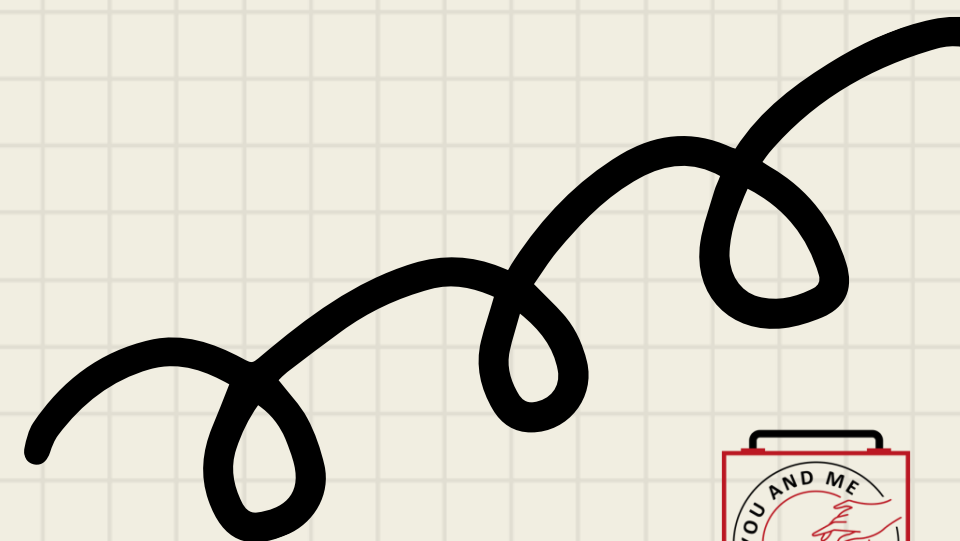


Your brain is

AWESOME



and does a lot of
amazing things!





Your brain's job is to:



Wow! Your brain's job is to: HA HA



HELP YOU FIGURE
OUT WHAT YOU LIKE





Your brain's job is to:



LEARN NEW THINGS



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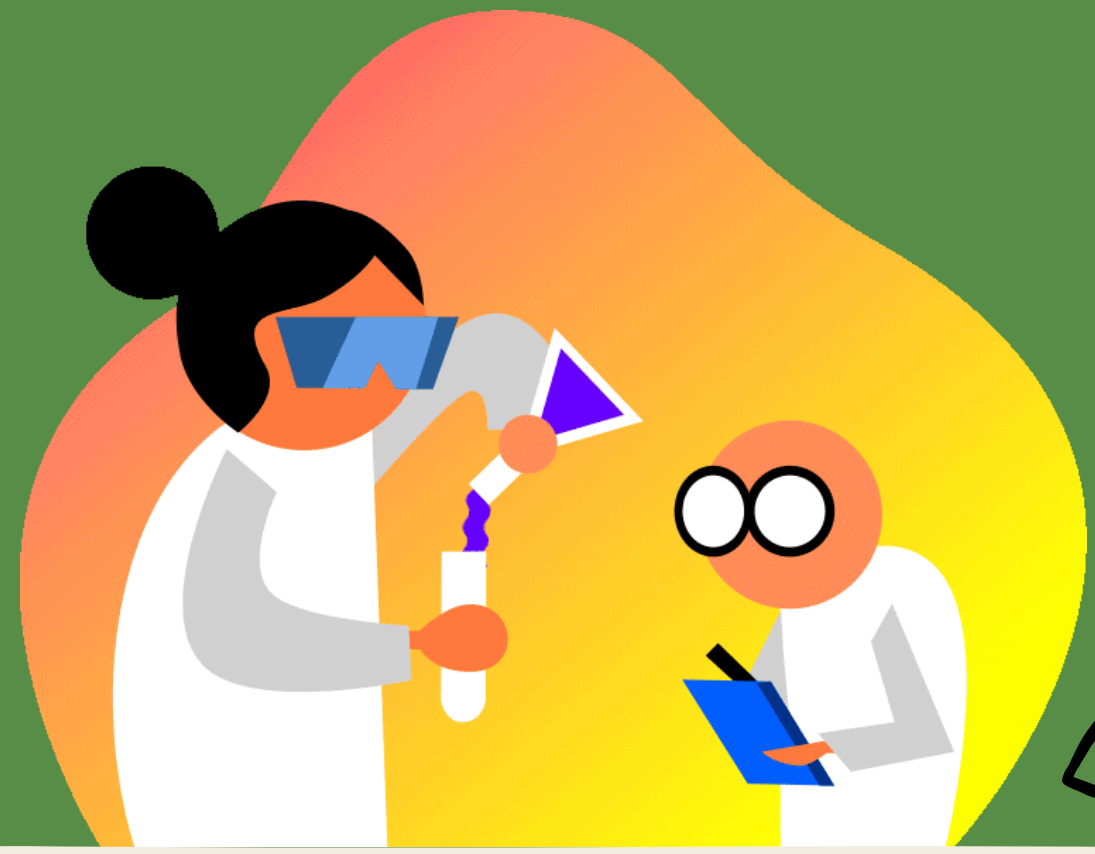




Wow!

Your brain's job is to:

HA
HA



HELP YOU BECOME
THE PERSON YOU
WANT TO BE

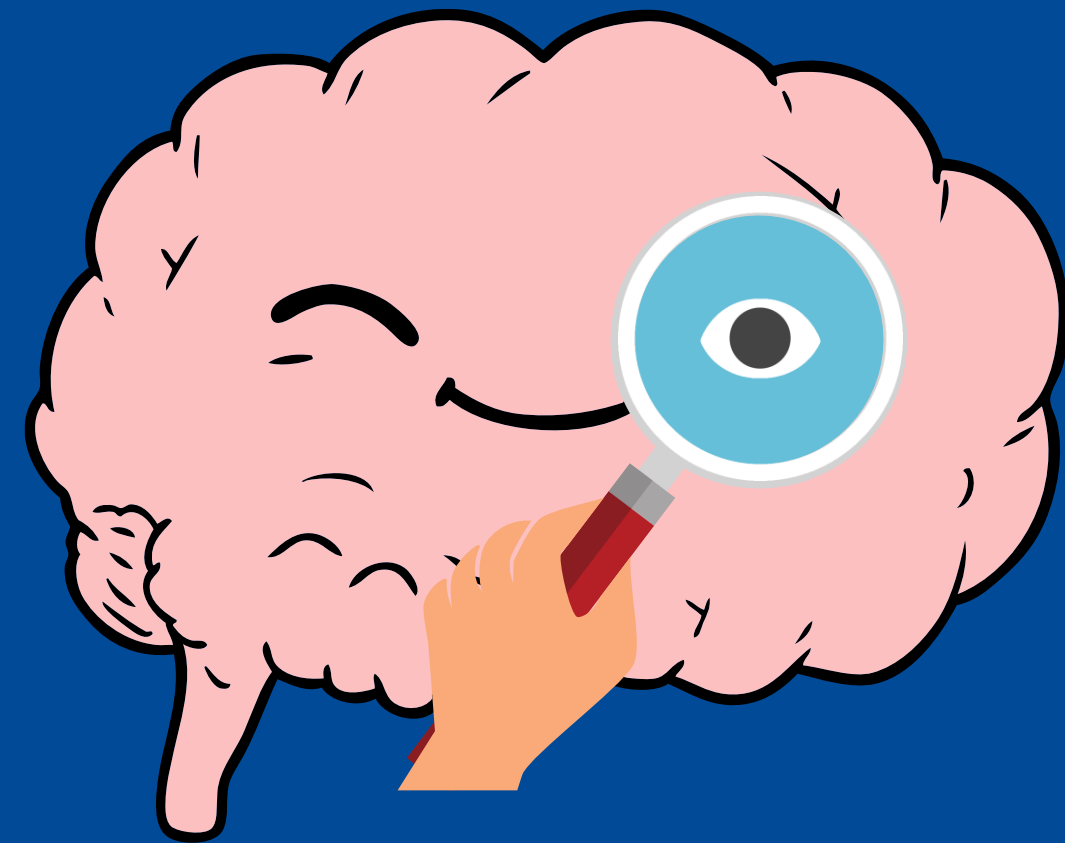
What do YOU want to be
when you grow up?



While this brain is looking for what she likes, it's at risk of getting tricked by things called drugs.

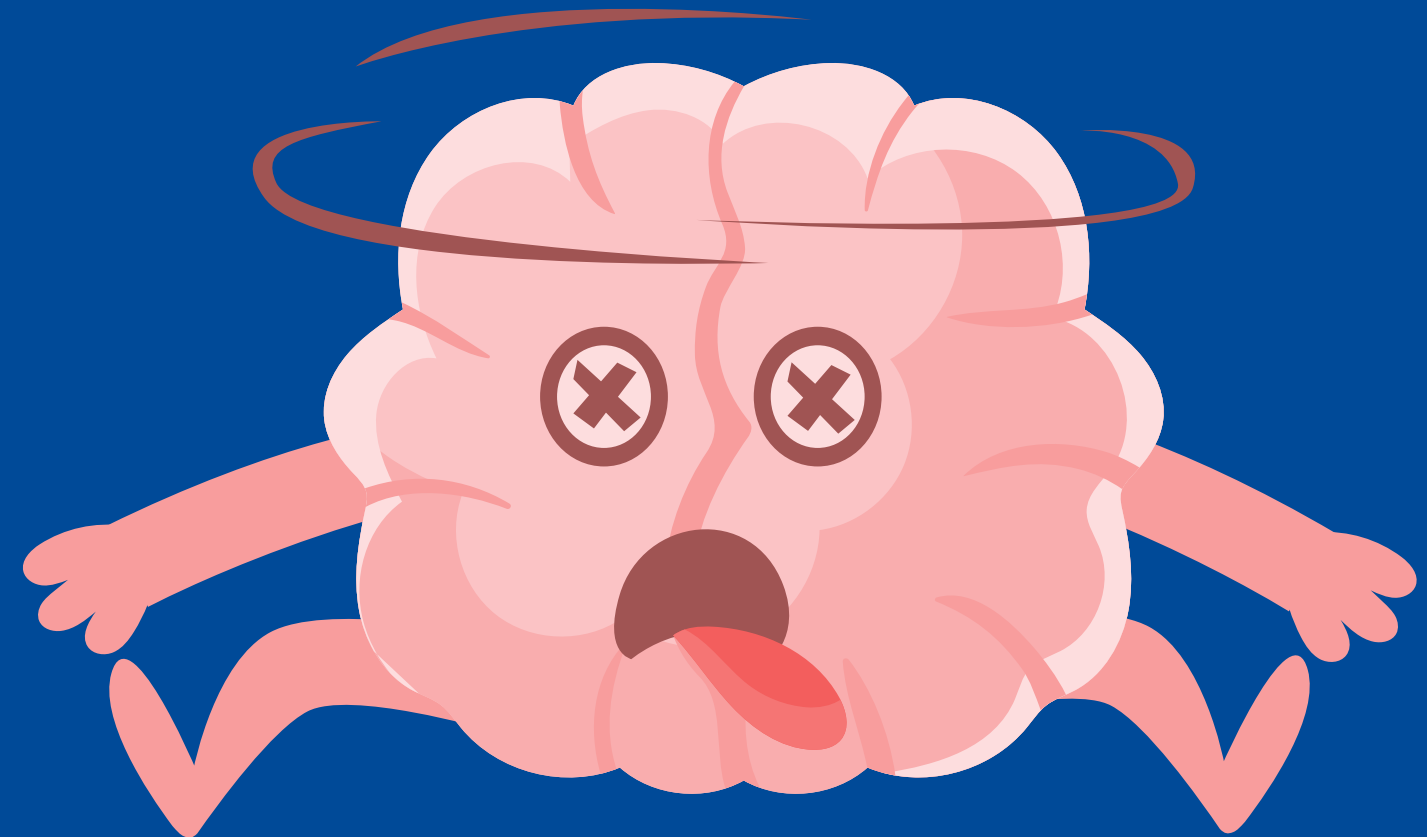
Nicotine is the drug that is in cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products

Nicotine?



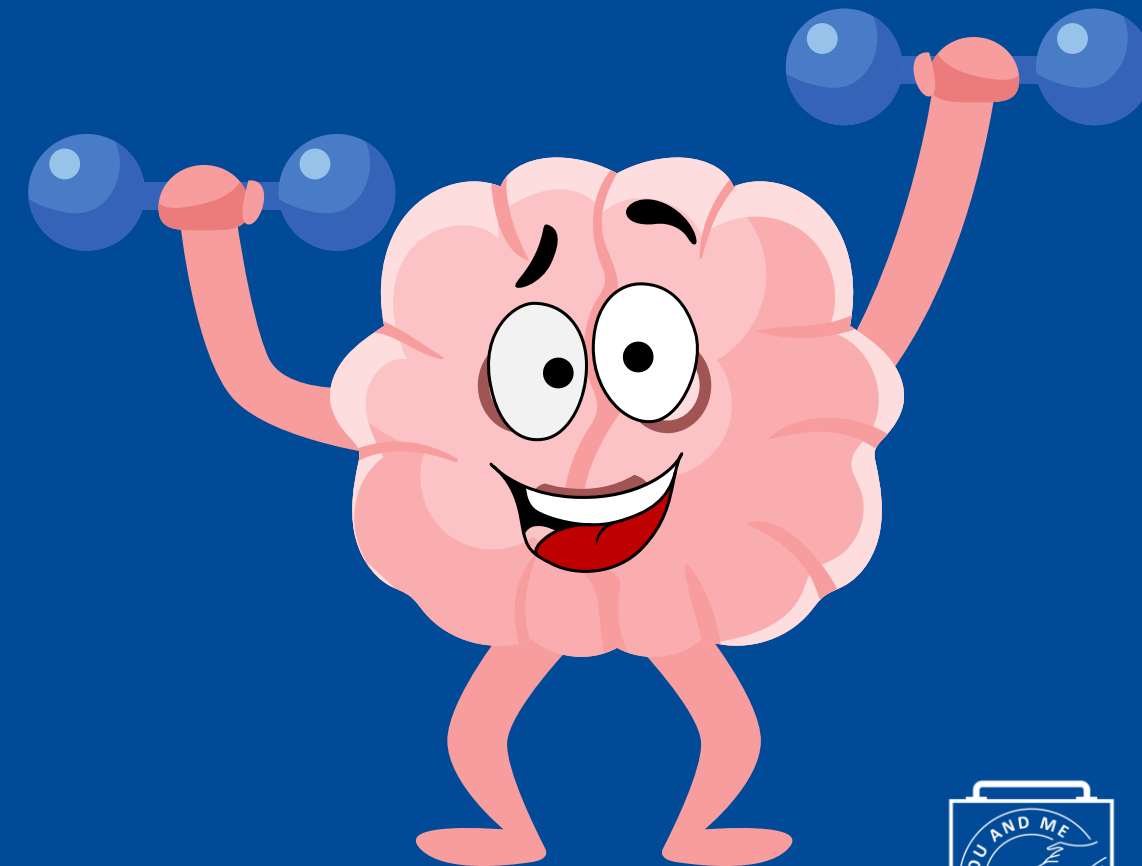
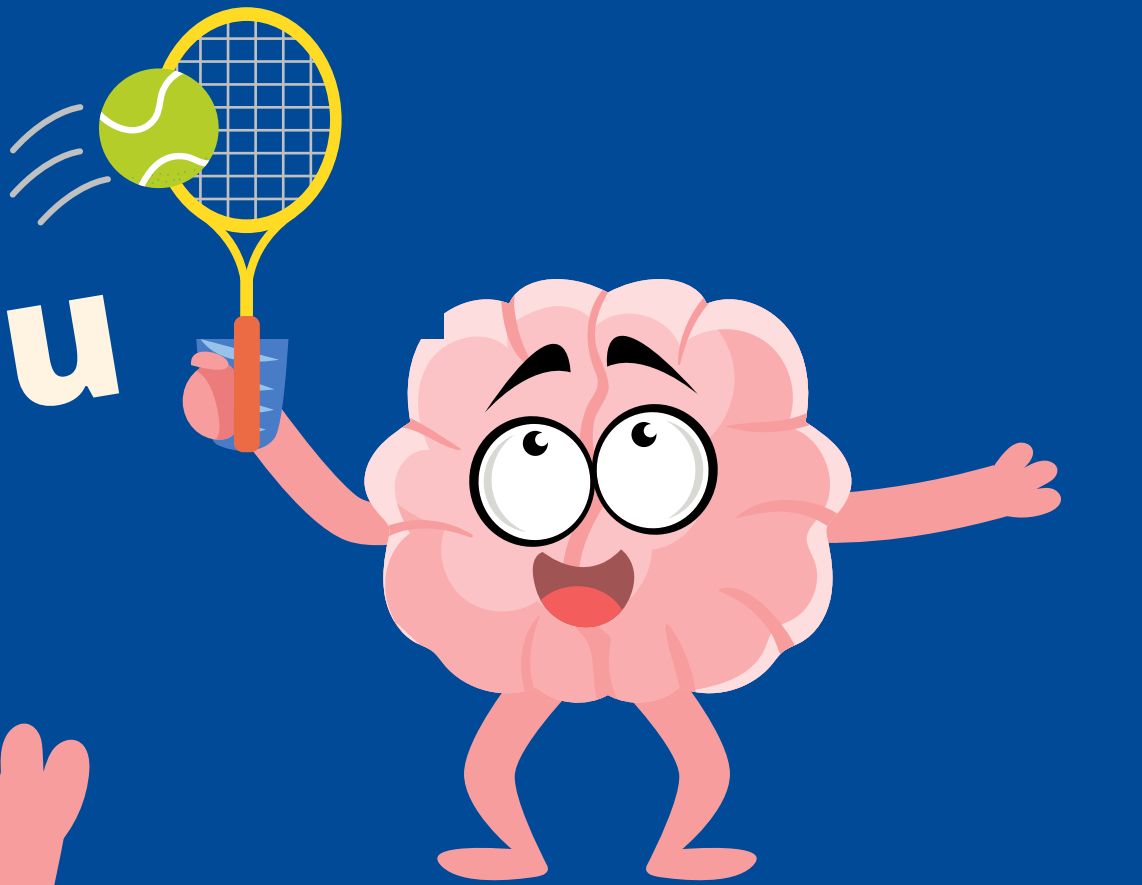
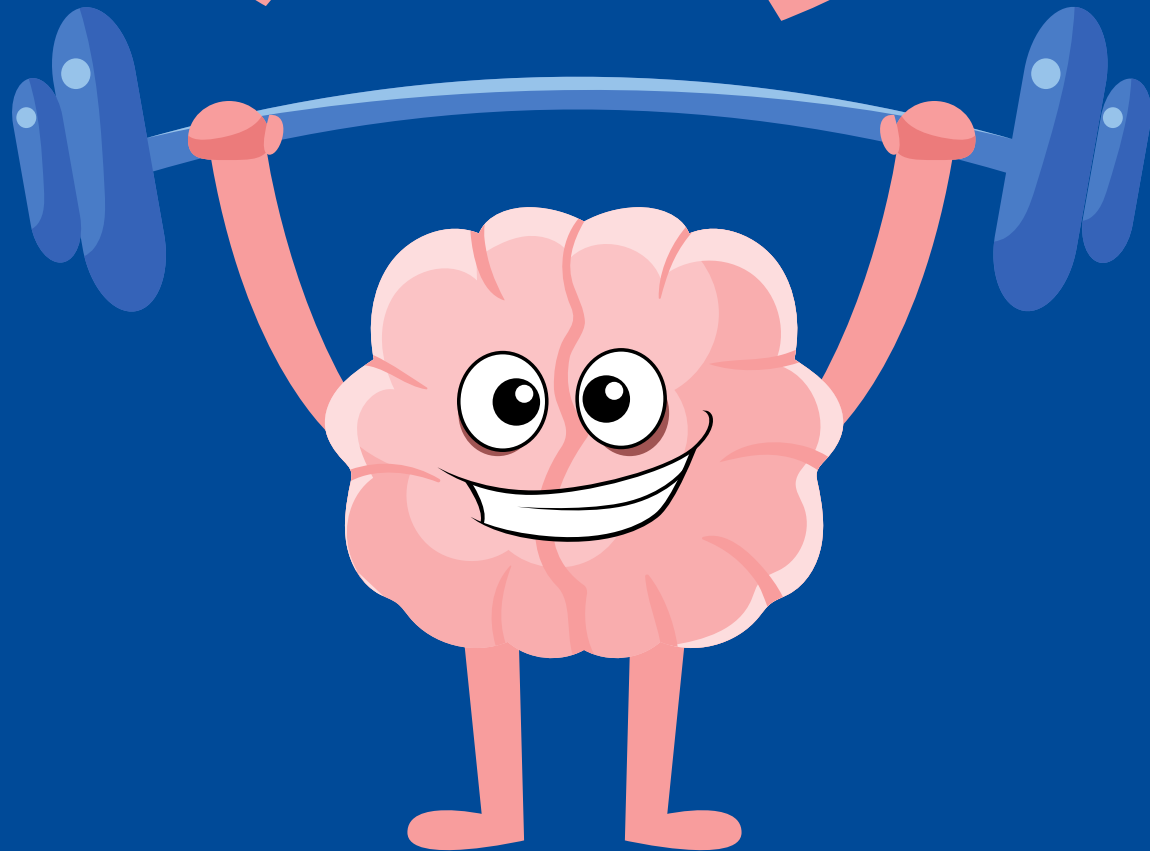
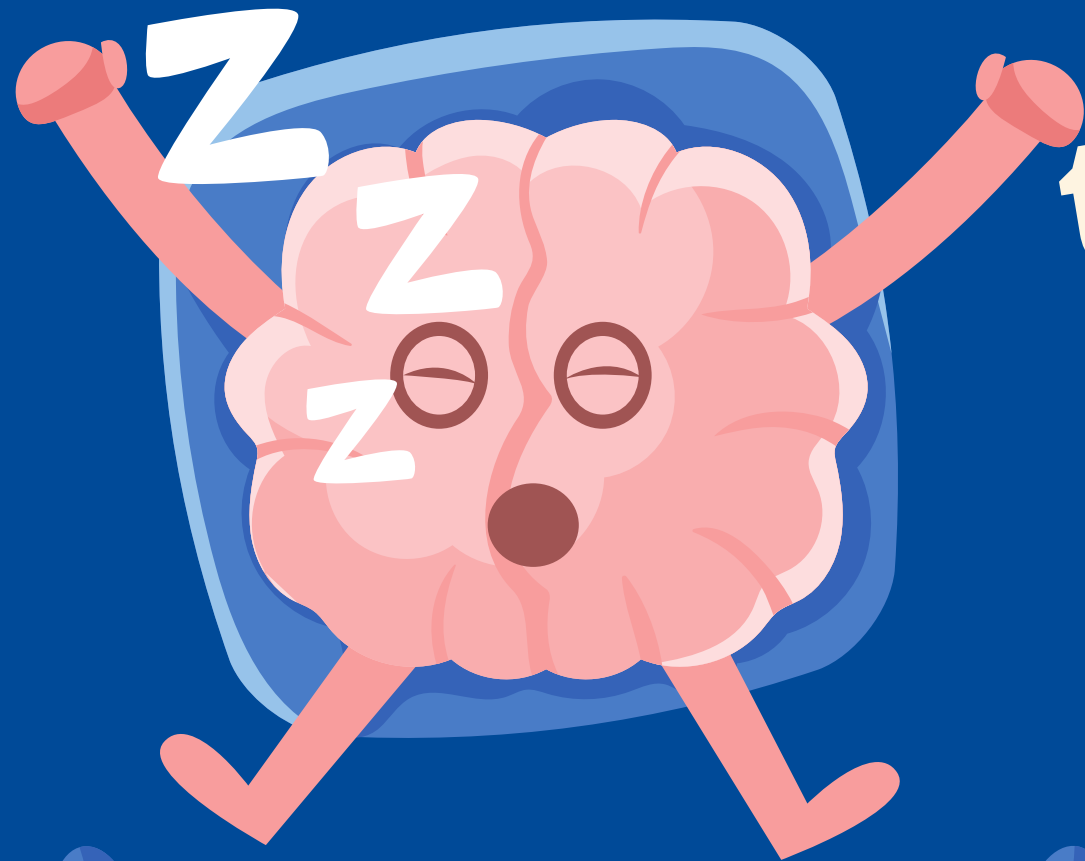
Drugs can trick a brain by making it think it likes the drug, and making it feel good at first

Nicotine?



It's not a bad thing to
want to feel good!

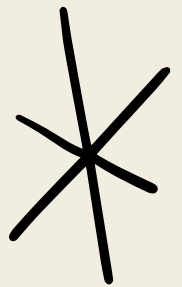
What healthy
things make you
feel good?



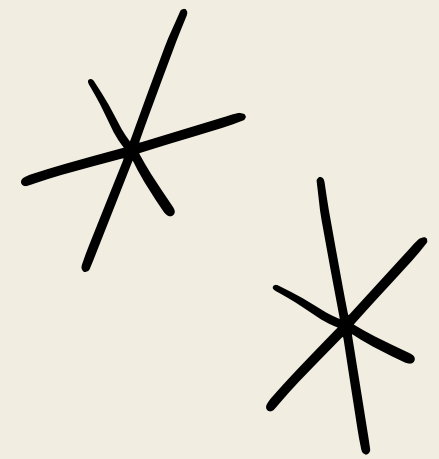


pair **THINK**
SHARE

Keep your brain
happy and healthy



1. Don't try
nicotine



2. Stop using
nicotine if you
have tried it



**3. Ask an adult 
that you trust for
help **





BLOOKET!!!



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TIME TO DEBRIEF

- What's something you could try or start in your school or community?
- What's something we should stop doing that might hold youth back?
- What's something we should keep or continue doing that's already working?

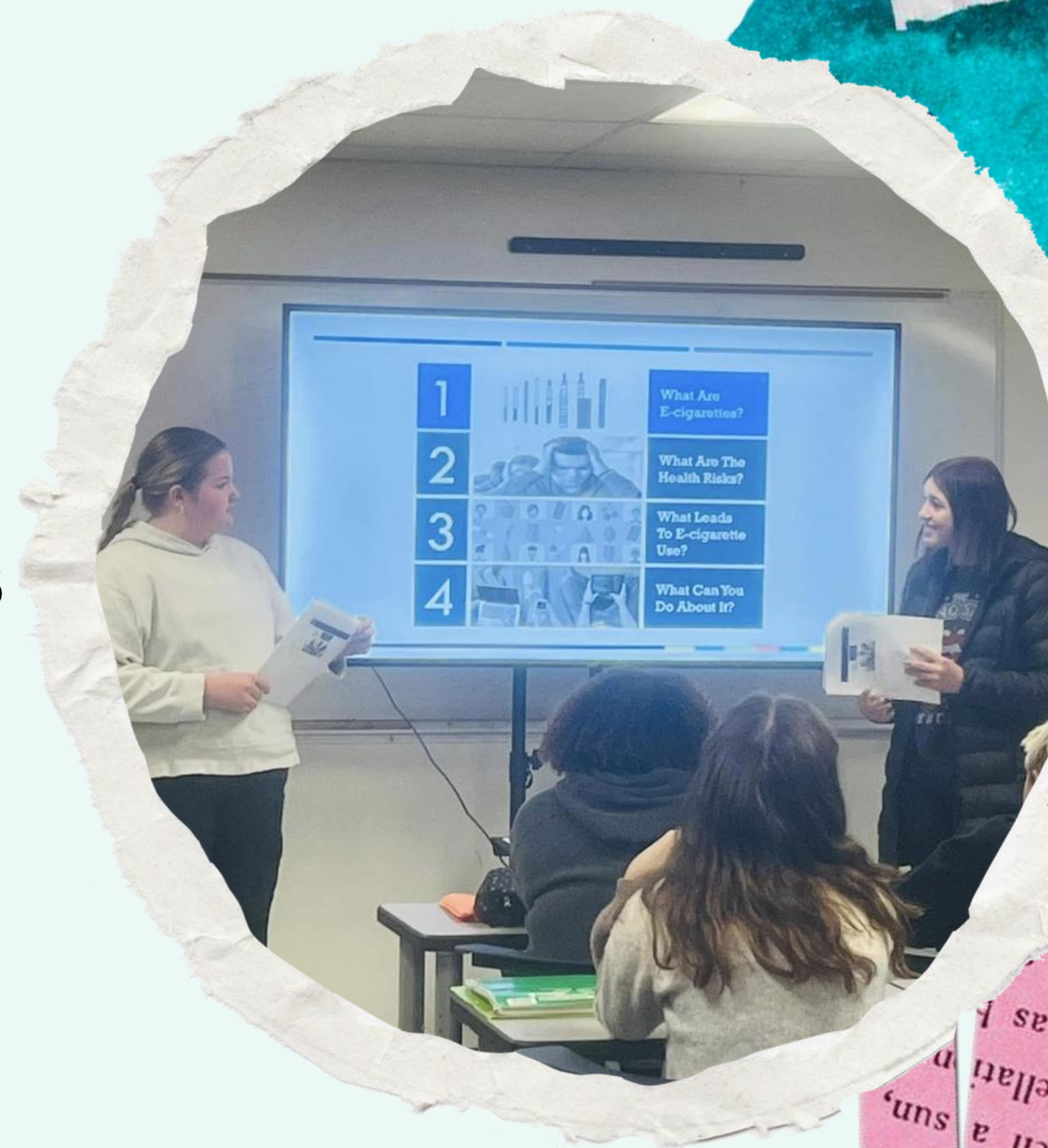




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LOCAL IMPACT AT A GLANCE

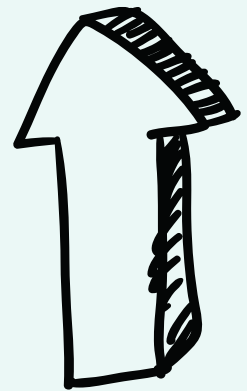
- 609 students reached
- 34 peer-to-peer presentations
- 9 schools
- 48 Empower presenters



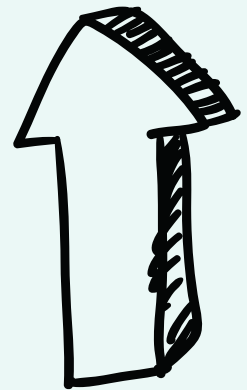


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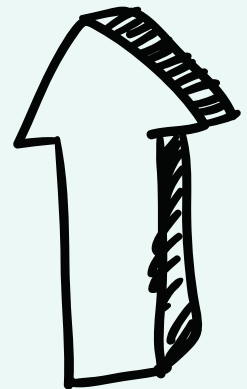
WHAT WE LEARNED



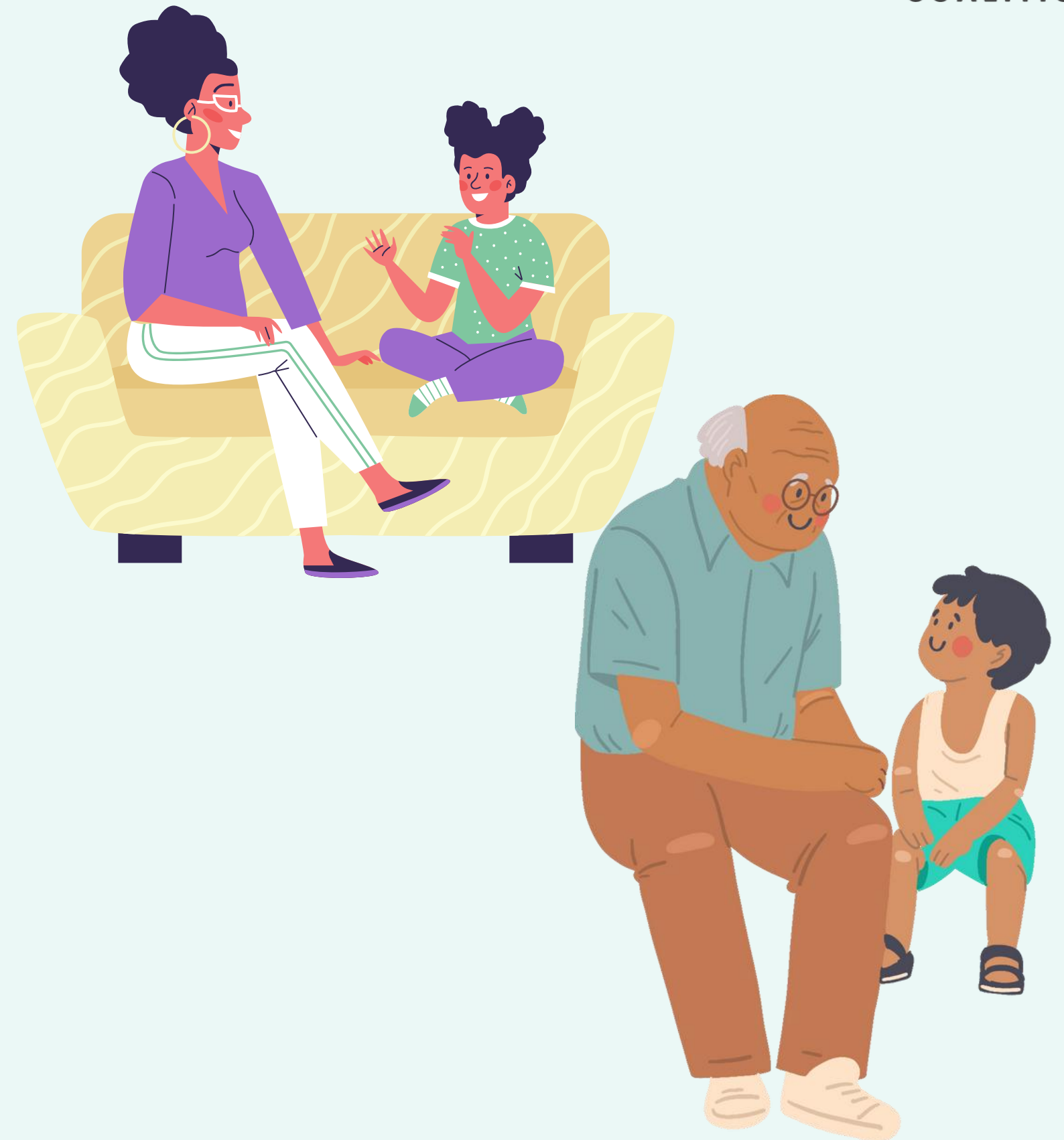
Confidence to say
"no"



Knowledge of
risks



Talking to trusted adults



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

I liked that it wasn't
a teacher because I
felt like it was more
real and I could
understand it more.

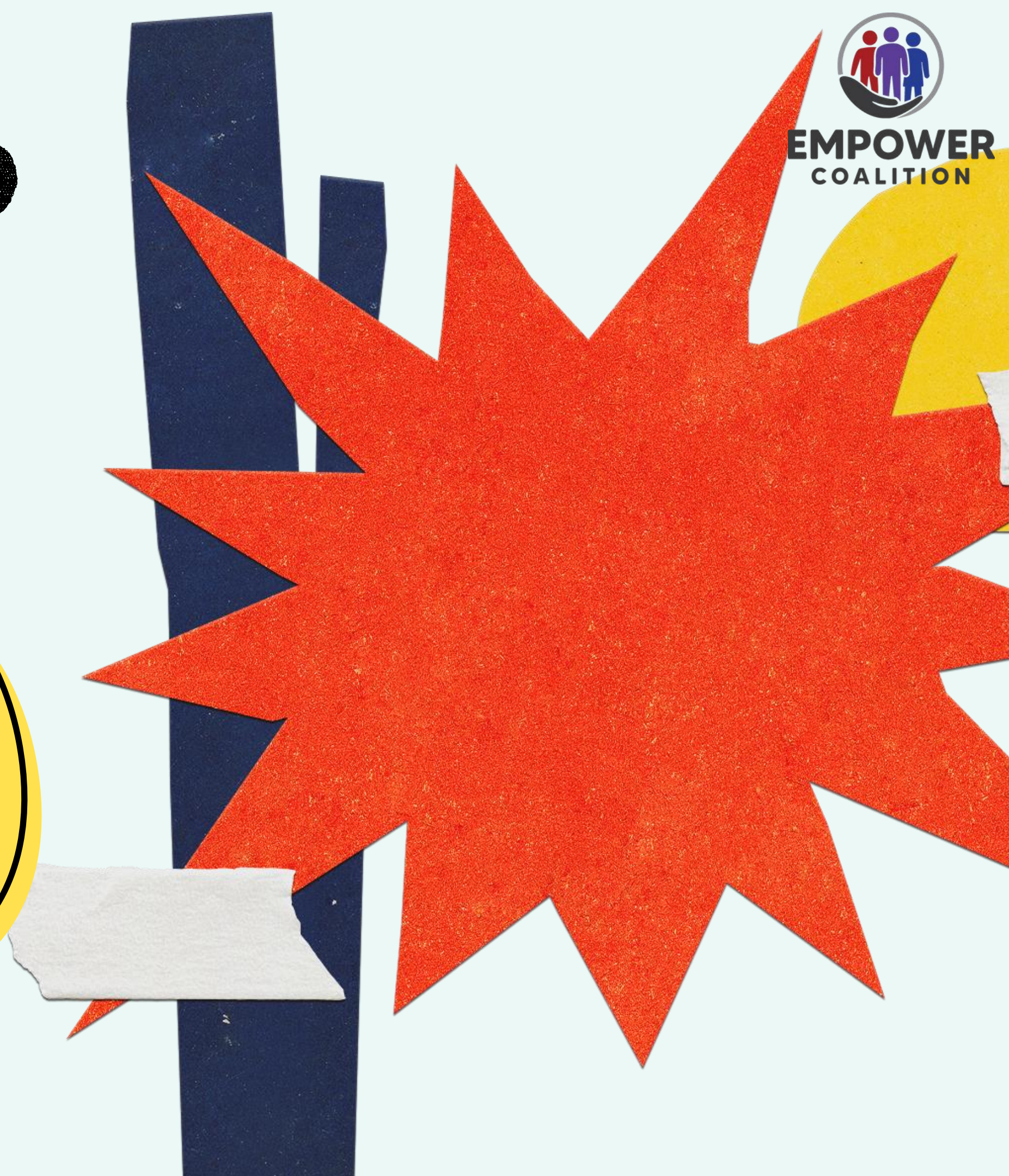
–Amelia, Gr. 6

One of my favorite
parts was either the
message that was
given or when we got
to play basketball
after!

Isaac, Gr. 6



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HOW YOU COULD TRY THIS

- Recruit a few friends
- Pick one topic
- Ask a teacher for class time
- Try a short mini-presentation
- Reflect, repeat, and grow



Just a few of our many amazing groups of presenters :)



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**YOU HAVE THE
POWER TO
INFLUENCE
YOUR PEERS!**



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QUESTIONS?



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**THANK
YOU!**

