Activity A: Tough Brain Teasers With Simple Answers

A man is sitting in a pub feeling rather poor. He sees the man next to him pull a wad of $50 bills out of his wallet. He turns to the rich man and says to him, 'I have an amazing talent; I know almost every song that has ever existed.' The rich man laughs. The poor man says, 'I am willing to bet you all the money you have in your wallet that I can sing a genuine song with a lady's name of your choice in it.' The rich man laughs again and says, 'OK, how about my daughter's name, Joanna Armstrong-Miller?' The rich man goes home poor. The poor man goes home rich.

What song did he sing?

Activity B: Brainteasers

- Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
- A clerk at a butcher shop stands five feet ten inches tall and wears size 13 sneakers. What does he weigh?

Activity C: Brainteasers

What is the number of the parking spot?

![Parking Spot Numbers](image)

Activity D: Teamwork & Collaboration

Materials
- Tarp

Set Up
Layout a tarp on the ground and have all team members stand on it. The smaller the tarp the more challenging the exercise! No Tarp? Use taped together newspaper sheets - the fragile paper makes the challenge even more interesting!

Directions
While standing on top of a completely open tarp, the group must create a plan to get everyone on the opposite side of the tarp without anyone stepping off. The size of the tarp should be defined by the number of individuals in the group.

Debrief Questions
- What was difficult / easy about the task?
- Who took the lead?
- Did everyone agree with what they needed to do?
- Did anyone have any ideas but were not able to share them?
- If you were going to do the task again what would you do differently?
Activity E: Slime (Cortisol)

Materials
Barbasol White Shaving Cream • Sta-Flo Laundry Starch • Elmer’s School Glue • Measuring Cups • Mixing Bowls • Small Containers or Ziploc Bags • Optional: Food Coloring/Glitter • Vinegar • Salt • Rubbing Alcohol

Set Up
Provide students with materials. Students can work alone or in groups. Good slime will stretch and is malleable like our brains. But when you add the wrong materials to the slime (i.e., negative emotions, stressors), it doesn’t look, feel, or work correctly.

Directions
Have student make slime wrong a few times with salt, vinegar, and/or rubbing alcohol. It won’t work correctly. Then, tell them how all these ingredients destroy the slime. Have them make slime the correct way and then allow them to play with it and take it home.

For good, fluffy slime:
1. Add two, 4 ounce bottles of Elmer’s school glue to a large container. Add whatever food coloring you like. We used pink. We like using this brand of food coloring because it always produces bright colors. Mix.
2. Add one cup of shaving cream to the glue mixture and stir.
3. Add about half a cup of the laundry starch to the mixture and stir. It will start to form polymer chains almost immediately. When the first half of the starch is mixed in, add the second half and stir.

Note: At first, it will be stringy, but after about three minutes of mixing, it will become a solid mass of fluffy slime and will no longer be sticky.

For problem slime:
Add salt—it makes the slime lumpy and more liquid in consistency. • Add rubbing alcohol- it makes the slime firmer and feels more like putty/ • Add vinegar- it liquefies the slime

Debrief Questions
Discuss how the wrong ingredients are like the negative stressors/emotions we have. How did it change the consistency of the slime? That’s how it changes our brain. The right ingredients (positivity) is what our brains need.
Activity F: Neuroplasticity

Materials
- 2 washers per student (neurons) – could also use bracelets, embroidery hoops, etc.
- 4 pipe cleaners per student (dendrites)
- 1 small pom pom per student (new information)

Directions
1. Have each student connect the two washers with one pipe cleaner. Then, try to move the pompom across the pipe cleaner. How did it work?
2. Add another pipe cleaner and try again. How did it work this time?
3. Repeat until all 4 pipe cleaners are connecting the two washers. They make a road or path. How easy is it to move the pom pom now? The more we practice a new skill or study new material the more we are wiring the brain’s connections or rewiring the connections. By building up these new connections, we are breaking old habits and learning new ones that can improve our lives. Also, this can be said of retrieving information—the more we contact information the thicker the connections and the easier it is to retrieve this information.

Bonus Activity for Self-Regulation: Money vs. Time

Materials
- Markers (one per student)
- Sticky easel pad sheets (one per student)
- Tablet/phone/computer with internet access
- Timer

Directions
At the top of the paper, have each student write $86,400. On the paper, they will write what they are spending the money on and how much each item costs. The rules are that (1) all money must be spent, (2) no money can be saved, (3) you can spend money on other people, but you cannot give the money to them. Students can research prices. Give students at least 10 minutes to do this, longer if you like. Have students present to the group what they spent their money on. Provide positive feedback to each student.

Debrief Questions
- Did you spend all your money? Why or why not?
- Do you have more NEEDS or more WANTS on your list? Which did you spend your money on first?
- How did you decide what to buy? How hard did you think about the best way to spend your money?
- Why were you given $86,400? That's how many seconds are in a day!
- Now, why could you not save the money/why did you have to spend all your money? Why could you not just give the money away?
- Do you spend as much time planning your time as you did planning your money?
- How does this relate to your academics? What changes can you make?
References


