

Livin' in Your Body 4 Life!

The mini-series

Episodes 1-5 SUMMARIES



Episode 1: BREAST CANCER

Episode 1 opens with Dr. Sarah Gehlert introducing and explaining breast cancer and her research on the disease. Through Dr. Gehlert's discussion of her research, the audience learns about breast cancer, its effects on the people who have the disease, and their friends and relatives, and how affected South Side Chicago communities feel about the treatment of the disease in their neighborhoods. Dr. Gehlert goes on to talk about the growing rate of breast cancer in younger black women. She is concerned that younger people are not as informed as they should be about how to take care of their bodies. Dr. Gehlert's discussion with Jamaal Conway covers not only breast cancer, but also the reasons behind the research and the resources available for breast cancer treatment and coping with the disease. The second half of the episode features Nikia Hammonds, a teen breast cancer survivor. She discusses her experiences with cancer and provides insights and advice on dealing with breast cancer at a young age.

Episode 2: STRESS AND FITNESS

Episode 2 discusses stress and how one's relationships and social environment affect stress levels both negatively and positively. The episode explains the differences between positive and negative stress, and describes how neighborhood violence, peer pressure, stressful family situations, and abuse can have negative effects on the body, emotions, and attitude. Effects of negative stress discussed include becoming desensitized to stressful situations, developing depression or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and experiencing physical (somatic) symptoms of stress on the skin or within the immune system.

The speakers in this episode describe ways to cope with and counteract the effects of stress on the mind and body by using self-care behaviors and by building solid, healthy social networks. Building a network of trusted family, friends, and other supportive relationships is emphasized as an important means of ameliorating the effects of stress. Adopting a balanced attitude to approaching stressful situations, and taking time for relaxation, exercise, creative and self-expressive activities, are other ways to deal with stressors, such as those described in this episode.

Episode 3: YOUR BODY

Episode 3 addresses the importance of taking care of one's mind and body. The episode encourages teens to become more aware of their bodies, including their physical and mental health. The relationship between the mind and body are discussed through interviews with health education professionals covering themes such as body language, dress, self-respect, and general well-being. The episode explores the connection between how we treat our bodies and our physical and emotional health; for example, how the choice to wear baggy pants and revealing dresses can affect self-image and others' perceptions, which can then strongly correlate to how a young person feels about his or her body.

The episode aims to show teens that taking control of self-presentation and self-image leads to self-respect, respect from others, and better mental health. The episode highlights the dynamic nature of adolescence and how it affects the lives of teens. The idea of personal boundaries is discussed to help teens establish healthy limits for themselves. Understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors and environments is

Episode 3 continued.

important for mental and physical health, and establishing personal boundaries can help teens stay away from harmful behaviors such as illicit substance use. The DVD's running theme of "being comfortable in the body you'll have for the rest of your life" is also emphasized through the importance of exercise and nutrition. Good diet and regular physical activity are discussed, in addition to the benefits of participation in sports. Specific drugs and their harmful effects are also mentioned. By discussing the impact of nutrition, substance abuse, and exercise, the episode highlights the need to treat one's body with care. Self-image, personal responsibility, and self-control are emphasized as a means to achieving these healthy behaviors.

Episode 4: ALLERGIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Episode 4 highlights how genetics and environment interact to contribute to health disparities. In this episode, environmental triggers to asthma, such as dust, cigarette smoke, insects, perfumes and cleaning solutions, are identified, and the difference between asthma and allergies is discussed as a means of raising teen awareness. The parts of the body affected by allergies and asthma are discussed to educate teens on the differences between these two diseases. Reasons for elevated levels of allergies and asthma in Illinois are also identified. Teens are taught how to help someone who is having an allergy attack by recognizing the symptoms, as well as how to identify the triggers for attacks in order to avoid an attack. Additionally, Episode 4 highlights important issues such as possible outcomes for people with asthma, specific symptoms to be aware of, and how medications are used to better manage the illness, which will improve one's overall health and wellness.

Episode 5: STUCK ON IT? DON'T LET IT STICK ON YOU! (ADDICTIONS)

Episode 5 helps teens to understand the effects of stress on physical and mental health, and examines the positive and negative ways that teens cope with stress. Teens share their methods for coping with stressors, such as talking to others, writing songs and poetry, praying, associating with people who are positive influences, and dancing. Current trends in illegal drug use are highlighted, along with the negative effects of drugs on the body. Self-medication by illegal drug use is defined as a negative way of responding to stress. Teens are encouraged to access support systems such as social workers, police officers, and family members to deal with peer pressure and negative influences. Peer educators discuss their plans for applying for scholarships to colleges and universities to model positive goal setting. The negative impact of drinking and smoking addictions, as well as addictions to electronic devices, are discussed. Bulimia and anorexia are also identified as self-destructive ways of coping with stress that can harm the mind and body. Peer educators role-play how challenges affect their lives and encourage teens to respect their minds and bodies by engaging in positive activities to cope with stress.

Summaries

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