

# BRAIN HEALTH UNIVERSITY

## COURSE TITLES & DESCRIPTIONS



### BRAIN FOOD CONCENTRATION

Participants will test their concentration and memory skills through this modification of a classic family game. Participants will also practice knowledge of brain power foods that are easily available.

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### BRAIN FOOD SNACK BAR

The foods we eat are very important to our brain health. It turns out that “what is good for the heart is also good for the brain.” So if we want to protect our mental functioning and brain health, we need to learn about the best food fuels.

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### BRAIN NUTRITION BINGO

Enhance your knowledge of brain foods and antioxidants through a spirited favorite game. You’ll be reacquainted with some of nature’s best choices.

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### BUZZ

Practice your focus and attention as you engage in this playful yet important warm up exercise.

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## CHAIR FUN

Chair Fun is a seated aerobic experience. Participants will learn about the components of a full body workout and sample rhythmic moves that involve attention, focus, and mental engagement. Participants will work at their own pace. All movements are performed in a comfortable, seated position.

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## CONFUSING COLORS

Do you believe your brain “has a mind of its own?” You will after experiencing “Confusing Colors.” This mental brain twister shows how challenging it can be to suppress our well trained impulses. But with practice participants will experience the brain’s ability to adapt and change.

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## DEFINE IT!

One of the best ways to challenge the brain is by learning something new. This course will challenge participants to add to their vocabulary. Participants will utilize their creativity and imagination while exploring interesting and unusual sounding words.

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## FACT OF THE DAY

Memory is influenced by attention, concentration, and practice. When we identify an unusual fact, think on it, and keep coming back to it we are practicing skills to enhance memory. Think about the fact. Keep coming back to it with certain time intervals spaced between. Come back to that “fact of the day” in 2 minutes, or 5 minutes, 20 minutes, hours later...or even the next day.

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## **FACT OF THE DAY JEOPARDY**

This game will utilize all 30 of the “facts of the day” that we will explore during the course of Brain Health University. During the course we will continue to practice these facts. Then at the end of the semester, we will enjoy a jeopardy game using our facts of the day.

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## **FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BALL**

Who can resist a ball that bounces? Once we are given a ball we automatically bounce it, toss it, roll it, or play games with it. A ball can also be an excellent tool for physical and mental exercise. Through ball “drills” we practice eye-hand coordination, agility, physical coordination and awareness. The exercise provides opportunity for fun and gentle play with our friends.

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## **GUIDED RELAXATION**

You cannot avoid stress but you can learn to counteract its negative effects by using the body’s natural relaxation response. Deep breathing, meditation, visualization and progressive relaxation can help people activate a relaxation response. When practiced regularly these activities are believed to reduce everyday stress levels and contribute to a feeling of calm and serenity.

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## **HUMOR ME**

Humor and playfulness promote interaction that creates a novel and creative experience. Brain healthy activity is not confined to thinking exercises and problem solving. Sometimes it takes as much mental power to be playful and creative as it does to be logical. Enjoy this novel approach to proverbs and let your inner spirit loose.

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## MANDALA RELAXATION

A mandala is a geometric design that draws your eye to its center. A mandala graphically represents energy or movement to or from a center point. It's a timeless pattern such as those found in flowers, snowflakes or seashells. The design can be a square, circle, triangle or other shapes inside a circle, square or rectangle. Traditionally spiritual leaders have used mandalas as a source of wisdom, a form of meditation or a way to reflect on our universe. Some find that coloring these images can help us become more focused when we feel scattered and more peaceful when we are struggling. Mandala work does not require a lot of mental energy. There is no right or wrong way to color. There are no mistakes, only endless possibilities. Materials will be provided.

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## MUSICAL MINDS

Music is the universal language. It can comfort and soothe us and be used as a stress management tool. Music can also have great meaning in our lives. Through this class we will explore different types of music and our physical and emotional responses. Part sensory experience and part reminiscence, this discussion will demonstrate an activity that anyone can use for relaxation and enjoyment.

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## NAME THAT INGREDIENT!

How's your taste perception? Do you think your taste buds and neural pathways work together? In this class participants will taste a sample of a dish and see what ingredients they can identify. Through this fun and playful twist the group will learn more about healthy ingredients and how they combine.

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## NEIGHBORLY NUGGETS

In this course we meet with our neighbors to develop a social interaction into a memory and brain fitness exercise. Participants share favorite preferences and experiences, but our goal is to practice and remember the information.

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## NEW RESIDENT WELCOME

Meeting and interacting with new people is one of the best ways to exercise our mental muscle. Complex skills are practiced during social interaction and engagement. Although it looks fun and simple on the surface, important mental work is being done. Research is finding that social interaction, although previously under appreciated, is a cornerstone for good brain health and well being.

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## NONSENSE STORIES

Nonsense Stories is actually a grammar exercise in disguise. This course reacquaints us with language and sentence structure but in a fun and humorous way.

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## PICTURE PUZZLES

Picture Puzzles is a class in thinking and interpretation. Word and drawings are combined as clues to a well known phrase or word. Participants much think literally to solve the puzzle. There is no magic to the process. With patience and flexing mental muscle participants can develop an eye and a strategy for success.

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## **PJ PARTY**

Did you know that good sleep is an important part of brain health? Disturbed sleep and waking up tired every day are not a normal part of aging. When we don't sleep well every part of our lives can suffer. There is a close relationship between quality of life and the quantity and quality of their sleep. Join the PJ Party to take the sleep quiz, and then learn more about the importance of sleep while getting tips for improving your sleep.

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## **RES BALL**

This fun, physical activity is our own resident version of baseball. Played in a seated position this game will have you practicing physical and mental skills while laughing at the same time. The only requirement is the desire to have fun. Play Ball!

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## **SLANG 101**

Mental exercise requires novelty, variety and challenge. And one of the best ways to get that challenge is by learning a new language. Participants will explore novel ways of using language in today's world as well as reconnect with phrases and idioms from years past.

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## **SLEEP TIPS & QUIZ**

Getting a good night's sleep begins with good information. Join this course to learn some excellent tips and then test your understanding of sleep health.

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## **SWEET DREAMS SNACK BAR**

Sleep is one of the most important needs in life. Productive sleep is essential to good brain health. Many of us already know from experience the types of foods that may keep us from sleeping well. A large meal of proteins or deep fried foods late in the evening can trigger digestive problems. Caffeinated drinks can keep us from a deep sleep. Spicy foods can cause heartburn which is made worse by lying down. But there is good news. There are some foods that are associated with a better nights sleep.

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## **10 IN 60 WORD STORM**

Brainstorming is a common mental exercise. Name ten types of trees. Name ten flowers. Name 10 objects you might find in the kitchen. When an activity becomes easy it no longer has the cognitive punch we need. It can be social and fun, but no longer has the required mental stimulation. When the brainstorming is combined with a time limit the exercise becomes different and more challenging. As the topics get more complex and the time limit decreases, participants are experiencing more advanced mental stimulation.

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## **VERB GENERATION**

Through this class participants will experience word fluency by brainstorm words and topics within parameters set by the group leader. The exercise targets very specific skills and parts of the brain. It may seem simple on the surface but you will soon see that the process is quite mentally stimulating.

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## WALK THIS WAY PART 1

The ability to walk is the foundation of physical independence. All adults who can comfortably walk need to practice and maintain that skill. When we combine walking with another task we add in cognitive stimulation. A reasonably easy task becomes more challenging and contributes to increased body awareness, agility, balance and mobility. The walking becomes a “brain fitness” exercise.

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## WALK THIS WAY PART 2

The ability to walk is the foundation of physical independence. All adults who can comfortably walk need to practice and maintain that skill. When we combine walking with another task we add in cognitive stimulation. A reasonably easy task becomes more challenging and contributes to increased body awareness, agility, balance and mobility. The walking becomes a “brain fitness” exercise. This session follows what was learned in Walk This Way Part 1 and adds more challenging variations and group interaction.

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## WHO ARE YOU?

This class is designed to help us learn about ourselves and each other. How do you see yourself? How much of yourself are you willing to disclose? Through verbal exchange in a social atmosphere, participants will share aspects of themselves. They will share and analyze memories, preferences, and values.

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## WORD SEARCH

Word Searches, also known as Word Finds, are excellent activities to exercise attention and visual scanning. It takes a bit of practice and strategy to complete a Word Search but during the process your brain will engage in excellent mental aerobics.

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