



School of Medicine  
and Public Health

# The Brain Health Community Registry Newsletter

Summer 2024



You are receiving this newsletter because you are currently enrolled in the Brain Health Community Registry!

The Brain Health Community Registry provides information about activities and current research. Participants receive education and hands-on tools for strengthening both physical and mental wellbeing.

We created this newsletter to share brain health resources and education, and to provide updates about the Brain Health Community Registry.

## In this newsletter:

- Upcoming Events
- Research Opportunities
- Brain Health Education & Resources

## Upcoming Events

### Navigating Alzheimer's: Unraveling Diagnosis Challenges and Finding Solutions - Virtual Only

*Learn about diagnosis challenges and strategies to navigate these challenges.*

- **When:** June 5th, 8 - 9am CST
- **Where:** Virtual - Zoom, registration required
- **Cost:** Free - you will need to make an American Society on Aging account which is free
- **Website/Registration:** <https://tinyurl.com/ymfzz4d8>

### You are More Than Your Diagnosis: Adapting to Life with Mild Cognitive Impairment - Hybrid Event

*Learn more about living and coping with MCI.*

- **When:** June 14th, 9:30 - 11:30am CST
- **Where:** Virtual - Zoom, or in-person in Brown, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, La Crosse, and Rock counties
- **Cost:** Free
- **Website/Registration:** [adrc.wisc.edu/mci](http://adrc.wisc.edu/mci)

### Brain and Body Fitness - In-Person Event Only

*Learn about brain health and engage in physical and mental exercises.*

- **When:** Weekly, starting June 19th through July 17th (skip July 3rd), 10:30 - 11:45am CST
- **Where:** MSCR Central - 328 E. Lakeside St. Madison, WI 53175
- **Cost:** Free
- **Contact:** 608-204-3000
- **Website:** [mscr.org](http://mscr.org)

# Research Opportunities

*As a reminder, a goal of the Brain Health Community Registry is to share research opportunities related to aging, brain health, and caregiving. Our study team has met with 3 separate research teams who are conducting studies we think may be of interest to you. Participating in these studies is completely voluntary and up to you! If you are interested or have questions, please reach out to the research teams using the contact information listed.*

## Opportunity with Emory University

### Title: Using Design Thinking Approaches to Tailor a Dyadic Behavioral Sleep Intervention for Persons Living with Cognitive Impairment and their Care Partners

- Researchers are trying to understand if a 6-week behavioral intervention for sleep can help you address sleep challenges
- This study involves wearing a wrist watch for 8 weeks, completing questionnaires and daily sleep diaries, and participating in 10 study "visits" on Zoom. You will be compensated for your time
- You are eligible if:
  - You are living with cognitive impairment with your caregiver
  - You experience challenges with sleep
- If you are interested in learning more or enrolling, contact [drbrewsterlab@emory.edu](mailto:drbrewsterlab@emory.edu) or call 404-712-9164



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY



Dr. Glenna  
Brewster



Dr. Janelle Beadle



Naomi Adjei

## Opportunity with the University of Nebraska at Omaha

### Title: Characterizing Risk Factors for Burden in Caregivers to Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Frontotemporal Dementia

- Researchers are trying to understand how caregiving burden is affected by dementia types and relationships with loneliness and emotion regulation
- This study involves a 90-minute virtual visit and completing online tasks/questionnaires. You will be compensated for your time
- You are eligible if:
  - You are 50 years of age or older and serving as an unpaid family caregiver to an individual who is 40 years of age or older with MCI, frontotemporal dementia, or Alzheimer's disease for 5 hours a week or more, for at least 6 months
  - You have comprehension of written and spoken English
  - You have completed a minimum of 2 years of high school
  - You live in the Midwest
- If you are interested in learning more or enrolling, contact [ABELabUNO@gmail.com](mailto:ABELabUNO@gmail.com) or call 402-554-5961

## Research Opportunities

### Opportunity with the University of Illinois

#### Title: ENACT

- Researchers are trying to understand the daily challenges that older adults experience due to cognitive impairments caused by traumatic brain injury or stroke
- This study involves a Zoom interview and completing questionnaires. You will be compensated for your time
- You are eligible if:
  - You are 60 years of age or older
  - You have had a history of traumatic brain injury or stroke, persistent with cognitive difficulties
- If you are interested in learning more or enrolling, contact KCH-HFA-ENACT@illinois.edu or call 217-265-0885

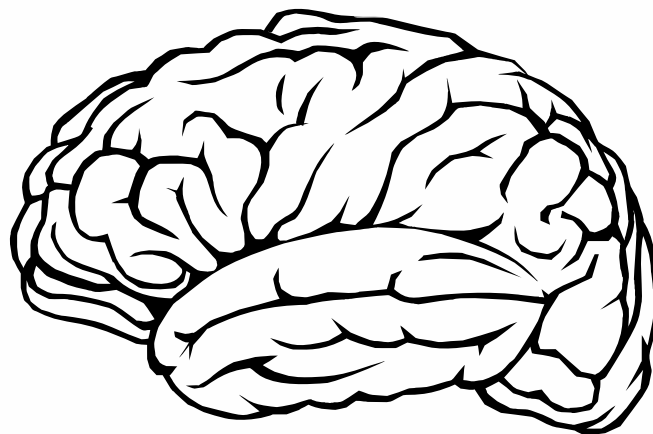


Dr. Wendy Rodgers

Dr. Carolyn Ellison-Keeler

## Brain Health Education

June marks Alzheimer's and Brain Health Awareness month, which is time dedicated to understanding and prioritizing the health of one of our most vital organs, the brain. The remainder of this newsletter focuses on key information about brain health; strategies for promoting brain health; unexpected vs. expected changes in thinking, learning, and memory; and organizations and resources that can provide additional education, support, and programming related to brain health.



### What is Brain Health?

Brain health is a very broad idea and refers to our brain's ability to:

- Think, learn, and remember
- Control our movements
- Feel and respond to emotion
- Sense the world around us through touch, sight, etc.

### Why is Brain Health Important?

Brain health is crucial for promoting cognitive function, mental and physical health, improving quality of life and longevity, and reducing the risk of neurological disorders.

### How can I promote my brain health?

It is never too early or late to start promoting your brain health. There are things that we do everyday that can make a difference, including:

- Mental stimulation: challenge your mind by doing something that is new or learn a new skill
- Social stimulation: start a conversation with someone new or attend an event
- Physical activity: engage in activity daily that raises your heart rate
- Eat well: choose healthier snacks and meals that you enjoy and are available to you
- Sleep well: stay off screens and make your sleep space as comfortable as possible
- Protect your head: prevent falls or potential head injuries

# Changes in Thinking, Learning, and Memory

It is common to worry about memory, especially as we age. **Mild forgetfulness, taking longer to learn something new, or the inability to recall information quickly are normal age-related changes.** Sometimes, we might experience unexpected changes. See below for examples

Expected Changes	Unexpected Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Making a bad decision once in a while</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Making poor judgements and decisions a lot of the time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Missing a monthly payment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Problems taking care of monthly bills you used to manage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Forgetting which day it is and remembering later</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Losing track of the date or time of the year</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Sometimes forgetting which word to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Trouble having a conversation (e.g., forgetting multiple words, or struggling to form an idea)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Losing things from time to time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Misplacing things in often or in unusual locations and being unable to find them</li> </ul>

## Information on Memory Assessments

*If you are experiencing any unexpected changes and are worried about your brain health, you should consult with your primary care physician*



- Your primary care provider should be able to complete an initial screening assessment with you
- They may also connect you with a provider that specializes in memory testing, like a neurologist or neuropsychologist
- Memory testing typically includes a series of assessments designed to evaluate various aspects of cognitive function and memory. Memory assessments might include a comprehensive medical history, physical examination, cognitive tests, and in some cases, imaging tests
- Remember, seeking help is a first step toward understanding and managing any concerns you might have!

# Resources

## Organizations

### Brain Health Information:

- Aging and Disability Resource Center
  - A “one-stop shop” for older adults and caregivers to receive useful information, assistance, and education on community-services and long-term care options while serving as the single entry point for publicly-funded services and supports. To find your ADRC please visit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/consumer/index.htm>.
- Alzheimer’s Association
  - A community-based and focused organization that offers information on brain health in general. Visit: [https://www.alz.org/help-support/brain\\_health](https://www.alz.org/help-support/brain_health) or call 800-272-3900.
- Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center
  - Wisconsin ADRC is primarily focused on improving early detection of Alzheimer’s disease, identifying risk and protective factors, and finding ways to delay onset and progression. The ADRC offers information related to Alzheimer’s disease, the diagnosis process, prevention, and more. To learn more, visit: <https://www.adrc.wisc.edu/learn-more> or call 608-265-0407.

## New Program: Riding in the Moment

Riding in the Moment is an evidence-informed program designed to increase the quality of life of adults living with dementia and their family members/friends. Over the course of an 8-week session participants can ride, groom, and play with horses. For more information call 608-877-9086 or email [ashley@three-gaits.org](mailto:ashley@three-gaits.org).



## Newsletters and Podcasts

Newsletters and podcasts are a great way to stay engaged and receive up-to-date information related to brain health. Here are a couple of examples that may be of interest:

- Alzheimer’s Association e-News:
  - <https://www.alz.org/e-news> or call 800-272-3900
- Caregiver Chronicle
  - To subscribe, call 608-261-5679 or email [debroux.jane@danecounty.gov](mailto:debroux.jane@danecounty.gov)
- Nutrition news
  - To subscribe, call 608-261-5678 or email [gabriel.shannon@danecounty.gov](mailto:gabriel.shannon@danecounty.gov)
- Dementia Matters Podcast
  - <https://www.adrc.wisc.edu/dementia-matters>

## Exercises and Activities

### Exercises

Physical health is associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline with aging. It is important to move our bodies everyday. Here are some resources that help promote physical exercise:

- Silver Sneakers
  - <https://tools.silversneakers.com>
- Get Movin’
  - <https://www.adrc.wisc.edu/get-movin>

### Brain Activities

Engaging in activities that challenge our brain builds our cognitive reserve, enhances memory and learning, and reduces risk of cognitive decline. Activities such as word searches, sudoku, crosswords, and completing puzzles stimulates our brain and promotes overall brain health.