

# Healthy Brain, Healthy Life

Key information  
resource



# Healthy Brain, Healthy Life

Brain health and dementia prevention using  
creative and culturally tailored approaches

@BU\_HealthyBrain

# Dementia within minority ethnic communities

## What we know

- An estimated **25,000** people from minority ethnic background live with dementia in the UK.
- This is expected to double to **50,000** by 2026, and rise to over **172,000** by 2051, nearly a 600% increase in just 40 years.
- Early onset dementia is very common in individuals from minority ethnic communities and they are also at greater risk of developing vascular dementia.
- People from minority ethnic communities were less likely to receive a cognitive assessment, scored low on the tests and were more likely to be seen by a psychiatrist.
- There are very few dementia diagnosis and support services that are culturally appropriate and take into account cultural norms of minority ethnic communities.

# Dementia within minority ethnic communities

## What we can do

- We need to use more ways that are culturally appropriate to create awareness, promote understanding and create dialogue around brain health and dementia.
- We need to encourage individuals from minority ethnic communities to get involved in research around dementia. This will help policies and services to be tailored to their needs.
- There is stigma surrounding dementia diagnosis. Many people are worried about getting negative perceptions from professionals.
- It is important that professionals are trained to be able to support individuals from minority ethnic communities.

# Risk factors for minority ethnic communities

## Risk factors

Dementia is not a natural part of ageing. It is a set of symptoms that develop when the brain is damaged by disease.

A person's 'risk' of developing dementia is the chance that they will get it at some point in their life.

Risk factors that we **cannot** change:

- Age, gender and sex, ethnicity, genes.

Risk factors that we **can** change:

- Excessive alcohol consumption, high blood pressure, smoking, low physical activity, low social contact, air pollution, depression, obesity, diabetes.

Many people are not aware of the link between these health-related behaviours and dementia.

# Risk factors for minority ethnic communities

Risk factors

Ways to reduce our risk:



Physical activity



Eat a healthy balanced diet



Don't smoke



Keep socially active



Drink less alcohol



Keep your brain active



Have regular health checks with your GP

# Our traditional food and our community

**Fun  
facts**

## Healthy eating for brain health

The food that we eat impacts our brain health. Nutritious meals which are well-balanced contribute to better brain health.

- Food that is good for the heart is also good for the brain.
- Therefore, a heart healthy diet is a brain healthy diet.
- Common conditions influenced by diet such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes harm both cardiovascular and cognitive health.
- No single food acts as a silver bullet for improving or maintaining brain health.
- The combination of different types of food and nutrients together in our diets likely determines health benefits.

# Our traditional food and our community

**Fun facts**

## What foods are good for our brain health?

| Nutrient                          | Food sources  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Omega-3 fatty acids               | Fatty fish, flax seeds, krill, chia, kiwi fruit, butternuts, walnuts  |
| Curcumin                          | Turmeric (curry spice)  |
| Flavonoids                        | Cocoa, green tea, ginkgo tree, citrus fruits, wine (higher in red wine), dark chocolate, berries                            |
| B vitamins                        | Various natural sources, dairy products, fortified cereals, fermented foods   |
| Vitamin D                         | Fish liver, fatty fish, mushrooms, fortified products, milk, soy milk, cereal grains  |
| Vitamin E                         | Asparagus, avocado, nuts, peanuts, olives, red palm oil, seeds, spinach, vegetable oils, wheatgerm, olive oil               |
| Choline                           | Egg yolks, soy, beef, chicken, veal, liver, lettuce   |
| Combination of vitamins (C, E, A) | Vitamin C: citrus fruits, green leafy vegetables: spinach dandelion, coloured vegetables: sweet potato, calf and beef liver |
| Calcium, zinc, selenium           | Milk, fish, oysters, beans, nuts, almonds, whole grains, sunflower seeds, cereals   |
| Copper                            | Oysters, beef/lamb liver, brazil nuts, blackstrap molasses, cocoa, black pepper   |
| Iron                              | Red meat, fish, poultry   |

\*Check out the African & Caribbean and South Asian Eatwell Guide of how much to eat from each food group.



# Our culture and brain health

## Activities

### Storytelling around the fire

Poetry, drama and storytelling contribute to improved quality of life and wellbeing by stimulating an enjoyable experience.

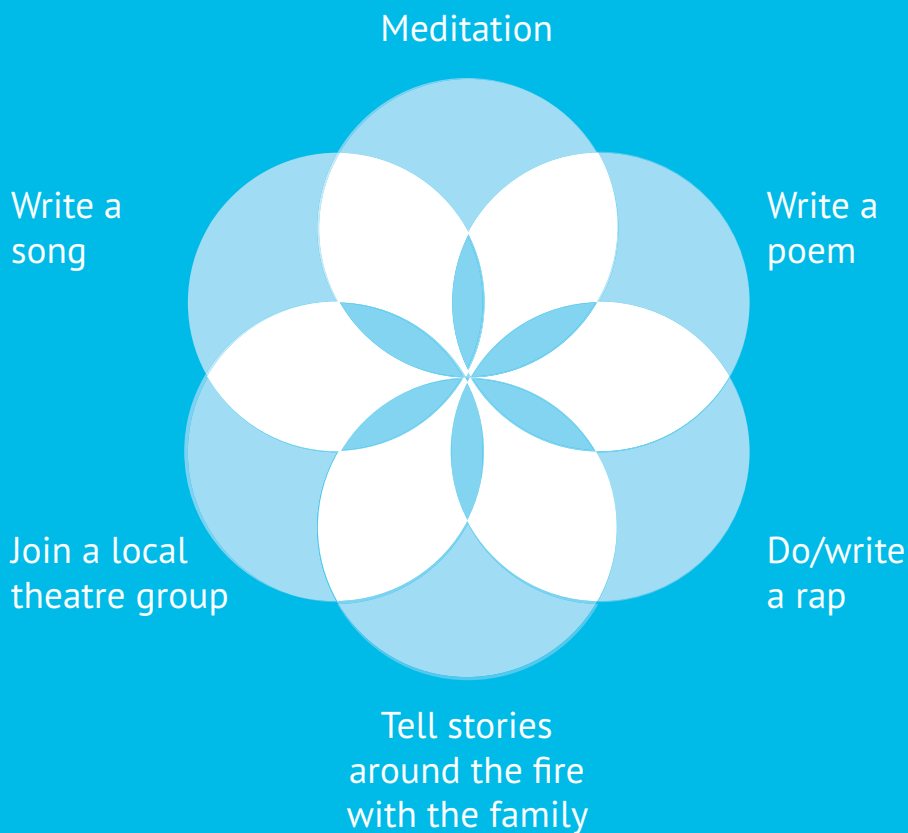
#### What are some of the benefits for brain health?

- Provide good creative outlets.
- Help us to explore and reflect on feelings.
- Build self-awareness and self-confidence.
- Stimulate areas of the brain linked to memory.

# Our culture and brain health

## Activites

What kind of activities can I do?



# Our culture and brain health

## Activities

### Music, movement and mind – keeping active

#### What are some of the benefits for brain health?

- Music and dance are not only good for our brain health but can also reduce the onset of dementia.
- If you combine music with an aerobic and social activity, you can receive the maximum health benefit from it.
- Music stimulates the brain's reward centres while dance activates its sensory and motor circuits.

#### How does music and dance help our brain health?

- Encourages socialisation.
- Strengthens brain function.
- Improves cardiovascular health, mood, confidence, self-esteem, balance and strength.

# Our culture and brain health

## Activities

### Music, movement and mind – keeping active

#### What kind of dances can I do?

Zumba, Kizomba, Bharatnatyam, Kathak and Salsa.



#### What can I do to keep active?



# Our culture and brain health

## Activities

### Creating with our hands - expression through art

Creative art enhances our brain function and it is important for improved attentional, creativity, sensory, cognitive, emotional balance and fine motor skills.

#### What are some of the benefits for brain health?

- Reduction in stress and cortisol levels.
- Helps to process our emotions and imagine a more hopeful future.
- It activates the reward centre of our brain and allows you to focus deeply.

#### What types of art can I do?

- Drawing, painting, collaging, sculpting clay, cake decorating, knitting, scrapbooking, pottery, woodwork, paper craft, stitching, crocheting.

# Our culture and brain health

## Activities

### Stimulating the brain – keeping our brain active and young

#### How do we keep our brains active and healthy?

- Exercising our cognitive skills by playing brain games is a fun and effective way to boost our memory.
- Keeping our mind active involves practicing memory exercises that build our 'mental muscles'.
- Brain games and memory exercises improve retention and recollection in our everyday life.
- Regularly playing brain games and memory games can help reduce our risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Games can spark imagination and increase both our creativity and productivity.
- Brain games improve our short-term memory, working memory, concentration and problem-solving skills.

# Our culture and brain health

## Activities

### Stimulating the brain – keeping our brain active and young

#### What activities can I do?

##### Board games

Improve creative abilities, logical thinking to increase brain function.



##### Chess, Checkers, Backgammon, Oware

Encourage our brain to create responsive patterns for strategic moves that lead to victory and ultimately foster memory growth.



##### Lumosity

Improves cognitive abilities by simulating different areas of the brain, including parts responsible for problem solving, memory and attention span.



##### Puzzles

Increase active brain cells and promote a healthy mind.



# Further information and resources

Alzheimer's Research UK provides a lot of resources around brain health and dementia prevention:

**[www.alzheimersresearchuk.org](http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org)**

Dementia UK provides support for families around dementia diagnosis and services:

**[www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)**

The Race Equality Foundation has resources on dementia and black and minority ethnic communities:

**[raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/health-care/dementia-and-black-and-minority-ethnic-communities-resources](http://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/health-care/dementia-and-black-and-minority-ethnic-communities-resources)**

Dementia Action Alliance have information on dementia and brain health for black and minority ethnic groups:

**[www.dementiaaction.org.uk/joint\\_work/dementia\\_and\\_seldom\\_heard\\_groups/black\\_asian\\_minority\\_ethnics\\_bame](http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/joint_work/dementia_and_seldom_heard_groups/black_asian_minority_ethnics_bame)**



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