

COMPONENT 4:

Brain Health Education Guide

Purpose

Brain health education activities completed through this component should be promoted using the outreach and communication strategies found in **Component 3**. Communities are also encouraged to use **Component 8** tools to plan activities, track participation, evaluate outcomes, and support sustainability.

Why It Matters

Research shows that several factors associated with cognitive decline and dementia are modifiable. Communities play an important role in helping residents understand how lifestyle choices and community supports can promote brain health throughout life.

Expected Outcomes

- Increase community awareness of brain health
- Promote healthy aging strategies
- Deliver evidence-informed education
- Integrate brain health messaging into existing programs and settings
- Connect residents to brain health resources
- Encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors

Key Actions

- Deliver Evidence-Informed Education
- Integrate Brain Health Messaging into Existing Settings

Estimated Time to Complete

Ongoing throughout implementation.

Who to Involve

Healthcare Providers • Public Health Professionals • Aging Services Organizations • Senior Centers • Libraries • Faith Communities • Schools and Universities • Community Organizations • Worksites and Employers • Caregivers • Community Volunteers • Tribal Health Organizations

Tools Included in this Component

Tool Number	Tool Name
4.1	Brain Health Education Planning Worksheet
4.2	Brain Health Education
4.3	Brain Health Infographics
4.4	SD Head Forward Brain Health Checklist
4.5	Brain Health Resources

Step 1: Plan Brain Health Education Activities

Purpose: Identify educational opportunities that fit community needs, interests, and capacity.

Tool to Use: Tool 4.1 Brain Health Education Planning Worksheet

Recommendations for Success:

- Start with one educational activity.
- Build on existing programs and events.
- Focus on audiences identified in Component 2.
- Partner with organizations already serving your target audience.

Step 2: Deliver Evidence-Informed Education

Purpose: Provide community members with accurate, evidence-informed information about brain health and healthy aging.

Tools to Use: Tool 4.2 Brain Health Education; Tool 4.3 Brain Health Infographics

Recommendations for Success:

- Use interactive discussions whenever possible.
- Encourage questions and participation.
- Use plain language.
- Provide take-home resources and educational materials.

Step 3: Promote Brain Health Behaviors

Purpose: Help residents identify practical actions they can take to support brain health throughout life.

Tool to Use: Tool 4.4 SD Head Forward Brain Health Checklist

Recommendations for Success:

- Encourage small, achievable lifestyle changes.
- Promote physical activity, healthy eating, social connection, sleep, and lifelong learning.
- Encourage participants to set personal goals.

Step 4: Integrate Brain Health Messaging into Existing Settings

Purpose: Incorporate brain health education and messaging into programs and services already offered within the community.

Tools to Use: Tool 4.2 Brain Health Basics; 4.3 Infographics and 4.5 Brain Health Resources

Recommendations for Success:

- Build on existing communication channels.
- Partner with organizations already providing education.
- Reinforce messages throughout the year.
- Integrate brain health into broader healthy aging initiatives.

Step 5: Connect Community Members to Resources

Purpose: Provide access to educational materials, community resources, and additional learning opportunities.

Tools to Use: Tool 4.2 Brain Health Education; Tool 4.5 Brain Health Resources

Recommendations for Success:

- Provide resources at every educational activity.
- Offer information in print and electronic formats.
- Encourage participants to share resources with others.
- Review and update resource information regularly.

Tool 4.5 Brain Health Education Resource Directory Includes

- Brain Health Activities
- Brain Health Hub for Caregivers
- Brain Health Hub for Professionals
- Healthy Aging Brain Resources
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association Education Programs
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association Brain Health Habit Builder

Tips for Success

- Start small and build over time.
- Focus on practical actions people can take.
- Use existing community programs and events.
- Partner with trusted community organizations.
- Reinforce brain health messages consistently.
- Celebrate small successes and community participation.

Component Completion Checklist

- ☐ Brain health education activity planned
- ☐ Educational resources selected
- ☐ Brain health education delivered
- ☐ Brain Health Checklist distributed
- ☐ Brain health messages incorporated into community activities
- ☐ Community members connected to resources
- ☐ Community partners engaged
- ☐ Brain health education integrated into existing settings

Additional Resources (Component 9)

- CDC Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map
- National Institute on Aging
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association
- South Dakota Department of Health Head Forward
- Dakota at Home

Next Steps

After completing this component, communities may continue with Component 5: Dementia Awareness & Early Recognition, Component 6: Caregiver Education & Support, or Component 7: Dementia-Friendly Community Practices. Information and lessons learned can also support future implementation, evaluation, and sustainability activities in Component 8.