

Brain Health Matters: At the Individual and Community Level



The past few months related to the pandemic have uncovered much of the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of our global society. They have also caused much fear, pain, sadness, and even a sense of helplessness. We carry within us the struggles and achievements we experience individually and as a community during these times. It is not unusual to expect that with each new event, individual and community reactions may be heightened, revealing the true compounded impact on our hearts, minds, and bodies.

Negative thoughts, emotions, feelings, words and associated actions, can escape and are unhealthy to the brain and body of the *giver* *and* the receiver. At the individual level, they can erode our physical, mental, emotional, and social core. They also have the power to erode the foundation of a community upon which we must build our future and carry on.

Fortunately, there have been many wonderful examples of people coming together to demonstrate an appreciation of our commonalities and commitment to the greater good. We have seen neighbors, near and far, stand up for our individual and community well-being, and the principles that steady us when the world seems to be on fire and upside down.

The coming weeks and months will bring further unprecedented experiences to us as individuals, to our families, and communities. How will *you* respond? How will *we* respond? What we do in this time will define each of us and our greater community now and in the future.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

- **Make brain healthy choices.** Each of us is critical. We need to “lean in” and live a brain healthy life through the choices we make - everything we think, feel and do. Our choices, for better or worse, predict our individual and collective outcomes.
- **Be intentional in your actions.** We all need to feel safe, valued and respected; to feel as if we belong and matter. These are essential to our brain and physical health, as well as to the health of our society. What can you do to contribute to this experience? How can you bring comfort to yourself and reach out to share with another?
- **Be open-minded and open-hearted.** There is simply no place for hatred, discrimination and injustice in a thriving brain healthy community. These feelings and actions destroy the brain and body of the receiver, as well as the disseminator. What can you do to better understand the hatred, discrimination, and injustice that exists (even in our backyard although perhaps more hidden), and stand up peacefully with your words for change and acceptance?

It is the hope of the Brain Health Initiative that we continue to come together to support one another, practicing the science of a brain healthy living at the individual and community level. Together we can find new ways to navigate a world that has changed and create maps not yet developed to guide us. The BHI is confident that this can be done with respect for ourselves, and others.