



## BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



### Brain Awareness Week is Here! How Much Do You Know?

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. **Today, we take a closer look at a common myth about the brain and how it really functions.***

#### Right brain vs. left brain: finding or fallacy?

Are you right-brained or left-brained? Common thinking would say you are right-brained if you are creative and emotional, left-brained if you lean more on logic and rationality.

But is this really how the brain works? Or is it a fallacy?

It is a fallacy. The myth of left-brain vs. right-brain seems to come up when we talk about our strengths or weaknesses. For many decades, there has been a common misunderstanding that the left side of the brain supports our logical side and the right side brings out our creative side. Unfortunately, this fallacy stems from split-brain experiments in the mid-late 20th century that were translated and shared with the public.

While it's true that the brain has two distinct hemispheres – the right side directs the left side of the body and vice versa – there is a common misconception about whether one side is responsible for rational thought and the other for creative thought. In reality, brain lateralization is more complicated than that. Plus, the two hemispheres communicate and work together.

In her book, *Neuromyths: Debunking False Ideas About the Brain*, Dr. Tracey Tokuhamma-Espinosa, a BHI faculty member, explains this fallacy regarding certain capacities. “It’s not that math is in ‘x’ part of the brain and ‘art’ in another, but information is distributed throughout the brain in complex networks.”

So, there you have it, the answer to one brain question. There are only a billion or so inquiries left to solve about the brain and how to use that knowledge to protect the health of your brain and reduce risk for brain illness. Stay tuned.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

*Think you know everything there is to know about the brain? Here are a few statements from the Dana Foundation about how the brain works. See if you can get all the right answers when it comes to finding or fallacy.*

- **BRAIN SIZE DOES NOT DETERMINE INTELLIGENCE. FINDING OR FALLACY?** This is a finding. Research shows connections between different areas in the brain and their efficiency are most linked to intelligence.
- **THE BRAIN IS GOOD AT MULTI-TASKING. FINDING OR FALLACY?** This is a fallacy. When it comes to more than one voluntary activity at one time, the brain doesn't do them simultaneously. It switches back and forth between the tasks.
- **ALL HUMAN BRAINS START OFF AS FEMALE IN THE WOMB. FINDING OR FALLACY?** It's a finding! The Y chromosome, which is present in males, doesn't develop until the fifth or sixth week of development.
- **YOU ONLY LOSE 10 PERCENT OF YOUR BRAIN. FINDING OR FALLACY?** This is a fallacy. Unless there is brain damage, most areas of the brain are active, at least to some degree.

**BE BRAIN HEALTHY** and adopt a lifestyle that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:

- Stress resilience
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Social connection
- Emotional wellbeing
- Meaning and Purpose
- Cognitive stimulation and creativity
- Engaging with nature
- General health
- Positive impacts

### About the Brain Health Initiative ([www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org))

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, uses a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is building brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the **Be Brain Healthy** movement, **because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference**. To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).