

Are You Ready for Retirement Psychologically?

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Psychology, Aging Studies

What is it about work
that's engaging?



An effective retirement requires
structure and purpose



Psychology

- Oxford Definition: the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context

- Social

Sports

- Evolutionary

Emotion

- Cognitive

Nutrition

Today's Talk

- Within the context of brain health
 - Physical activity
 - Meaningful activity
 - Cognitive activity
 - Gut health
 - Emotional health
 - Positive psychology
 - Social support
 - Green health



What can go wrong

- The pandemic.....
- Health issues



When you work from home



**And somebody wants
to have a video call**

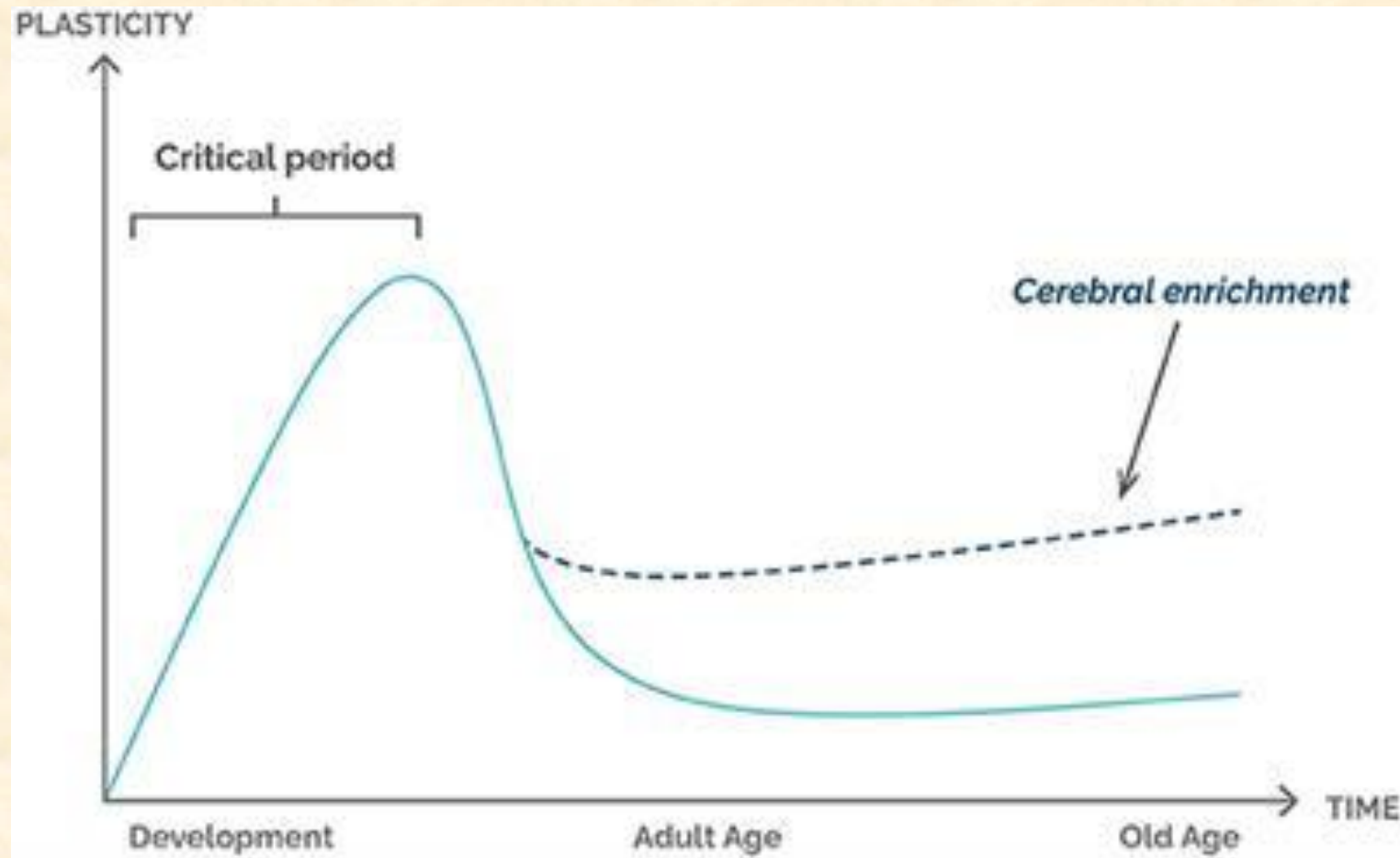
Health Issues

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Mental/Emotional

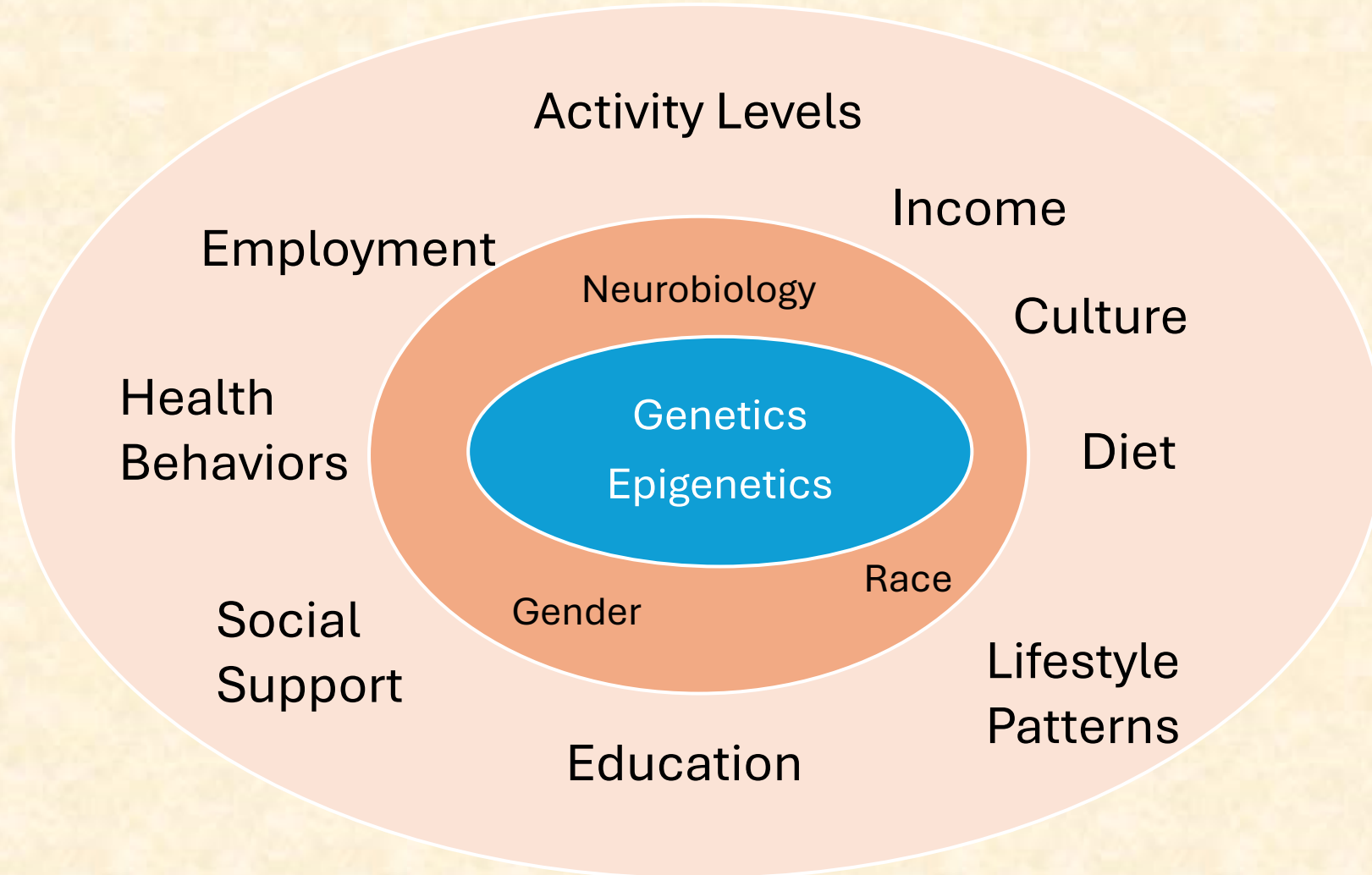
What can go right!

- Neuroplasticity
- Epigenetics
- Rebuilding your Brain

Neuroplasticity



Epigenetics



Mind-Body Issues

Mind

- Memories
- Perceptions
- Ideas
- Thoughts
- Decisions

Body

- Neurons
- Neurochemicals
- Transmissions of impulses
(electrochemical)

All cognition is a result of neurological activity

Building Cognitive and Neural Reserve



cognitive



biological

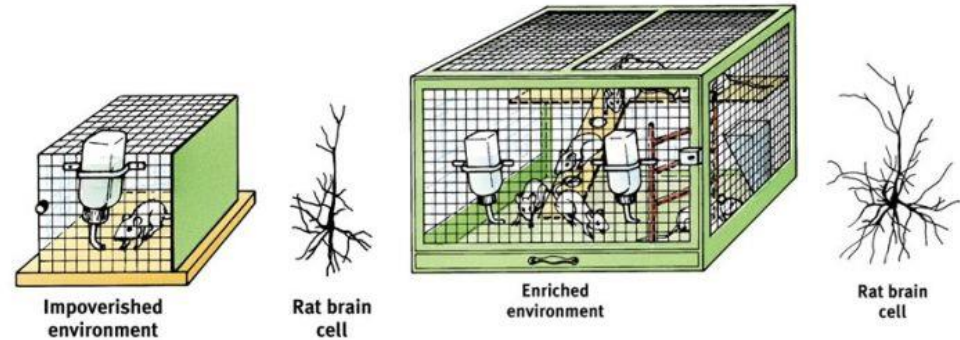
Road Map

- Physical activity
- Meaningful activity
- Cognitive activity
- Gut health
- Emotional health
- Green health

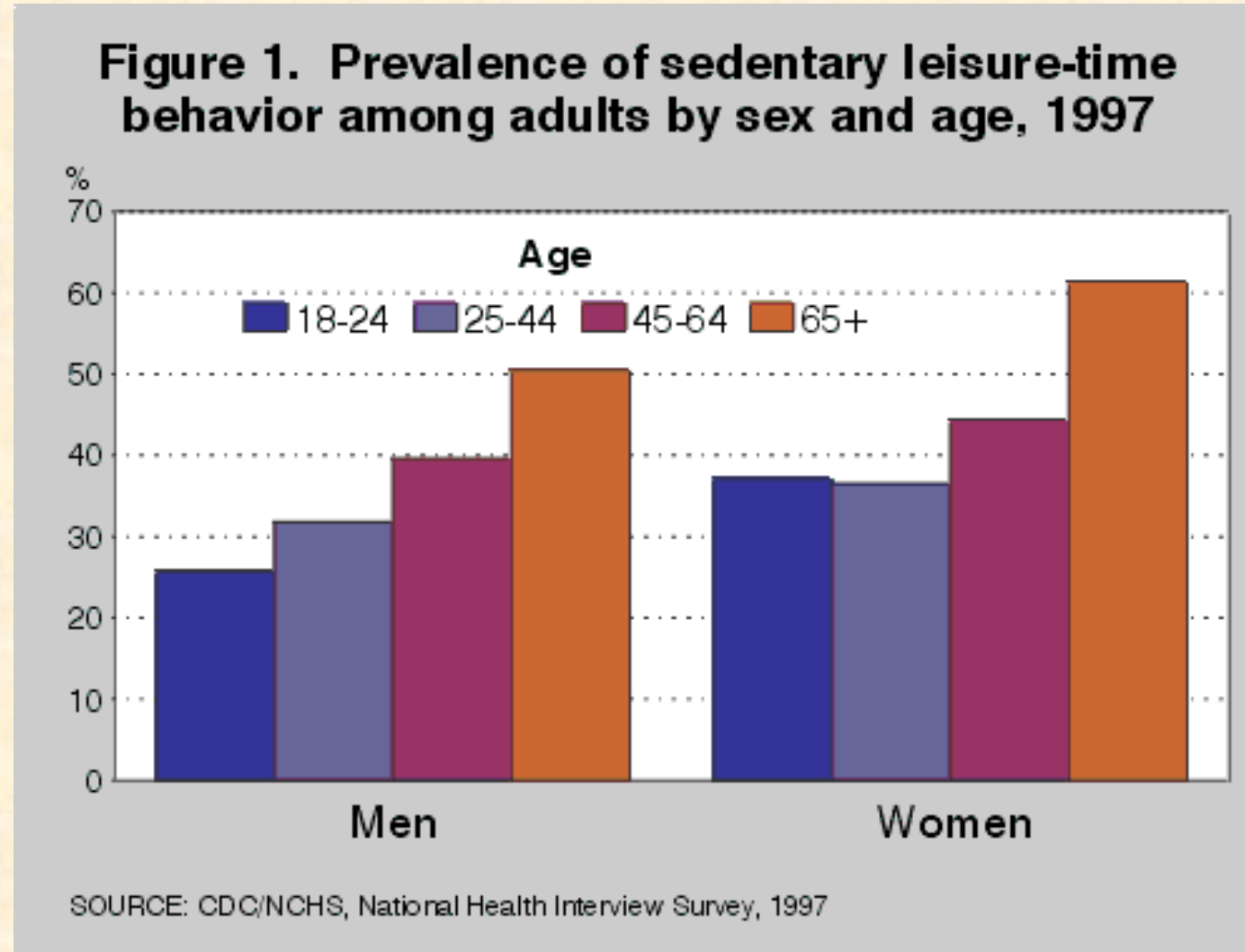
Exercise your Body

- Oxygen to the brain
- Running in rats
 - Improves learning
 - Stimulates synaptic plasticity
- AD mice and exercise
 - Improves learning
 - Less beta-amyloid

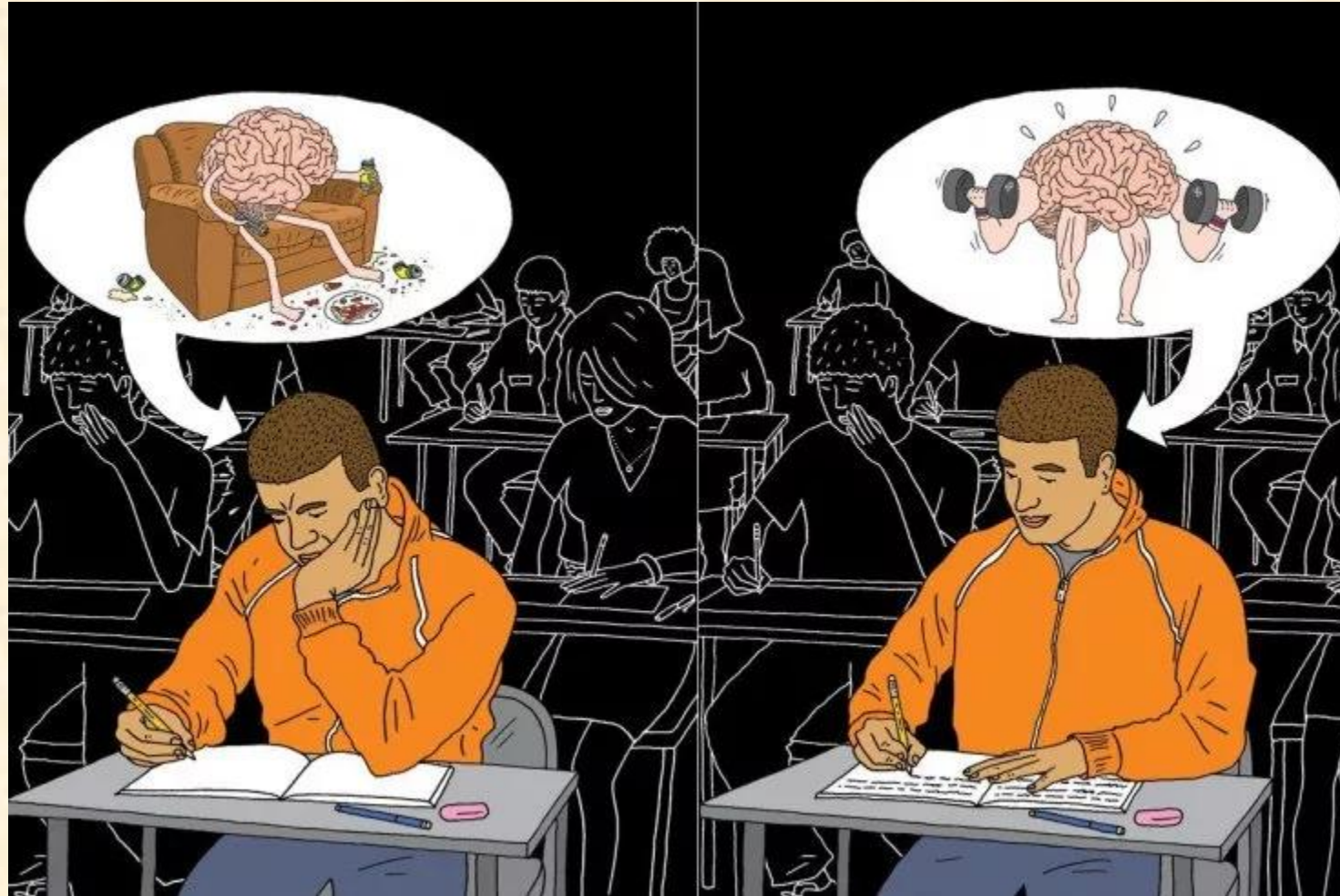
Rosenzweig and Bennett (1972)



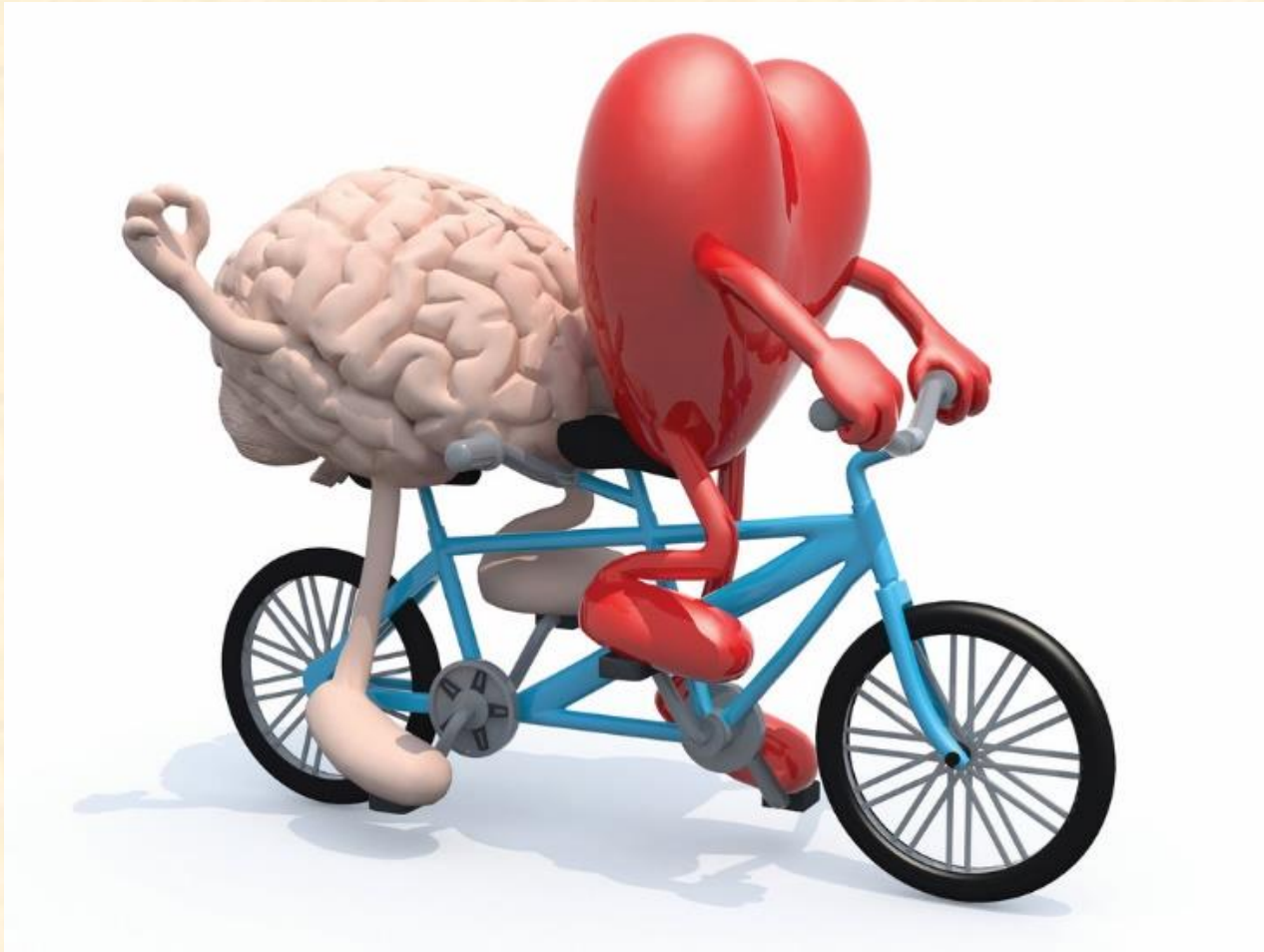
Sedentary Behavior



Not all Sedentary Behavior is the same



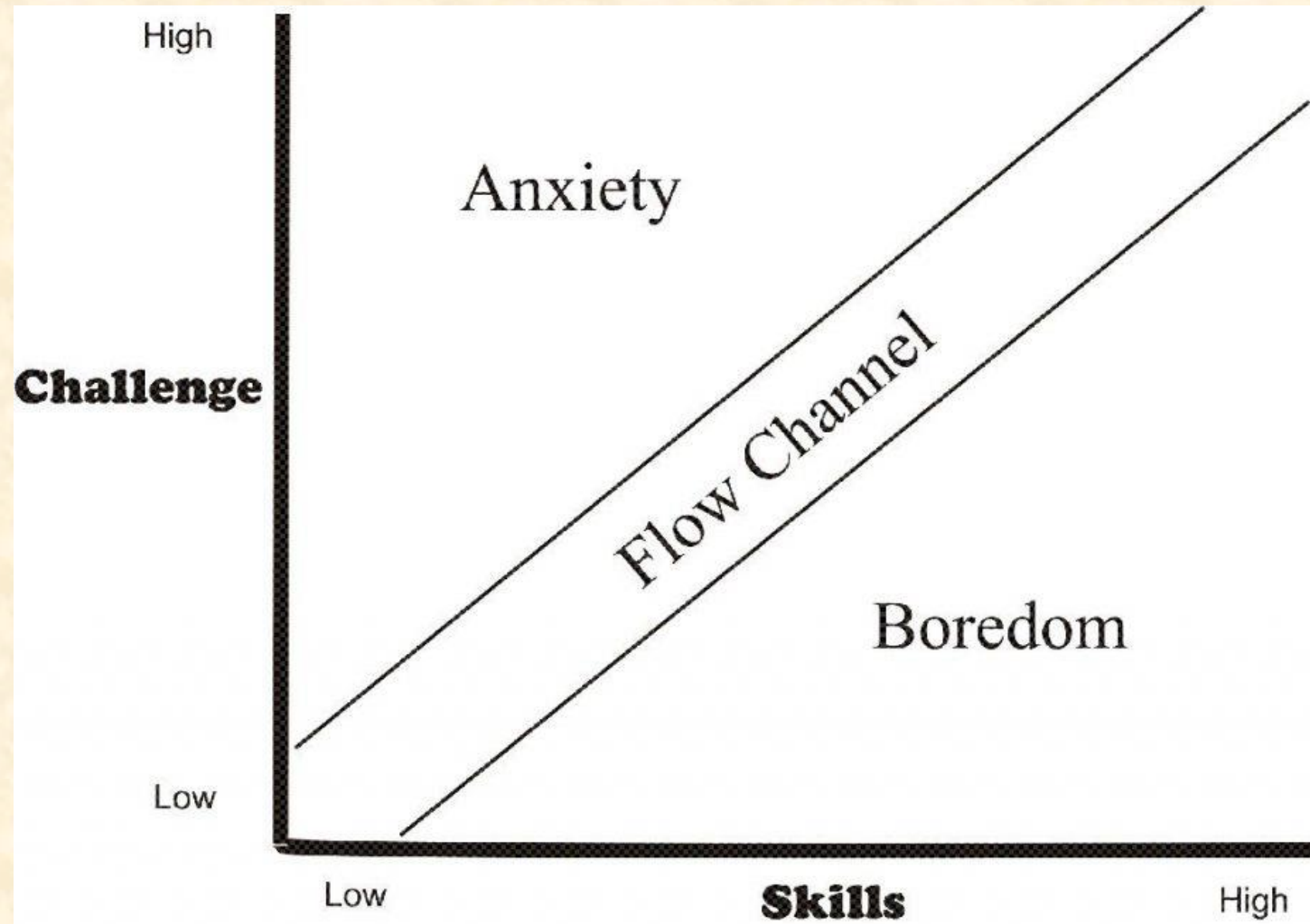
Keep moving! And remember to get up!



- Take the stairs
- Park farther from the door
- Walk a dog
 - Borrow a dog
- Walk a cat

Meaningful Activity

- Could be physical activity
- But also social and/or artistic and/or cognitive activity and/or other
- Csikszentmihalyi and flow



The Flow. After Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The Flow* (1990), p. 74

Meaningful Activity

Robot and Frank



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4y8YAMPFhk>

Table 1. Top Meaningful Activities

Activity	Meaningfulness M (SD)
Spending time with loved ones	3.48 (0.78)
Supporting family members' or friends' goals and interests	3.34 (0.71)
Caring for children and other family members	3.12 (0.91)
Helping others	3.08 (0.77)
Education/Learning/School	3.03 (0.89)
Persevered at a valued goal even in the face of obstacles	2.98 (0.92)
Expressed my gratitude either verbally or in writing	2.93 (0.92)
Traveling	2.90 (1.03)
Listened carefully to another's point of view	2.90 (0.86)
Sleeping	2.86 (0.95)

M: mean (average); SD: Standard deviation

note. adapted from Hooker et al., 2020, Table 3.

Arash Emamzadeh

Meaningful Activities (con't.)

- In an hour or two
- In a day or two
- In a week or two

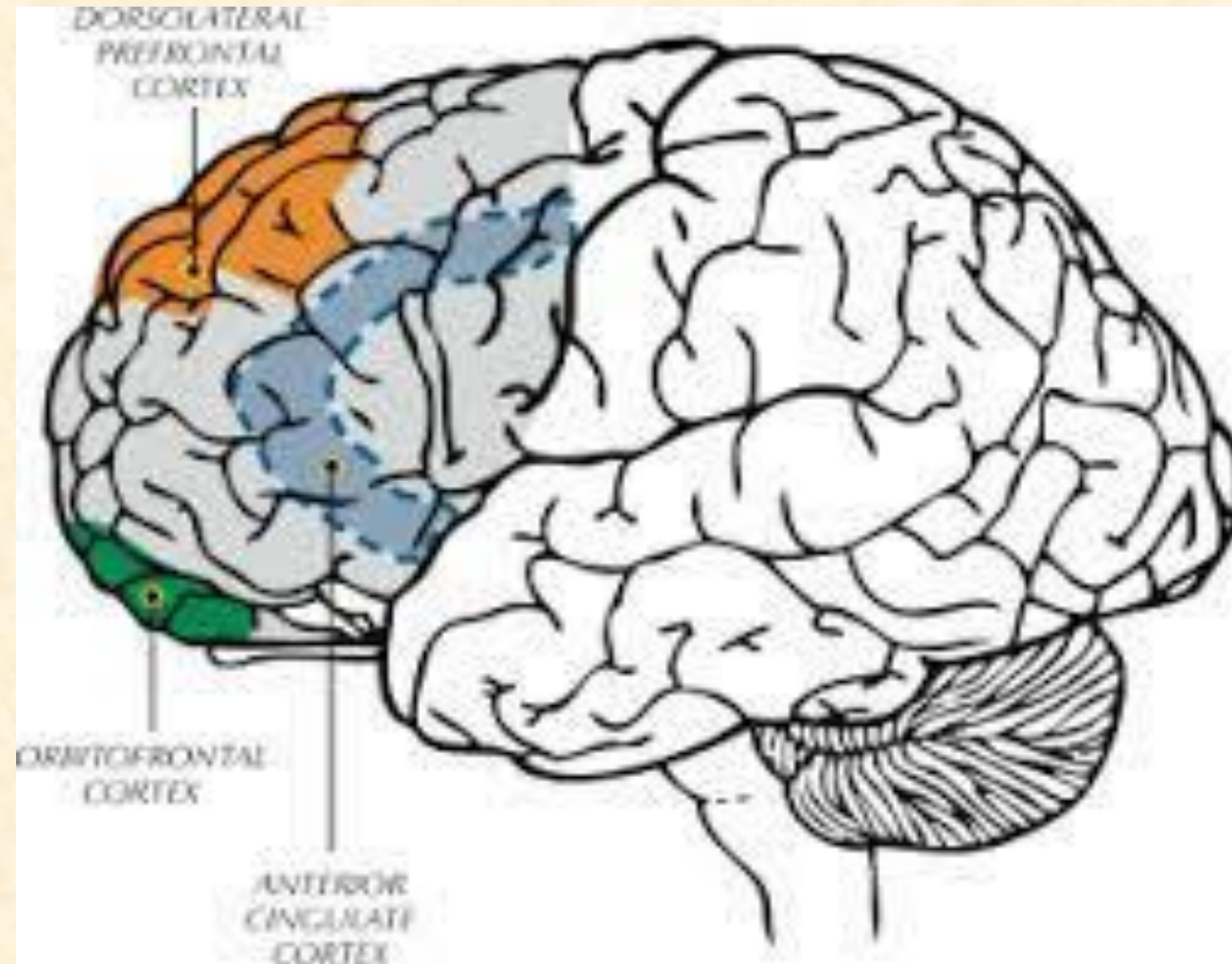
Cognition

- Executive Function
- Memory
- Building Reserve

Executive Function



Executive Function (con't.)



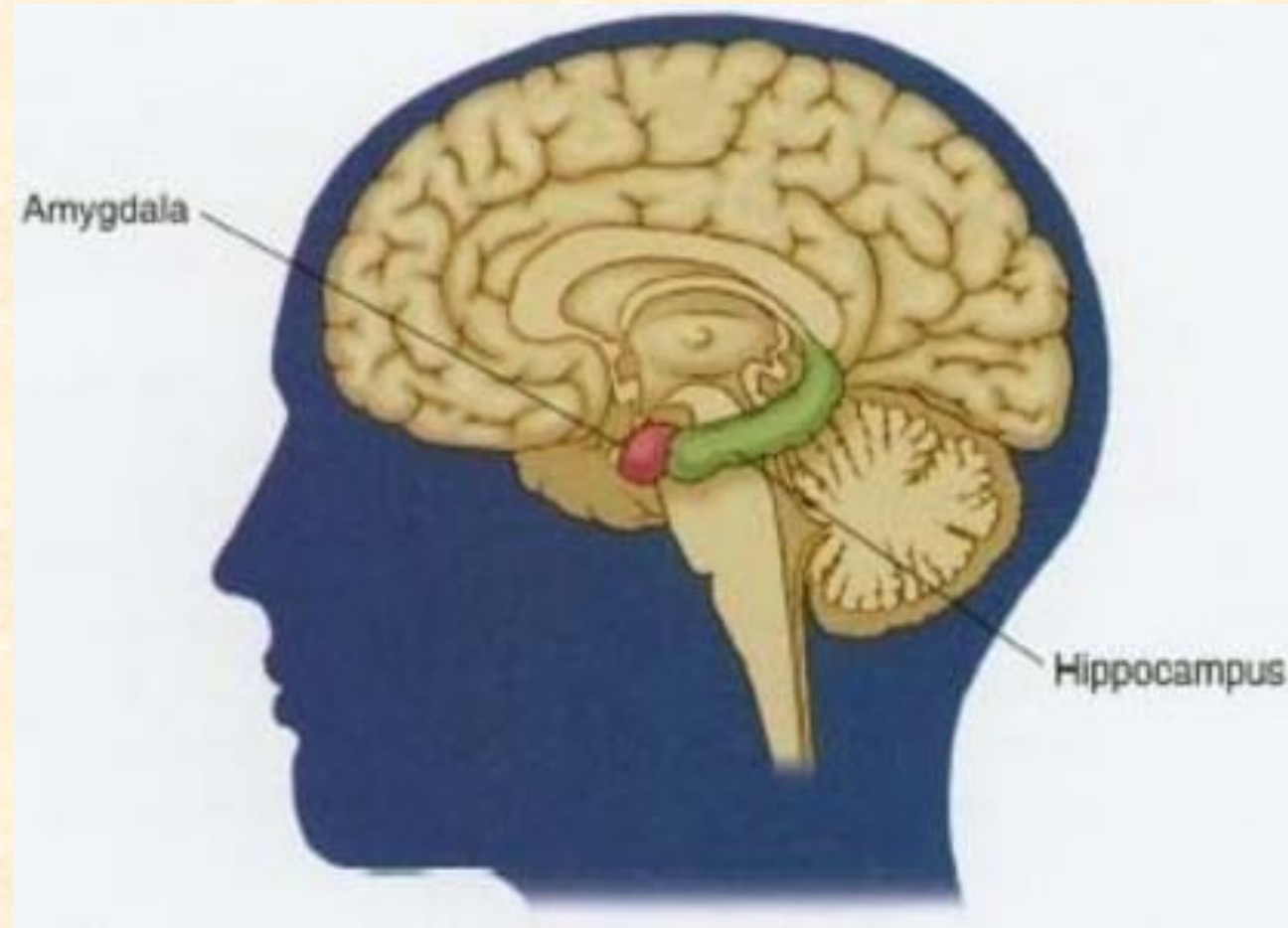
Memory



Memory (con't.)



Hippocampus



Super Agers

YOUTHFUL MEMORY OF *Superagers*

- › Exercise help in superaging
- › Memory on par with 25 year olds
- › Keeping brain active by working hard at something

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<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging/what-does-it-take-to-be-a-super-ager>

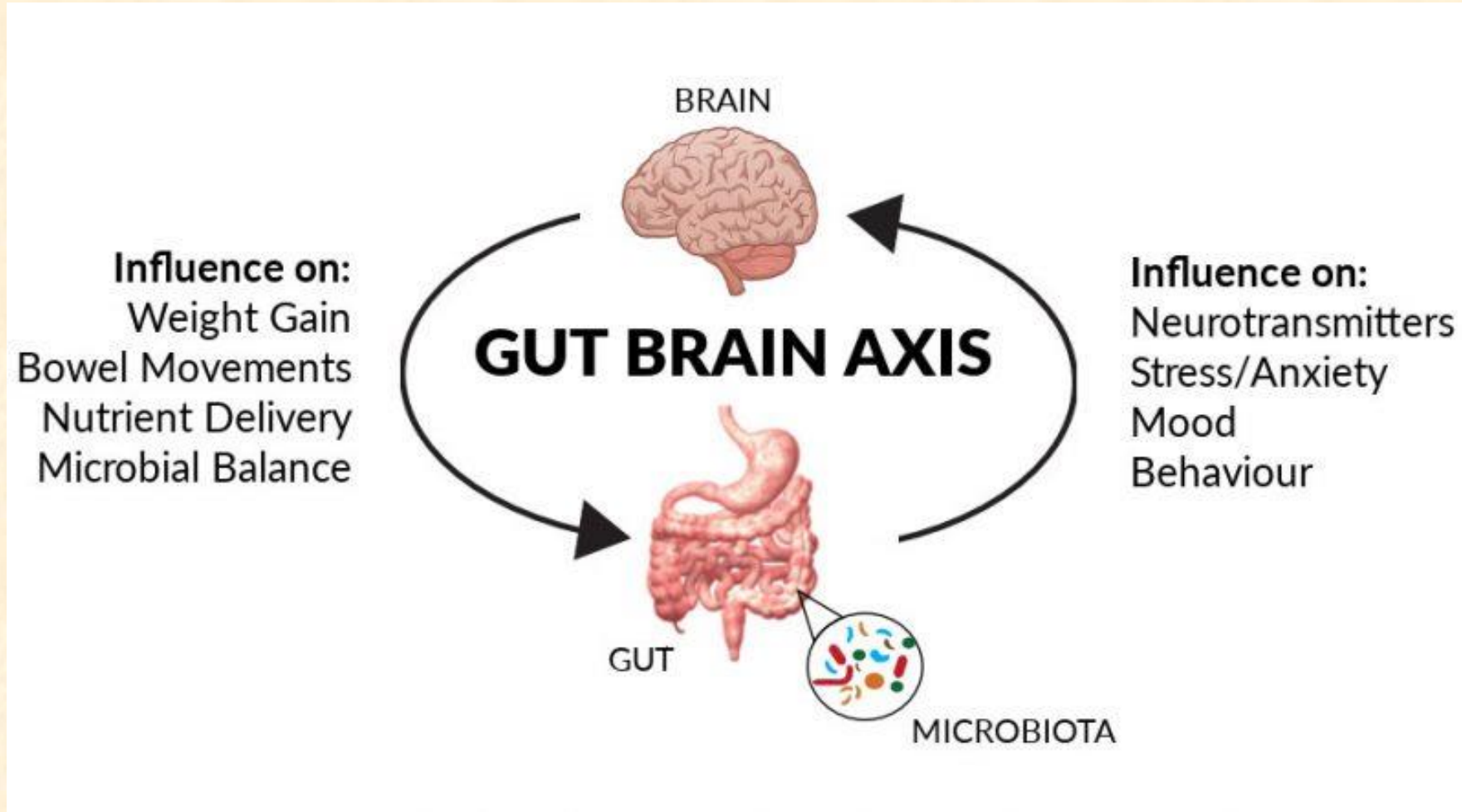
Building Reserve

- Cross Word puzzles, Jumble
- Words with Friends
- Jig-Saw puzzles
- Sudoku
- Reading
- <https://www.thehealthy.com/aging/mind-memory/free-brain-games/>

Gut Health



Better brains with gut health



Blue Zones



Gut Health Tips

- Less sugar
- Choose healthy fats
- Vitamin D
- Mediterranean type diets



Emotional Health

- Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000
 - The Science of Happiness
- Master's in Positive Psychology, U. of Penn.
- Seligman et al., 2005
 - Online clinical trial

Background

The Nun Study



Positive affect in writing samples predicted longer life 50 years later



Eichstaedt et al., 2014

Positive tweets (short messages of up to 140 characters) related to reduced risk of heart disease

Happiness Exercises

- **Gratitude** visit
 - Write and deliver a letter of gratitude
- **Three good things** in life
 - Write down 3 things each day that went well and why
- You at **your best**
 - Write about when you were at your best and reflect on personal strengths in the story. Review story each day.

Happiness Exercises (con't.)

- Identifying **signature strengths** (top five)
 - www.authentichappiness.org
 - www.viacharacter.org
 - Use one of these each day in a new and different way.
- Using **signature strengths**
 - Use five highest strengths more often during the next week.

Placebo Exercise

- **Early memories**
 - Write about your early memories every night for one week.



Conclusions

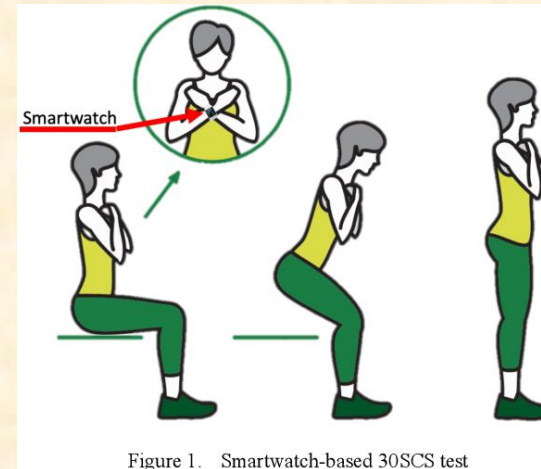
- **Gratitude** -- highest increase in happiness
- “Lasting” happiness
 - **Three good things**
 - **Using signature strengths**
- Those who persisted with exercises showed highest gain

Quinn et al., 2021

- Happiness minus sadness
- PANAS
 - 10 questions on happiness
 - 10 questions on sadness
- Physical Activity
 - Performance
 - Self-report
- Cognition
 - Performance
 - Self-report

Physical Activity

- Fullerton Advanced Balance Scale
 - Balance
- 30 s Chair Stand
 - Lower body strength
- 30 ft Walk
 - Gait velocity
- Composite Physical Function
 - Perceived Activities of Daily Living



Cognition

- 10-item word list
 - Immediate recall
 - Delayed recall
 - Recognition

- How forgetful have you been in the last week?

Forgetfulness

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not forgetful

Extremely forgetful

Results--Physical

- More happiness predicted
 - Better balance
 - Better lower body strength
 - Better self-reported ADL's

More happiness predicted better physical performance and function

Results--Cognitive

- More happiness predicted
 - Better immediate recall
 - Better word recognition
 - Less self-reported forgetfulness

More happiness predicted better cognitive performance

Conclusions

- **More happiness** improved both physical and cognitive performance and function.
- Activities which promote **happiness** can help adults (both with and without chronic conditions) to maintain healthier lifestyles

Social Support

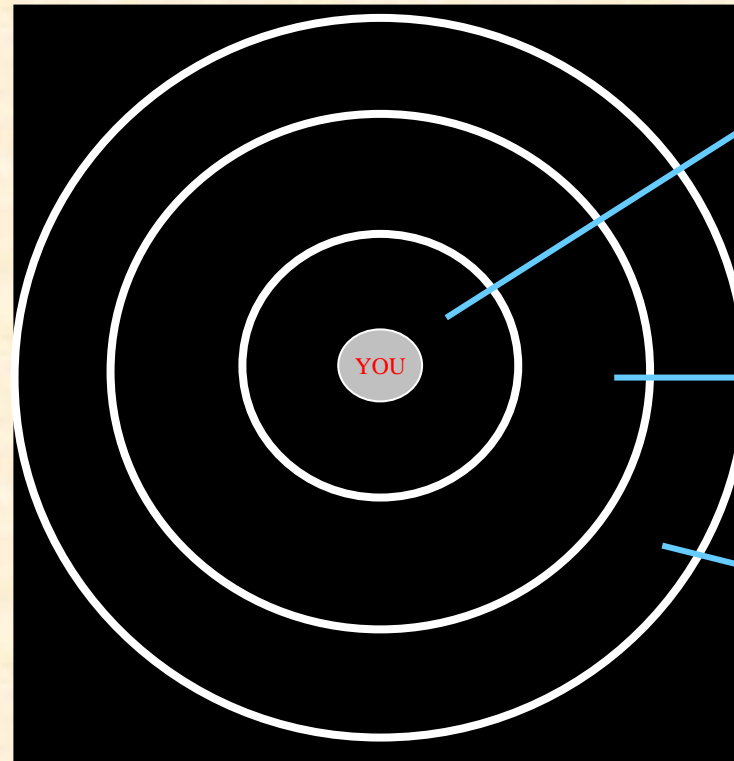
Definition: Resources and interactions provided by others that may be useful for helping a person cope with a problem.

*Call it a clan, call it a network,
call it a tribe, call it a family:
Whatever you call it, whoever
you are, you need one.*^[SEP]

-- Jane Howard



Kahn & Antonucci's Target Diagram (1980)

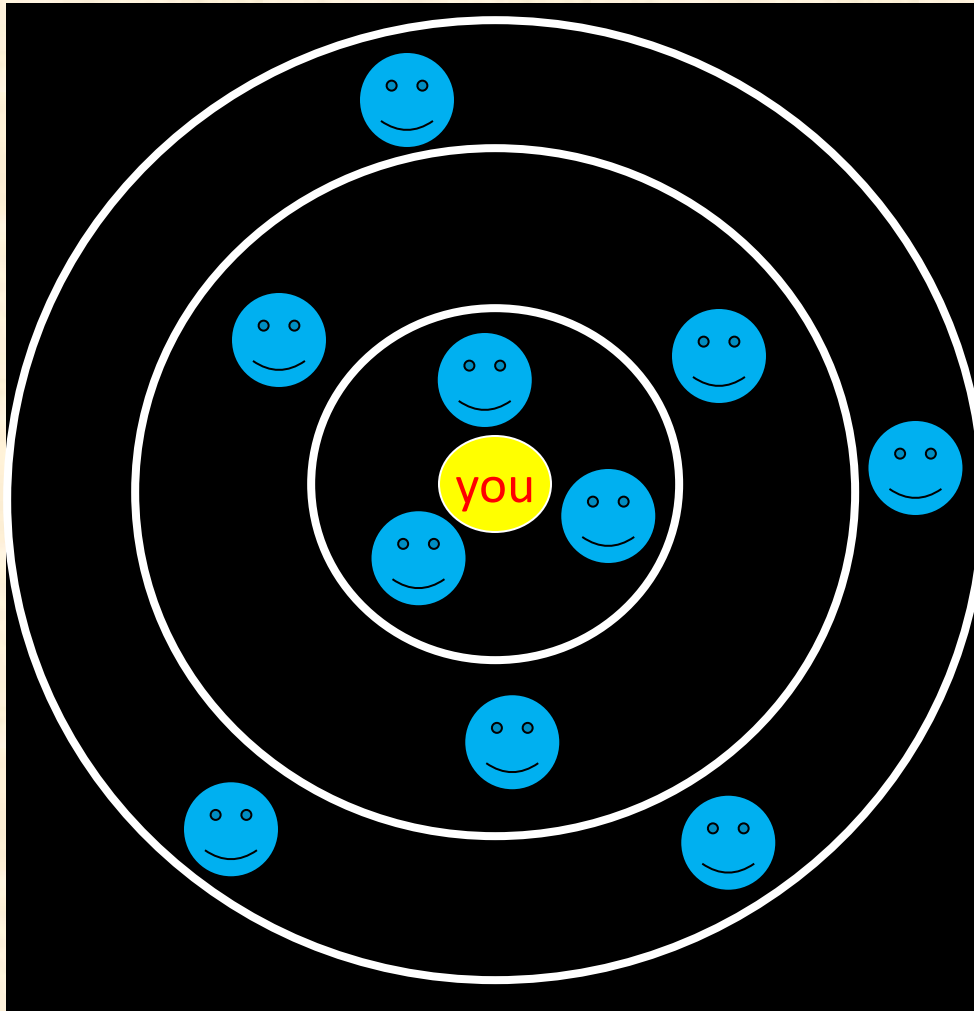


Inner Circle: Closest friends or family members...can't imagine life without them

Middle Circle: Not quite as close, but still important

Outer Circle: People who are less close, but still part of your life

Who makes up your social network?



Common Members:

Spouse / Partner

Immediate Family

Close Friends

Extended Family

Acquaintances

Neighbors

Co-Workers

*This is our social network or “social convey”

Social Support is associated with...



lower levels of depression, loneliness, and anxiety



higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness



fewer health problems



faster disease recovery



a longer life!

Major Life Events Affecting One's Social Network



Retirement

Widowhood

Health
Changes

Suggestions for Enhancing Social Ties Later in Life



Stay Connected to Co-Workers



Get Reacquainted with Spouse/Partner



Volunteer for a Favorite Cause



Join a Social Group



Take a Class



Try On-Line Social Networking Sites

On-Line Social Networking

Popular platforms for all ages:

Age	Facebook	YouTube	Instagram	Twitter	TikTok
50-64	73%	83%	29%	18%	14%
65+	50%	49%	13%	7%	4%

Source: Pew Research Center, Jan-Feb 2021.

*Fastest growing group – 75 and over

Regardless of where you are in life...

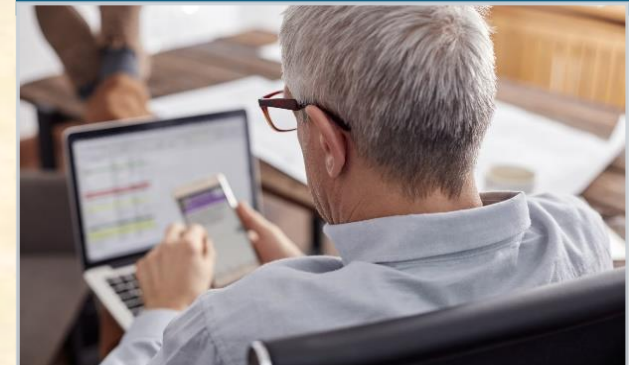
maintain
connections with
others



form new
relationships



consider alternate
forms of
communication



It's all about your environment!!

- Activity Levels
- Health Behaviors
-
- Social Support
- Culture
- Diet
- Lifestyle Patterns
- Education

Environment, literally





Happy Brains

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbZSe6N_BXs

