



Activity 1- Game board: Navigating Cognitive Health - A Journey Through Risks and Prevention

**DOCUMENT PRODUCED BY:
ROMANIAN ALZHEIMER SOCIETY**

Active learning activity – description

Module	Module 1. The main mental health disorders in old age (cognitive decline, dementia and Alzheimer disease, other neurological disorders – e.g. multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease): symptoms, warning signs, stages
Chapter	Identifying cognitive decline
Name of activity	Game board: Navigating Cognitive Health – A Journey Through Risks and Prevention
OBJECTIVE(S)	Participants will navigate the game board, encountering spaces with "Risk Factors" and "Prevention Opportunities." The goal is to reach the end of the path with as many positive points as possible by accumulating "Prevention Opportunities" and avoiding "Risk Factors."
METHODS	<p>Game-Based Learning: Participants engage with key concepts about risk factors and prevention opportunities through an interactive board game.</p> <p>Simulation: The game simulates a life journey where players encounter both risks and prevention opportunities.</p> <p>Collaborative Learning: Teams work together to make decisions and accumulate points, fostering communication and idea-sharing.</p> <p>Guided Reflection: After each turn, teams discuss and reflect on the impact of each risk or prevention opportunity, connecting them to real life.</p> <p>Experiential Learning: Players directly experience how risk factors and prevention opportunities influence outcomes, enhancing understanding.</p> <p>Continuous Feedback: The instructor provides ongoing feedback, helping participants grasp the importance of cognitive risk prevention.</p>

	Gamification: A scoring system and friendly competition motivate participants to stay engaged and active throughout the activity.
TIME ALLOCATED	45 minutes
RESOURCES NEEDED	Game board (printed in large format) Dice (one for each team) Game pieces (one for each team) Risk Factor cards (20) and Prevention Opportunity cards (20) A timer to track time Space for movement
INSTRUCTIONS*	Introduction Game Rules Game Play Conclusion
REFERENCES	
HANDOUTS	Game board (printed in large format) Risk Factor cards (20) and Prevention Opportunity cards (20)

* Full instructions:

Instruction for the instructor:

1. Introduction (5 minutes):

Explain the objective of the game and the basic rules to participants. Each team will take turns rolling the die and moving their game piece along the path. Depending on where they land, the team will draw a "Risk Factor" or "Prevention Opportunity" card.

2. Game Rules (5 minutes):

- Each team takes turns rolling the die and moving their game piece accordingly.
- If they land on a "Risk Factor" space, the team draws a card from that category and loses one point for each risk they encounter.
- If they land on a "Prevention Opportunity" space, the team draws a card from that category and earns one point for each prevention opportunity they collect.
- The team with the most points at the end of the game, when all teams reach the finish line, wins.

3. Game Play (25–30 minutes):

- As the teams progress along the board, the instructor will keep track of the time and ensure that each team has the chance to engage with both "Risk Factor" and "Prevention Opportunity" spaces.
- Teams will be encouraged to reflect on each risk factor or opportunity and discuss how it applies to the prevention of MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment) and dementia.
- Teams will tally points as they go based on the cards they collect.

4. Conclusion (5 minutes):

The instructor will summarize the key takeaways from the game, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and avoiding risk factors and leveraging prevention opportunities to reduce the risk of MCI and dementia.

Development:

Introduction to Participants:

The purpose of this game is to provide an interactive and fun way to learn about the factors that can increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia, as well as the strategies that can help prevent them. As you play, you'll be introduced to both negative influences (risk factors) and positive actions (prevention opportunities) that affect brain health.

Each time you land on a space, you'll have to respond by drawing a card. Your goal is to accumulate more prevention opportunities and fewer risk factors to score higher in the game of life, ultimately improving your knowledge of MCI and dementia prevention.

Game Play Instructions:

1. Starting the Game:

- Each team selects a game piece and places it at the start of the board.
- Teams take turns rolling the die.
- Move your piece forward according to the number on the die.

2. Landing on a "Risk Factor" Space:

- Draw a card from the "Risk Factor" deck.
- Read the card aloud to your team.
- Lose 1 point for each risk factor card collected.
- Discuss how this factor increases the risk of cognitive decline or dementia. For example, a card might read: **“Lack of Physical Activity—Increases risk due to reduced blood flow to the brain and decreased neuroplasticity.”**

3. Landing on a "Prevention Opportunity" Space:

- Draw a card from the "Prevention Opportunity" deck.
- Read the card aloud to your team.
- Gain 1 point for each prevention opportunity card collected.
- Discuss how this strategy can reduce the risk of cognitive decline or dementia. For example, a card might read: **“Engage in Regular Physical Activity—Promotes neurogenesis and improves memory function.”**

4. Winning the Game:

- Teams continue playing until all teams reach the finish line.
 - The team with the most points (prevention opportunity points minus risk factor points) wins the game.
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Sample Cards:

18 Example Risk Factor Cards (Personalized):

Risk factor	Description
Smoking	You’ve been smoking for years. You notice it’s harder to keep up with others during physical activities, and your doctor warns you about the impact on your brain.
Sedentary Lifestyle	Your job has you sitting all day, and you’ve neglected exercise. You feel sluggish and realize this routine isn’t good for your brain health.
Unhealthy Diet	You’ve been eating too much fast food and sugary snacks. You start feeling more tired and mentally foggy.
Chronic Stress	Work deadlines are piling up, and you’re feeling overwhelmed. You’ve noticed memory slips and difficulty concentrating.
High Blood Pressure	At your last check-up, the doctor mentioned your blood pressure is creeping up. You’re at risk for cognitive decline if it stays this high.
Diabetes	After years of ignoring dietary advice, you’ve developed type 2 diabetes, and it’s starting to affect your energy levels and mental clarity.
Sleep Deprivation	You’ve been staying up late watching TV, and your sleep schedule is a mess. Lately, you’ve noticed difficulty remembering things.

Social Isolation	After moving to a new city, you haven't made time to connect with people. Loneliness is taking a toll on your mental well-being.
Excessive Alcohol Consumption	Social drinking has turned into regular heavy drinking. You wake up feeling groggy and notice it's affecting your memory.
Obesity	You've gained weight over the years and now struggle with physical activity. Your doctor warns you this could increase your dementia risk.
Hearing Loss	You've noticed you're asking people to repeat themselves a lot. You haven't dealt with your hearing loss, and it's affecting your social life.
Air Pollution Exposure	You live in a city with heavy pollution, and you've started feeling its effects on your respiratory and cognitive health.
Lack of Mental Stimulation	You've fallen into a routine of doing the same things daily without challenging your mind. You've noticed your memory isn't as sharp.
Depression	After a tough year, you've struggled with depression. Your motivation is low, and you've started forgetting things.
Chronic Inflammation	You've been dealing with an autoimmune condition that keeps your body in a state of inflammation, affecting your focus and memory.

Untreated Hypertension	You’ve been ignoring your high blood pressure for years, and now you’re noticing the effects on your mental sharpness.
Vitamin D Deficiency	You’ve been indoors all winter without sunlight exposure, and now you’re dealing with fatigue and low mood.
Substance Abuse	Substance use has started to affect your mood and memory. It’s taking a toll on your overall brain health

18 Example Prevention Opportunity Cards

Prevention Opportunity	Description
Engage in Regular Physical Activity	You decide to join a local fitness class. The movement feels great, and you notice improved energy and focus.
Adopt a Mediterranean Diet	You swap out processed foods for fresh vegetables, olive oil, and lean meats. You feel lighter and mentally sharper.
Maintain Strong Social Connections	You make an effort to reconnect with old friends, and the time spent socializing feels refreshing.
Learn a New Skill or Language	You start taking online lessons in a new language, and the mental challenge gives you a great sense of accomplishment.

Get Quality Sleep	You establish a bedtime routine and finally get a full night's sleep. The mental fog lifts, and you feel recharged.
Practice Mindfulness or Meditation	After starting a daily meditation practice, you feel more relaxed and focused, and your stress levels decrease.
Keep Blood Pressure in Check	You start monitoring your blood pressure and making healthier lifestyle choices. It's under control now.
Read or Solve Puzzles Regularly	You've started a habit of solving crossword puzzles in the morning, and it's keeping your mind sharp.
Eat Foods Rich in Omega-3 Fatty Acids	You add more fish, nuts, and seeds to your diet. Your brain feels more energized and focused.
Take Breaks from Screen Time	You've started taking regular breaks from your computer and phone, and your eyes and mind feel much clearer.
Limit Alcohol Intake	You cut down on your alcohol consumption, and you notice your mood and memory improving.
Join a Group Activity or Club	You join a local book club and meet new people. The discussions are engaging, and you feel mentally stimulated.
Manage Chronic Conditions Effectively	You start taking your health more seriously by managing your diabetes and cholesterol. You feel in control.

Spend Time Outdoors	You make time to take walks in nature, and the fresh air boosts your mood and energy levels.
Take Up a Creative Hobby	You’ve started painting again, and the creative process brings you joy and mental stimulation.
Get Regular Health Check-Ups	You schedule regular check-ups with your doctor, catching potential health problems early. You feel reassured.
Challenge Yourself with Mental Games	You’ve started playing chess with a friend, and the mental strategy keeps your brain sharp.
Maintain a Balanced Work-Life Routine	You’ve created boundaries between work and personal life, reducing stress and improving your overall well-being.

To adapt the "Navigating Brain Health" activity for an **online format**, you can use the following approach:

Steps		Description
1	Virtual Board Game Platform	Use tools like Google Slides, Miro, or a custom virtual board game platform to create an interactive game board where players can move their pieces. Host the game on platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, where all participants can see the shared game board and communicate via video and chat
2	Digital Dice and Pioneers	Use a virtual dice roller (e.g., Google dice roller) to simulate the dice throws.

		Each team or participant controls their virtual pion by moving it manually on the shared game board.
3	Card Draws	<p>Prepare the "Risk Factors" and "Prevention Opportunities" cards as digital files or slides.</p> <p>When a participant lands at a certain spot, the instructor can randomly "draw" and share a card with them (via chat or screen sharing). You can use digital tools like Google Sheets to randomize card selection.</p>
4	Breakout Rooms for Team Discussion	After drawing a card, the instructor can assign participants to breakout rooms (e.g., on Zoom) where they can reflect and discuss how the risk/prevention factor impacts brain health and prevention strategies.
5	Scorekeeping	Use a shared document or slide for live score updates that everyone can view. This can be updated as each team gains points based on their actions.
6	Real-time Feedback	The facilitator provides feedback and guidance throughout the game, helping participants relate the game's scenarios to real-life prevention strategies.
7	Time Management	Keep an eye on time and allocate specific rounds for each part of the game to ensure all participants have equal chances to participate and the activity stays within a 45-minute window. This format ensures that participants stay engaged, communicate effectively, and gain the same insights about brain health, even in a virtual environment.



“On Stage In the Golden Age: Theatre for Healthy Ageing”

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Conclusion:

The game illustrates how everyday choices can impact the risk of cognitive decline. By focusing on prevention strategies and avoiding risk factors, we can support brain health and reduce the likelihood of MCI and dementia.



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“ON STAGE IN THE GOLDEN AGE: THEATRE FOR HEALTHY AGEING”

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