

WILD CARD GAMES by Dr Helena Popovic

Game #1 - Congratulations!

1. Go through the 20 Brain Boosters and organise them into 3 piles:
 - I) Pile 1 consists of what you are already doing on a regular basis
 - II) Pile 2 consists of what you are doing some of the time
 - III) Pile 3 consists of what you are not doing at all or doing only very rarely
2. Congratulate yourself on Pile 1
3. Think of ways to increase the suggestions in Pile 2
4. Start implementing the Brain-Boosters in Pile 3, one at a time.
5. In three months time review the Piles and see if you are able to move some of the cards from Piles 2 and 3 into Pile 1.
6. Repeat the review process every three months. Over time you'll have no more cards in the third pile.
7. Reflect on the positive changes these actions have made to your life.

Game #2 - Daily Dose

1. At the start of each week, choose a card to carry in your pocket, handbag or man bag.
2. Make sure the card is in a place that will allow you to see it or easily access it throughout the day.
3. Make the message on the card your focus for the week. Think of different ways you can apply the call to action every day.
4. This doesn't need to take much time. A minute or two can make a positive difference.
5. With some cards it isn't even about doing something. It simply means bringing a fresh attitude to what you're already doing, or practising a new way of thinking.
6. At the end of the week you'll be amazed at how this simple exercise creates an uplifting context in which to live.

Game #3 - Share the Love

1. At the start of each week, give every team member at work a card to play the Daily Dose game.
2. Allow them to choose a card at random or select a card you feel would be of value to them.
3. Watch the magic happen as the week unfolds!
4. At the end of the week, gather everyone together to share their experience of putting the card into practice. This is a great team-building exercise as well as providing invaluable learning.

Game #4 - Memory Mastery

1. Every week, commit to memory the quote from the back of one of the cards.
2. Why? For a start, you'll sound very clever when you suddenly produce a relevant quote at just the right time in a conversation.
3. More importantly, the process of memorisation is a vastly under-rated Brain Booster in its own right. The benefits of memorisation include:
 - I) Memorisation trains the mind in focused attention. This is a skill that many people are losing because of the hyper-stimulated, highly distracting environment we live and work in.
 - II) Memorisation fosters 'mental industriousness' - a sharpening of our problem-solving ability.
 - III) Memorisation trains the brain to develop learning and memory schemas that facilitate future learning. We don't become worse at learning as we age. We become worse at learning if we don't practise learning new things as we age.
 - IV) The quotes themselves provide a powerful perspective on how to handle challenges.
 - V) People report that when they start memorising the quotes, it boosts their confidence in their memory, and they discover that their overall memory improves.

Game #5 - Make it Memorable

1. Place all the cards - picture side up - on a table so that they lie flat and don't overlap.
2. Players take it in turns to select a card and summarise from memory the explanation on the other side of the card.
3. Alternatively, players choose a card for other players to summarise.
4. Who can remember the most Brain Boosters?

Game #6 - Get Deep

1. Take one card at a time and write down all the different ways you can put it into practice.
2. Stretch your imagination to come up with new ways to apply the Brain Booster on each card.

Game #7 - Resistance is Futile

1. Go through the set of Brain Boosters and identify which one you feel is the most difficult to apply in your life – either because of the time and effort you think it will take, or because it asks you to do things very differently to how you currently do them.
2. Now ask yourself the following question: 'In an ideal world, how could I find the time, energy or resources I need to implement this Brain-Boosting activity into my life?'
3. Start a timer or stopwatch and give yourself two minutes to write down whatever responses pop into your mind – even if the responses seem irrelevant such as 'How am I going to come up with an answer in two minutes?' At the end of two minutes put away the piece of paper you were writing on (or close the document you were typing in) and get on with your day without thinking about the answer any further.
4. Repeat this two minute exercise at the same time every day until the answer comes to you – it always does! This is a way of training your brain to subconsciously work on solutions for you while you go about the rest of your day.
5. You can apply this process to any unsolved issues you are grappling with, not just to Wild Cards.

Game #8 - Get Creative

Use your imagination to come up with ways of using Wild Cards that are personally meaningful to you or your team.

Game #9 - For Aged Care Service Providers

This game is particularly valuable for health professionals working in aged care: doctors, nurses, diversional therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, administration staff, policy makers and other allied health workers.

1. Go through the entire deck and assess which of the 20 Brain Boosters you could apply to your individual setting of caring for the elderly - whether they are mentally sharp or suffering from dementia.
2. How can you improve the service you are offering by incorporating Brain-Boosting activities and attitudes with the people in your care?
3. How can you use Wild Cards as prompts to create a more brain-stimulating environment?
4. How can you all work together to make brain-boosting the context in which you care for your patients, residents and clients?