

BRAIN PLAY

aka “MENTAL AEROBICS”

Kay Paggi

972.839.0065

www.kaypaggi.com

- **Licensed Professional Counselor**
- **National Certified Gerontological Counselor**
- **Care Manager, Certified**

NEW versus OLD

- In counseling with older adults I frequently meet with an elder who believes that because he/she has crossed some magical birthday, her ability to reason has declined. This is a bias commonly found in American society called 'ageism'. Given a choice in the grocery between a box marked 'new' and its counterpart, most of us will take the new one, assuming that it is better. In our fairy tales and Disney movies, the witch is always mean and ugly *and old*. Television emphasizes youth and physical strength and beauty, and show elders as needing denture fixative and hemorrhoid cream. The result is elders biased against themselves!

The BRAIN can continue to grow new connections

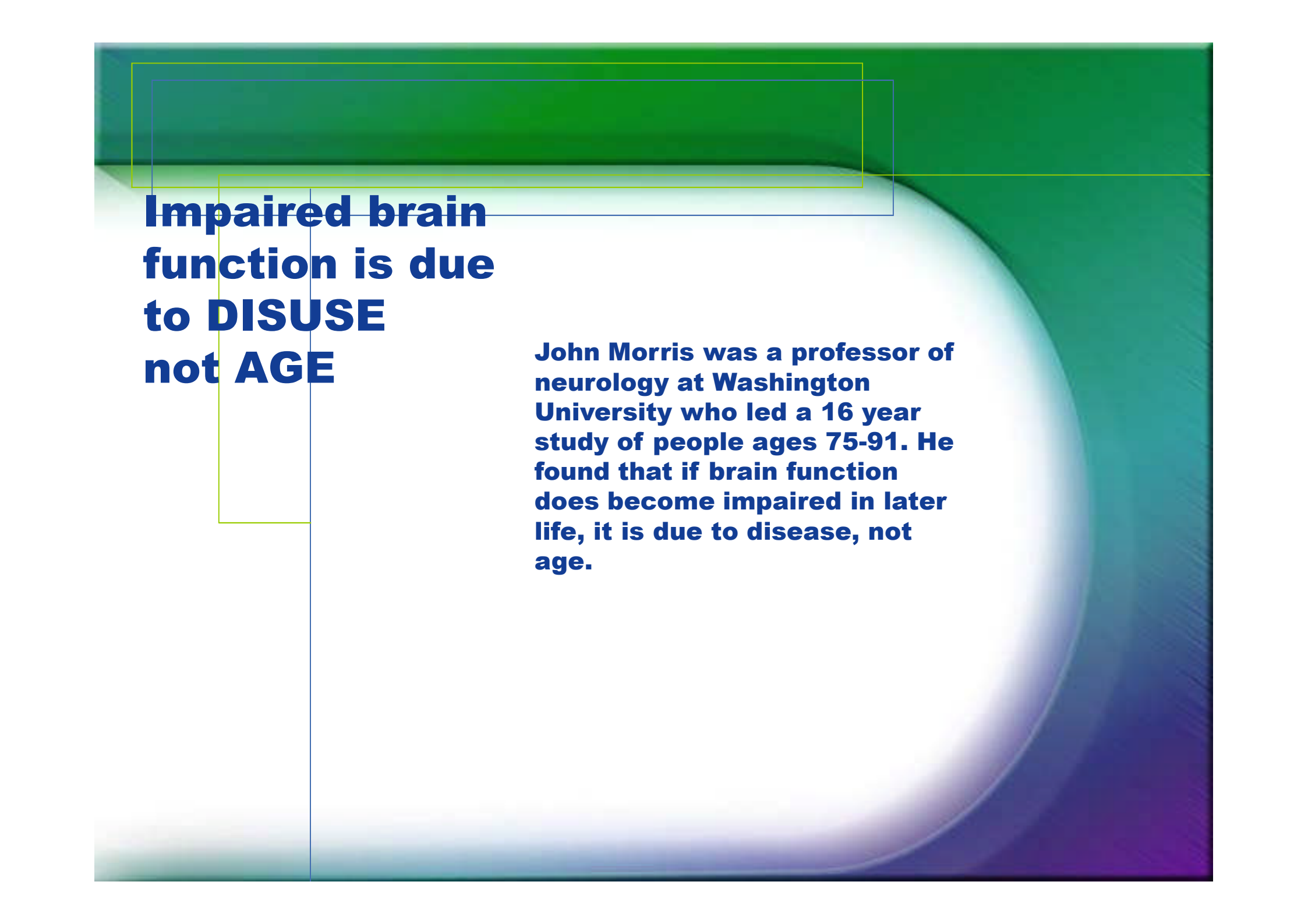
- Contrary to this cultural myth, Researchers on aging have found that the ability to think and remain mentally competent does not decline with age.
- Marian Diamond, PhD. Is professor of anatomy at Berkeley and well known researcher of brain. She is one of the few scientists to be allowed to **study the tissue from Albert Einstein's brain.** She has found that the human cortex, which handles higher mental functions, can decrease OR increase in size at **any age** depending on the level of stimulation. She writes that a brain in an enriched environment can generate new dendrites and make new connections with other brain cells. Thus the cortex grows or shrinks according to its use.

Hermione, my rat



Rat Studies

- Dennis Selkoe is the director of the Center for Neurologic Diseases and professor of neuroscience at Harvard Medical school. He found that brain scans of *healthy* people in their 80's show as much activity as those of people in their 20's. Studies done on rats in the early 90's show that those who live in a stimulating environment have more complex branching in their brains than rats who live in dull environments.



**Impaired brain
function is due
to DISUSE
not AGE**

John Morris was a professor of neurology at Washington University who led a 16 year study of people ages 75-91. He found that if brain function does become impaired in later life, it is due to disease, not age.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW

The MacArthur Foundation Network on Successful Aging has been studying successful aging nationally. Among their findings is that people who challenge themselves mentally stimulate the neurons in their brains. These people may be able to tolerate more damage to the brain before it shows.

COGNITIVE DECLINE IS UP TO YOU

These studies indicate that we have a great deal more control over how we age than previously assumed.

RETIREMENT IS NOT HEALTHY FOR YOUR BRAIN

What does occur to many elders is a lack of opportunity to continue to use their brainpower. Once retired, it's easy to stop thinking. No longer have to make workday decisions, and popular activities such as television and bingo discourage mental exercise.

Educational Gerontology 1999

- Mental Aerobics is a program designed to enhance the self-esteem & cognitive functioning of older adults in a context of group sessions where the emphasis is on having fun, cooperative sharing of ideas, and the development of solutions to challenging problems. Mental Aerobics consists of puzzles, logic matrixes, math and word games to be solved. Seniors are encouraged to believe in their continuing ability to problem solve by their own successful performances.

2003-2004 Study

- **THE IMPACT OF MENTAL AEROBICS TRAINING ON THE COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE AND COGNITIVE SELF EFFICACY OF OLDER ADULTS.**
- Bert Hayslip, Jr., Ph.D, University of North Texas
- Kay Paggi, M.Ed., LPC, Private Practice
- Melissa L. Ward, B.A.
- These findings suggest that Mental Aerobics can be effectively used to enhance older adults' views of their skills, critical to efforts to maintain one's cognitive functioning into later life.

Let's Play with your Brain

- Mental Aerobics is intended to promote continued intellectual activity. *You are not supposed to answer every question correctly.* In fact, you are not supposed to answer every question or even to understand them all. You **are** supposed to stretch your mental muscles. I often use the metaphor of your brain as a muscle which must be exercised to stay in shape. Flabby minds are no fun!



Words and Phrases with ‘LINE”

WORDS AND PHRASES WITH 'LINE'

LINE

- -up
- -dance
- -item veto
- -man
- -of sight
- -of thought

By
chorus
clothes
Coast
County
Date
dotted
econoline
(gas?)

Fault
Feline
Front
frost
gas
hair
hard
Head
hem
hold That L !
hot
In___ (skates)
Kevin Kline
Life
linen
line-o-type
liner
Linus
Lunch

Base
blank
blood
blue
Bottom
main
malign
Mason-Dixon
midline
NightL___
Off
On
Out
party
pipe
Plumb
power
punch

rail
recline
red
Ship
shore
Sky
Soup
stream
tan
time
toe the ___
tree
Under
waist
water



How much money can you have in change and yet be able to make correct change for a dollar?

TREMENDOUS

- How many words can be made using the letters in tremendous?

How well do you read?

- MR DUCKS
- MR KNOT
- O S A R
- CM WANGS
- LIB
- MR DUCKS

ANN OWED TWO THE SPELLING CHECKER

**Eye have a spelling checker
It came with my Pea Sea
It plane lee marks four my revue
Miss steaks aye can knot sea.
Eye ran this poem threw it,
Your sure reel glad two no.
Its vary polished in it's weigh
My checker tolled me sew.
A checker is a bless sing,
It freeze yew lodes of thyme.
it helps me right awl stiles two
read,
And aides me when aye rime.
Each frays come posed up on my
screen
Eye trussed too bee a joule
The checker pour o'er every
word
To cheque sum spelling rule.**

OXYMORONS

Act

Dress

Even

Farewell

Flat

Fresh

Numb

Original

Random

Same

Science

Busted

Copy

Difference

Feeling

Fiction

Frozen

Natural

Odds

Order

Pants

Reception

BIRTHDAY FINDER

1. Write the number of the month in which you were born.
2. Multiply by 4.
3. Add 13.
4. Multiply by 25.
5. Subtract 200.
6. Add the day of the month you were born.
7. Multiply by 2.
8. Subtract 40.
9. Multiply by 50.
10. Add the last 2 digits of the year you were born.
11. Subtract 10,500.