

## Brain Care Score Frequently Asked Questions

### Common Talking Points with Community Members

These are the ones we've thought of. If there are more common ones, please reach out and let us know.

Question	Talking Point
<i>What if I don't know my blood pressure, hemoglobin A1c, and cholesterol measures?</i>	The Brain Care Score has been validated without physical components and can be removed if necessary. The score becomes less effective in predicting risk of dementia, stroke, and late-life depression but it is still helpful to fill out the BCS even if you do not know these measures.
<i>What does my score mean?</i>	A higher score is better. Your score is built up of different lifestyle and health factors that affect your brain health. These include your daily habits, emotions, and physical health. While it is not necessarily a diagnosis, it is a way to understand how different parts of your life support your brain. Seeing where you might be falling behind can help you find areas to improve.
<i>Do I have to answer every question on the Brain Care Score?</i>	The Brain Care Score can still be used even if you leave out the parts that need physical measurements. Even if you don't have that information, the Brain Care Score can still be a guide to find other lifestyle changes that can improve brain health
<i>Does the Brain Care Score need to be administered by a medical professional?</i>	No, the Brain Care Score can be self-administered or administered with the help of another community member, but a medical professional is not required to take or interpret the score. It does not serve as a diagnostic tool. Some questions may be easier to answer (blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar) with a medical professional's help. Instead, the BCS is meant to provide guidance around what areas people can improve upon and what people can do to control their modifiable lifestyle factors to improve their health.
<i>Why should I care about this?</i>	Brain health affects your memory, mood, focus, and energy. It is also connected to other areas of health, like heart disease and cancer. Improving your score in one area of the BCS can improve your health overall.
<i>Does a low score mean something is wrong?</i>	Not at all. This is simply a tool to show where small changes can help — not a diagnosis. Lower scores mean there are more areas where support or small changes could help. The most important part is identifying opportunities for improvement, not the number itself.
<i>How can I improve my score?</i>	Small changes like moving more, eating well, sleeping better, and staying connected with others. Many areas overlap — progress in one area can

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	help the others! You can pick one topic to work on to start. Your score might not immediately improve - a bad week doesn't set you back, the goal is to get you thinking about what you can do to protect your brain.
<i>Can I take it again later?</i>	Yes! It's a great way to track your health over time. Taking it in a few months might be helpful since making changes to your health can take time.
<i>What is an A1C, and how is it connected to Brain Health?</i>	Your A1C score looks at your blood sugar levels. When blood sugar stays high, it can damage blood vessels and nerves — including the ones that support the brain.
<i>What does cholesterol have to do with my brain?</i>	<p>Cholesterol travels through your blood. If there's too much of the "bad" kind, it can build up in your blood vessels and make them narrow or clogged.</p> <p>If blood can't flow well to the brain, the brain doesn't get enough oxygen and nutrients — this can increase the risk of stroke and memory problems later in life.</p>
<i>How does blood pressure affect my brain?</i>	High blood pressure puts extra stress on your blood vessels. Over time, that can damage the tiny vessels that feed the brain. This can impact thinking and memory later in life.
<i>How does sleep affect my brain?</i>	<p>When you don't sleep well, it's harder to think clearly, your mood can drop, and your brain doesn't have time to rest and repair. Sleep helps us with our memory, focus, make decisions, and our mood.</p> <p>Over time, poor sleep can raise the risk of problems like memory loss, depression, stroke, and dementia.</p>
<i>How does nutrition affect my brain?</i>	Adding fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein to your diet helps provide nutrients to your brain and protect brain cells from damage.
<i>I thought brain problems were mostly genetic — can my behavior make a difference?</i>	Yes! Genetics can play a role, but lifestyle behaviors like movement, sleep, food, and stress have a big impact on brain health. Even one small change can reduce your risk. What's good for the body and heart is also good for the brain!



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**Questions from Brain Care Champions/Community Organizations**

Question	Talking point
Do I need an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application?	The GBCC team recognizes that requirements for IRB may vary based on your location and the nature of your Brain Care Score implementation. We encourage you to follow your institution’s guidelines on when an IRB is required.
Can I administer/hand out a paper version of the Brain Care Score?	Yes. A paper version of the BCS can be given if it is more accessible, though the online survey version of the score is preferred since it can help with reaching more individuals if there are limited resources/staff. If possible, additional metrics, such as tracking how many people are interested in taking the flyer, and any feedback provided from staff and patients, are also valuable to collect as part of your administration of the Brain Care Score.
What happens when someone brings their Brain Care Score back to me [staff]?	<p>Congratulations! You have achieved the first goal of your Brain Care Score implementation in your community! Now that individuals participating in your program are starting to return their scores, you can work with them to interpret the findings and share potential options for referring patients to goal-setting or additional resources provided by your organization.</p> <p>The GBCC provides several resources in the toolkit on how to talk to individuals after taking the BCS and examples of brain care tips.</p>
How does my organization share anonymous data with the GBCC?	Data can be shared through the GBCC’s secure online OneDrive or Dropbox folders. As a reminder, the GBCC does not want data that could personally identify an individual.

Email the GBCC team at [GlobalBrainCareCoalition@mgb.org](mailto:GlobalBrainCareCoalition@mgb.org) with any questions.