

StrongerMemory

Facilitator Training for
Skilled Nursing Facilities



What is StrongerMemory?

StrongerMemory is a research-based brain exercise program designed to stimulate the brain's prefrontal cortex, which governs our ability to retrieve memories.

Created by Goodwin Living President and CEO Rob Liebreich, StrongerMemory has been used by older adults since 2020. Research indicates that it works to reduce the effects of mild cognitive impairment and improve social engagement.

Meet Wendy:

The Inspiration for StrongerMemory

- Born and raised in Oregon
- 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 3 grand-dogs
- *Year 2011:*
 - Repeating her thoughts
 - Forgetting conversations and events
 - Losing basic math skills
 - Got lost driving in her own neighborhood



**She asked what she could do to slow her decline.
No one had answers.**

Wendy's Success Leads to StrongerMemory

2011:

Wendy diagnosed with MCI

2012:

LeadingAge Conference introduced a program that led to improved or stabilized testing scores!

2012:

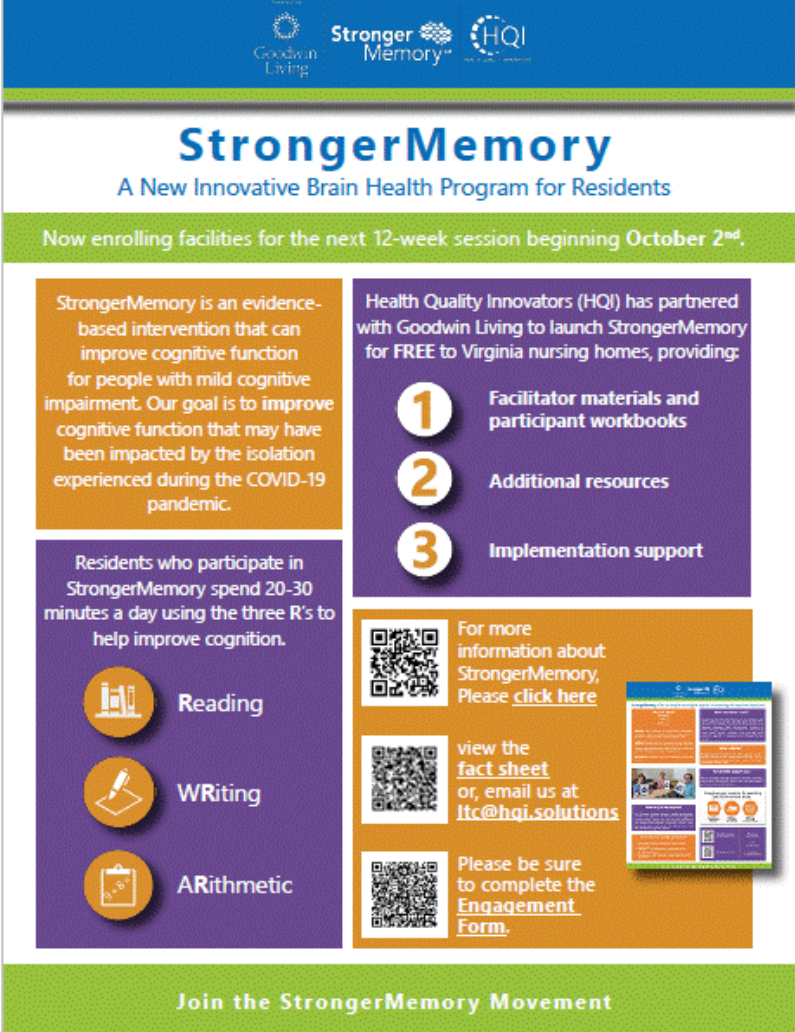
Wendy started Reading Out Loud, Handwriting, Doing Simple Math Quickly.
Led to improvement in a month!

Now, over **12,000 individuals** all over the country do daily StrongerMemory exercises and participate in weekly StrongerMemory sessions!



StrongerMemory in Nursing Homes

- Provides a non-pharmacological approach to improve or stabilize residents' cognitive function by incorporating brain health exercises into daily routines and activities
- Improves quality of life by engaging with others and forming deeper connections while exercising the brain



The flyer features a blue header with logos for Goodwin Living, Stronger Memory, and HQI. The main title is 'StrongerMemory' in large blue font, with the subtitle 'A New Innovative Brain Health Program for Residents'. A green banner below the title states 'Now enrolling facilities for the next 12-week session beginning October 2nd'. The content is organized into several colored boxes: an orange box describing the evidence-based intervention, a purple box listing three benefits (1. Facilitator materials and participant workbooks, 2. Additional resources, 3. Implementation support), a purple box titled 'Residents who participate in StrongerMemory spend 20-30 minutes a day using the three R's to help improve cognition.' with icons for Reading, WRiting, and ARithmetic, and an orange box with three QR codes and links for more information, fact sheets, and engagement forms. A small image of a tablet displaying the program interface is also present. The footer is a green banner with the text 'Join the StrongerMemory Movement'.

Goodwin Living Stronger Memory HQI

StrongerMemory

A New Innovative Brain Health Program for Residents

Now enrolling facilities for the next 12-week session beginning October 2nd.

StrongerMemory is an evidence-based intervention that can improve cognitive function for people with mild cognitive impairment. Our goal is to improve cognitive function that may have been impacted by the isolation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Quality Innovators (HQI) has partnered with Goodwin Living to launch StrongerMemory for FREE to Virginia nursing homes, providing:

- 1 Facilitator materials and participant workbooks
- 2 Additional resources
- 3 Implementation support

Residents who participate in StrongerMemory spend 20-30 minutes a day using the three R's to help improve cognition.

- Reading
- WRiting
- ARithmetic

For more information about StrongerMemory, Please [click here](#)

view the [fact sheet](#) or, email us at Itc@hqi.solutions

Please be sure to complete the [Engagement Form](#).

Join the StrongerMemory Movement

What are the Benefits for Residents?

Although there is currently no cure for mild cognitive impairment or dementia, many StrongerMemory participants have noted:

- **improvement in their ability to focus**
- **paying more attention to detail**
- **remembering more names, events and conversations**
- **greater feelings of social connection and engagement**

...without any negative side effects



What Support Will Our Team Receive?

Thanks to a CMS CMP grant administered by the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), each nursing center will receive at no cost:

- **StrongerMemory training**
- **Workbooks, facilitator guides, and additional materials**
- **Weekly peer support call with other participating nursing centers**
- **Technical Assistance & expertise from Health Quality Innovators**
- **Best practices sharing**
- **Observation and feedback on program implementation**
- **Consultation for sustaining StrongerMemory beyond 12 weeks**

What are the StrongerMemory Exercises?

Multiple times each week,
residents spend 20 to 30 minutes a day engaged in
reading aloud, writing by hand, and simple math activities



**Reading
aloud**



**Writing
by hand**



**Doing
simple math**

This helps create an ongoing brain health routine

Building Better Brain Health with StrongerMemory

Brain with Normal Activity



Brain scans show activities like looking out the window or watching TV, or even solving difficult math equations, only activate a few parts of our brain to light up with activity. This doesn't do much to help our memory, recall and focus.

Brain with StrongerMemory

Stronger
MemorySM



When we read aloud, do simple math quickly and write by hand, the prefrontal cortex and wide areas of our brains light up, like a bright light bulb! StrongerMemory helps activate our neural pathways and working memory together. This greatly improves our recall, memory and focus.

Reading Aloud

- Read with the resident – anything the resident is interested in and able to read
- Examples: newspaper, magazine, poetry, local newsletter, resident-centered materials
- Take turns reading aloud to encourage the resident. Whatever you are reading together can be a good discussion topic after they finish reading aloud.



Writing Prompts

- If you could go on a trip tomorrow, where would you go, who would you go with, and why that location?
- Write about what you like to do for fun on a sunny day.
- What did you do with your first paycheck?



Simple Math Done Quickly

- Doing simple math quickly has been shown to activate the prefrontal cortex plus multiple “working memory” areas of the brain at the same time.
- Solving difficult math problems works a smaller area of the brain and can increase stress and feelings of frustration.



Please complete these math questions as quickly as possible:

$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 17 \\ +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 17 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ +4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Great results! You are making it work!

Implementing StrongerMemory

- Commit, as a team, to participate (i.e., Administrator, Activities Director, volunteer)
- Identify a StrongerMemory Facilitator (and a back-up person)
- Ensure your StrongerMemory team attends Facilitator Training session led by HQI, or watch recorded video if unable to attend training live.
- Review Facilitator Guide before starting the program
- Identify potential residents for participation and set meeting times at least 3x's per week.
- Acquire materials & resources
 - Receiving/ distributing workbooks & facilitator guide through HQI
 - Accessories: i.e., writing materials (pens, pencils, paper/notebook)

StrongerMemory Resources

Welcome to the **StrongerMemory** Facilitator's Resource Packet!

We are thrilled to have you as part of the StrongerMemory community. Together, we bring new hope and potential progress to those who seek to improve their brain health. To help you in your efforts as a facilitator, we have created this packet of materials. We have organized this packet into three sections:

Facilitator's Guide

Pages 3 – 18

Everything you need to get started as a facilitator can be found in this section. You'll become familiar with the program and how to make the most of your facilitator experience, for both you and your StrongerMemory participants.

Curriculum Docs

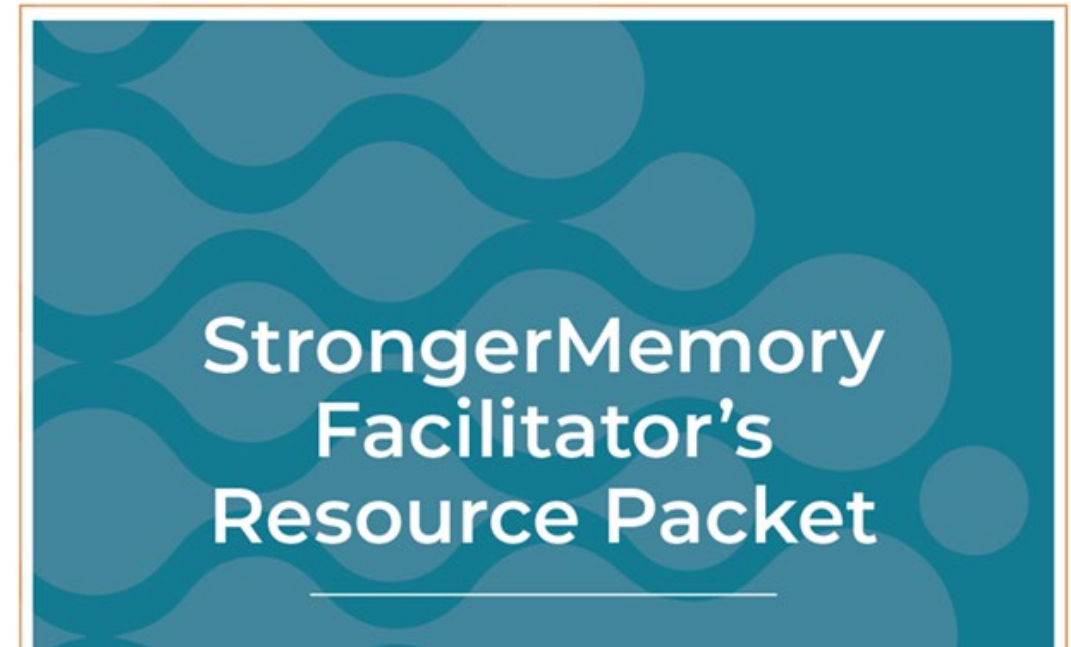
Pages 19 – 46

As you begin to manage your program, you will be facilitating 12 weekly check-in sessions. This section of our resource packet provides you with the tools you need to guide each of those 12 interactive sessions.

Communications Tips & Toolkit

Pages 47 – 54

This section of the resource packet will provide you with tips and tools to help you secure media coverage and promote the program on social media.



Lesson Plans for 12 Weekly Sessions are provided

LESSON 5: Why Easy Math?

As we learned in week 1, StrongerMemory is designed to help you improve your memory. You've seen in the workbook, the math problems in StrongerMemory are designed to be easy. That is a very deliberate choice to ensure we are working on the parts of your brain that shows that easy math works the prefrontal cortex and improves your working memory. Some of the math, especially in the early weeks, may seem so easy the answer comes to you immediately. It can feel very hard, but in fact your working memory and memory are being strengthened.

Discussion questions:



How have you felt doing the simple math exercises in the workbook?



What keeps you motivated to keep doing the math exercises?



Group activity: Can you solve these easy math riddles?

1. Which month has 28 days?
2. If there are 4 apples and you take away 3, how many do you have?
3. If eggs are \$0.12 a dozen, how many eggs can you get for a dollar?
4. If two's company and three's a crowd, what are four and five?
5. What did one math book say to the other math book?

Facilitator Role: Time, Data, Resources

Facilitator Commitment (12 weeks of program)

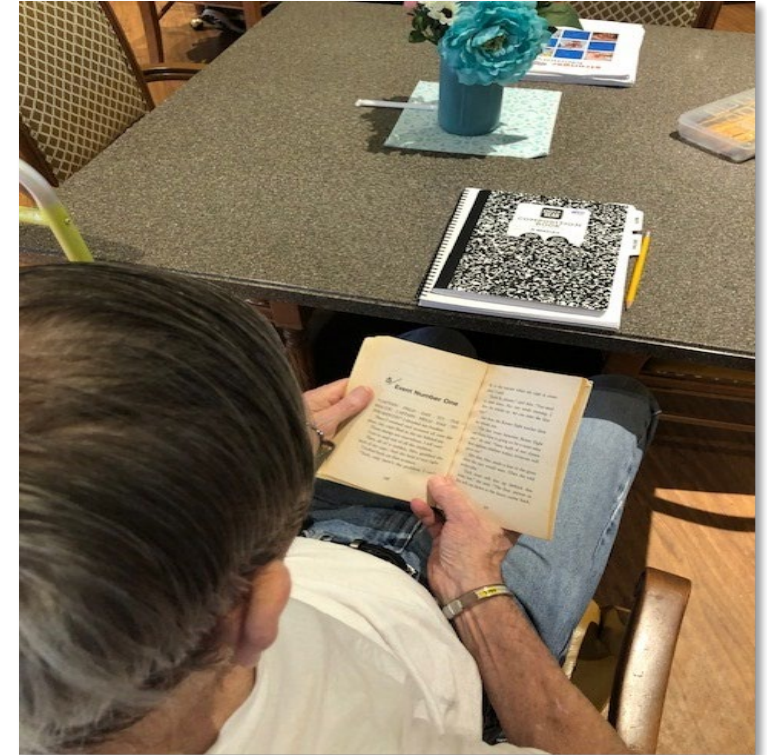
- Time Commitment is approximately 3 hours/week.
- Weekly scheduled HQI “Peer Support Sharing Calls” attendance encouraged & additional support is available. One on one calls with HQI every 3-4 weeks if unable to attend weekly calls.
- Provide weekly participation numbers to HQI-no resident data should be submitted.
- Self-assessment tool (short, 6 multiple choice questions) completed for each participant at the conclusion of the 12 weeks.
- Site visit by HQI during a session.

Adapting StrongerMemory for Specific Residents

- Participants do not have to be able to complete all exercises. If they can do 2 out of 3, that is totally acceptable
- Work it into resident's routine
 - Reading aloud after breakfast, math after lunch, writing before dinner.
- Adapt level of difficulty for exercises
 - Write answers to writing prompts for your participants.
 - Allow participants to write single words and then share verbally their responses to the writing prompts.
 - Have participants practice their signatures if they cannot write their responses to the writing prompts.
 - Allow participants to verbally answer math problems.
- Have materials that are helpful for participants with limitations
 - Use large print flash cards.
 - Use large print reading materials.
 - Have magnifying glasses available.
 - Use popsicle sticks or other materials for counting if participants cannot complete the math worksheets.

What does a StrongerMemory session look like?

- Group sessions or individual room visits.
- Prepare your designated space.
- Gather your participants
- Have a plan of which activity you want to start with. This can change week to week to keep the program stimulating.
- Start with an icebreaker or fun fact.
- Hand out math worksheets or participant workbooks. Complete up to two pages.
- Have participants pick a writing prompt and work on writing their responses.
- Participants share responses to writing prompts.
- Group takes turns reading from selected materials.
- Gather materials and conclude session.
- Make note of participant feedback and changes/improvements in participants.



Strategies for Success

- Share program information with residents & families
- Daily StrongerMemory Exercises
- Motivators to sustain momentum. Change things up periodically.
- Identify what's working and any opportunities for improvement
- Attend weekly Peer Support calls as needed with HQI & other nursing homes
- Capture positive quotes & stories (de-identified), and best practices
- Share successes with residents, family members, HQI & community
- Be encouraging – there are no wrong answers! Applaud all efforts.
- Be a supportive coach, not a teacher
- Set goals & reward participants for completing each day and each weekly session - make it fun!

Best Practices

- Add StrongerMemory to your activities calendar.
- Recognize residents that participate in multiple sessions.
- Incorporate games and different activities in sessions.
- Give insightful brain health facts.



Success Stories/Quotes

Shared from an Activities Director in a Virginia Nursing Home:

We've been doing the hand-writing exercises in the StrongerMemory program for a couple of weeks now. Our resident, Mrs. A had such difficulty writing that I've been putting my hand under hers while she held the pen so she could "feel" how it was to write again. Today I saw she had a piece of paper with writing on it already. I was able to read the writing, and suddenly I turned and asked Mrs. A, "did you write this by yourself?". She smiled and answered me proudly, "Yes, I did!"

Meet Eugene

Husband
Father
Grandpa
Veteran
Pastor
Town “good guy”

Then, in 2022...

Parkinson’s Disease

PTSD

Cognitive changes – Dementia

Physically aggressive at times

Often frustrated, angry

Family becoming disheartened

Until....



“Turns out he’s a math whiz!”

“He remembered his daughter – and called her by name, bringing her tears of joy!”

“Now he tells us stories from his childhood and the war--some are long & wild... and fantastic!”



Upcoming and Next Steps

- Office Hours calls weekly Wednesdays at 1PM. First Office Hours call is set for October 11th. (invite to be sent)
- Provide weekly participant numbers
- Site visit
- Self-Assessment at end of 12 weeks

HQI Contact Information



Elizabeth Nugent, LNHA, CDP
Consultant
804.289.5313
enugent@hqi.solutions



Sheila McLean, MBA, LNHA, CPHQ
Senior Consulting Manager
804.289.5345
smclean@hqi.solutions



Erin Webber, BS
Consultant
804.287.0283
ewebber@hqi.solutions