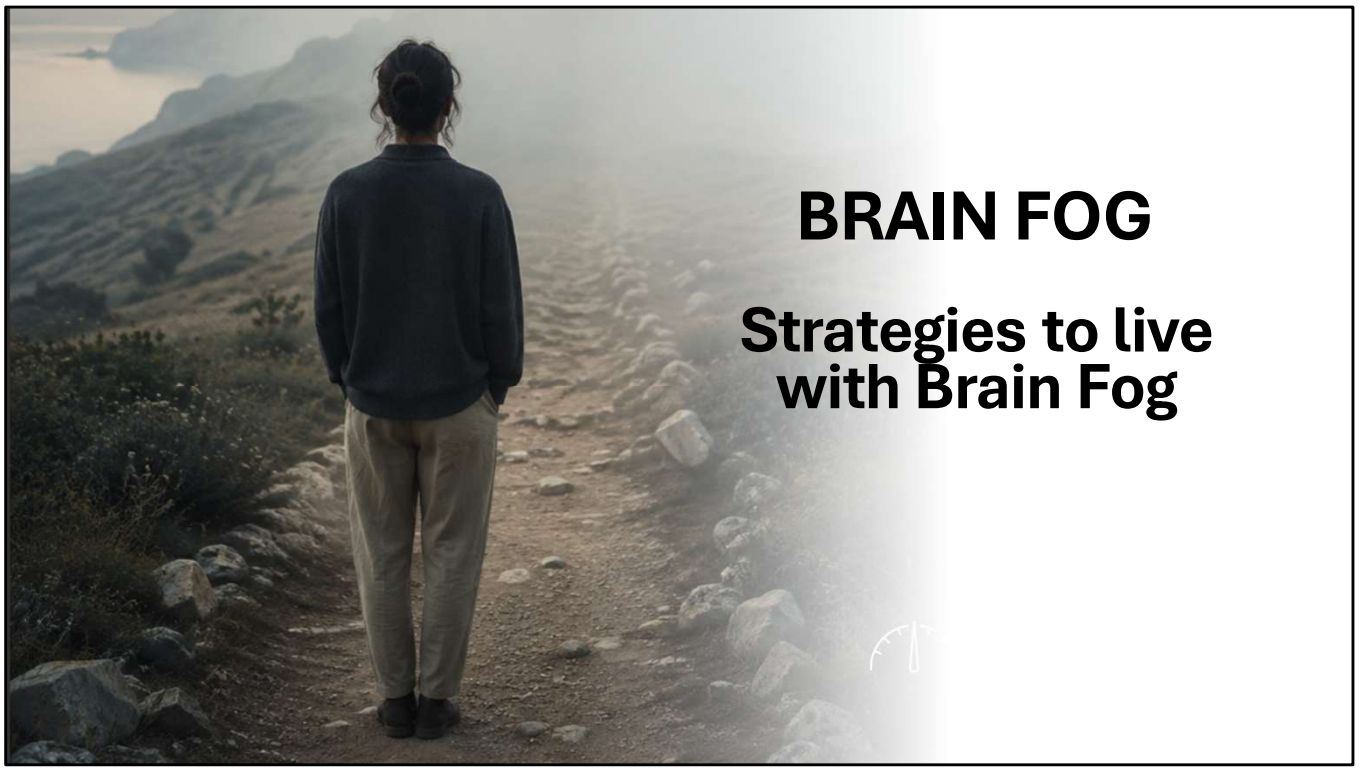


Hello and thank you for joining me today.
Today we're going to explore some practical strategies for managing brain fog. This session is about understanding your symptoms and discovering small, realistic changes that can make everyday life easier.
I encourage you to think about which strategies might work for you. Everyone's experience of brain fog is different, so it's important to find approaches that fit your own circumstances.

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UNDERSTANDING BRAIN FOG

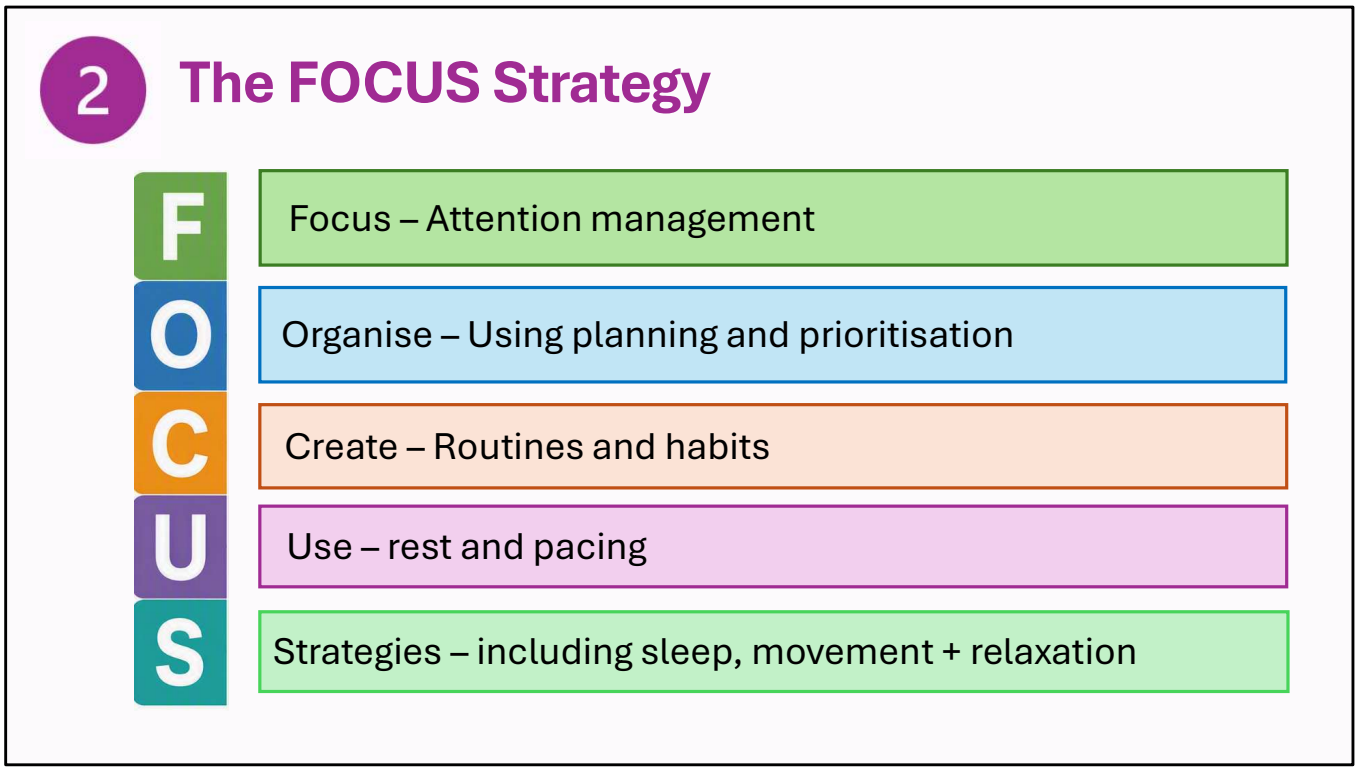
Brain Fog is not a medical condition, rather a group of symptoms which can include difficulties with:

- Thinking
- Memory
- Concentration
- mental clarity

- Often the cause of brain fog is multi-factorial



Before we look at strategies, let's take a moment to understand what brain fog actually is.
Today we're going to talk about brain fog and some simple things we can do to help manage it.
If you've ever walked into a room and forgotten why you're there, struggled to find the right word, lost track of a conversation, or found it harder to concentrate than usual, you're not alone. Brain fog is a common experience for many people living with long-term health conditions. It can feel frustrating, particularly when you're trying to work, manage daily activities, or keep up with family life.
Often there isn't a single cause. Factors like fatigue, stress, illness, poor sleep,hormones, medication and other health conditions can all contribute.
Brain fog can affect confidence, daily activities, work, relationships and emotional wellbeing, which is why finding practical management strategies can be so valuable



The FOCUS strategy provides a simple framework for managing attention and memory difficulties.
The key message here is consistency.
No single strategy works every time, but using techniques regularly helps strengthen new habits and supports better concentration over time.
Think of these strategies as tools in a toolbox. Different situations may require different tools.

Focus- Strategies for Reduced Attention

Check Your Spotlight



Ask yourself:

- What is your spotlight on right now?
- Is this where I want my spotlight?
- What deserves my focus the most?

Many people describe feeling as though their attention is constantly drifting, they're easily distracted, or they're struggling to stay focused on one task for any length of time. The important thing to remember is that attention is a limited resource. We only have so much mental energy available at any given time.
This slide uses the image of a **spotlight** to help us think about attention and focus.

Imagine your attention is like the beam from a torch or spotlight. Wherever the spotlight shines is where your brain's resources are directed. When concentration is working well, we can deliberately point that spotlight at the task we want to focus on. However, when we're experiencing brain fog, that spotlight can start moving around without us realising. It might be pulled towards distracting thoughts, worries about things we need to do later, phone notifications, background conversations, physical symptoms, fatigue, or frustrations about not being able to focus as well as we used to.

As a result, we may be physically present in a meeting, reading a report, or having a conversation, but our mental spotlight is somewhere else entirely.
That's why it can be helpful to pause throughout the day and ask ourselves the three questions shown on the slide.

The first question is **'What is my spotlight on right now?'**
This is about becoming aware of where your attention has gone. Perhaps you're trying to

write an email but are actually thinking about your next appointment. Perhaps you're reading a document but keep getting distracted by notifications or background noise. Simply noticing where your attention is can be the first step in regaining control.
The second question is **'Is this where I want my spotlight?'**
Sometimes our minds naturally drift towards things that feel urgent, stressful, or worrying. While these thoughts may be important, they can pull us away from what we're trying to achieve in the present moment. Asking this question helps us decide whether our attention is serving us or distracting us.

The final question is: **'What deserves my focus the most right now?'**
This links closely with prioritisation. Rather than trying to focus on everything at once, identify the one task, conversation, or activity that most needs your attention. When we deliberately choose where to place our spotlight, we often feel less overwhelmed and more productive.

Remember, concentration isn't about never getting distracted. Everybody's attention wanders. The skill is recognising when it has wandered and gently bringing it back to what matters most.
The more often we practice checking our spotlight, the better we become at managing our attention, protecting our mental energy, and reducing the impact of brain fog on everyday activities.

F Focus-

Strategies for Reduced Attention



Let's take a moment to look at this image. Many of us can probably relate to what's happening here, whether your experience is at work, out with friends or at home.

In this picture there are conversations going on in the background, bright lights overhead, notifications coming through, piles of paperwork, competing demands all requiring attention at the same time.
Our brains are constantly receiving information from our environment. To concentrate effectively, the brain must filter out what's important and ignore what's not. But when you have brain fog and there are too many distractions competing for our attention, that filtering process becomes much harder.

Think about the loud conversations shown in the image. Even when we're trying not to listen, our brains automatically process speech. This means some of our attention is being directed away from the task we're trying to focus on. Similarly, interruptions such as colleagues asking questions, phone calls, emails, or messages can break our concentration. Research suggests that once we're interrupted, it can take time to fully refocus on what we were doing.

The bright lighting, visual clutter, and busy workspace can also add to what we call our 'cognitive load'. Cognitive load is the amount of mental effort our brain is using at any one time. The more information our brain has to process, the fewer resources we have

available for concentrating, problem-solving, or remembering information.

Another challenge shown here is multitasking. Although many of us feel we're multitasking successfully, what the brain is often doing is rapidly switching between activities. Every time we move from an email to a report, then to a meeting, then back to a phone call, our brain must constantly reorient itself. This uses energy and can leave us feeling mentally exhausted.

For individuals experiencing brain fog and living with a long-term health condition, these effects can be magnified. What might feel like a manageable level of distraction for one person can quickly become overwhelming for someone whose cognitive resources are already stretched.

The impact can be significant. We may find it harder to stay focused on one task, forget information more easily, take longer to complete work, make more mistakes, or feel increasingly stressed and frustrated. Over time, this can affect both productivity and wellbeing.

The important thing to remember is that concentration isn't simply about trying harder. Often it's about creating the right conditions for focus. Small changes such as reducing clutter, managing notifications, using headphones, taking regular breaks, working on one task at a time, or finding a quieter space can make a real difference.

The key message is this: when our environment demands too much of our attention, our ability to think clearly suffers. By reducing distractions and protecting our focus, we give our brains the best opportunity to perform at their best.

Organise with A Plan



Brain fog makes everyday tasks feel much harder than they used to, an important strategy is to plan in advance. Brain fog often makes it harder to think on the spot or manage unexpected changes. Planning ahead can reduce the number of decisions we need to make during the day. Simple things like preparing for meetings, making a to-do list the night before, organising clothes or meals in advance, or scheduling important tasks can help reduce stress and improve focus.

One helpful strategy is to use a diary, planner, organiser, or app. When we're experiencing brain fog, our memory can feel less reliable. Rather than trying to keep everything in our heads, writing things down creates what we might think of as an 'external memory system'. Recording appointments, tasks, reminders, and deadlines means we don't need to use valuable mental energy trying to remember everything. This can reduce stress and free up cognitive capacity for other activities.

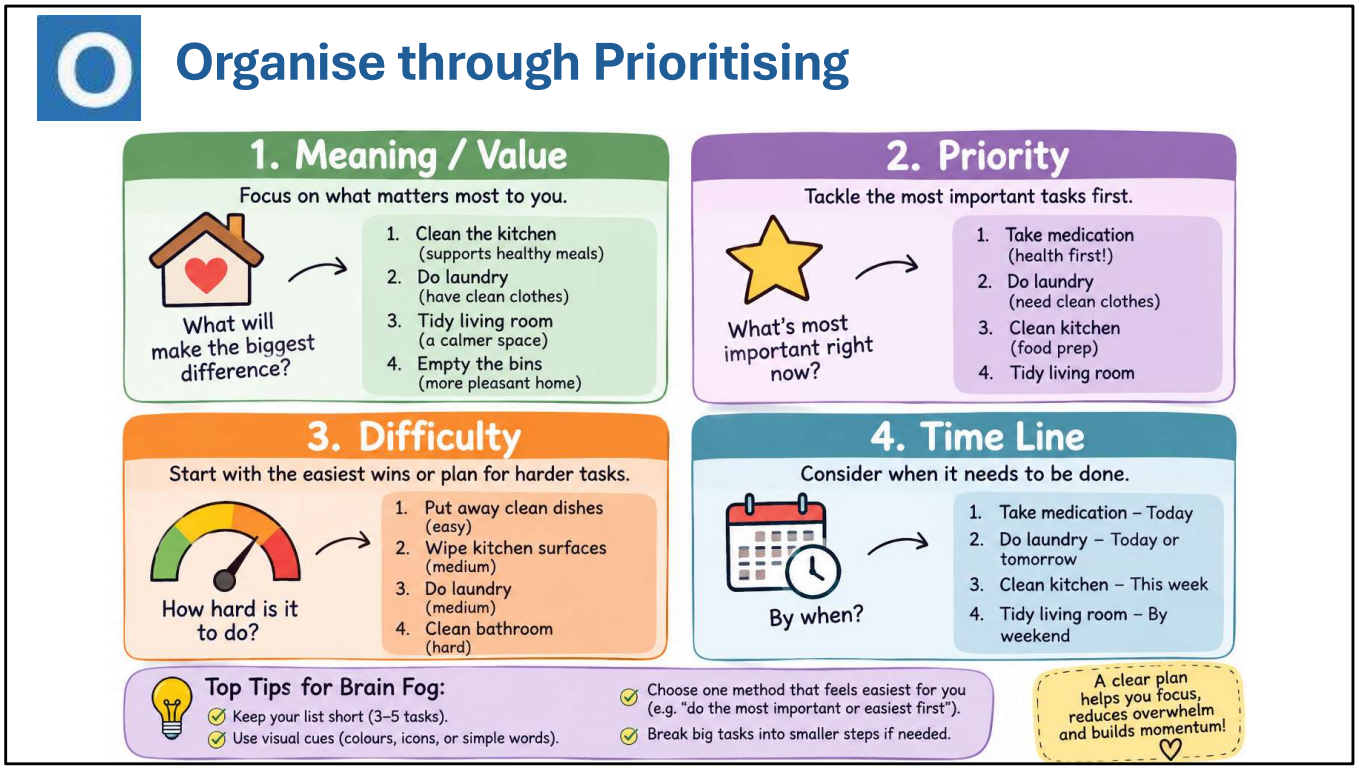
A second strategy is to make the most of technology. Many people find tools such as voice notes, reminders, digital calendars, task management apps, and AI-powered assistants incredibly helpful. For example, a voice note can capture an idea before it is forgotten, while reminders using products such as Alexa can prompt us to complete important tasks. AI tools can help summarise information, draft documents, create action plans, or organise thoughts when concentration is reduced. Using technology

effectively can reduce the mental workload and help compensate for difficulties with memory and attention.

It's also important to plan both rest and activity. Many people continue working until they feel completely mentally exhausted before taking a break. Unfortunately, once we've reached that point, it can take much longer to recover. Building regular rest periods into the day allows the brain to recharge before fatigue becomes overwhelming. At the same time, staying engaged in meaningful activities helps maintain routine, confidence, and cognitive function. The goal is finding a healthy balance between doing and recovering.

Finally, take time to reflect on the previous week. Ask yourself: What went well? When was my concentration at its best? What activities drained my energy? Were there situations that made my brain fog worse? Reflecting on these patterns can help identify what supports your cognitive function and what challenges it. Over time, this can help you make adjustments and develop strategies that work best for you.

The key message is that brain fog management isn't about trying harder. It's about working smarter. By using tools and technology, planning ahead, balancing activity with rest, and regularly reflecting on what helps, you can reduce the impact of brain fog and make daily life feel more manageable and predictable.
Remember: don't rely solely on memory. Plan, prepare, pace, and reflect. Small changes can have a big impact on mental clarity and confidence.



One strategy that many people find helpful when managing brain fog is learning how to prioritise tasks.
When we're experiencing brain fog, it's easy to look at a long to-do list and feel overwhelmed. Everything can seem equally important, equally urgent, and equally demanding. As a result, we might spend lots of energy deciding what to do rather than actually doing it.

Prioritising helps us use our mental energy more effectively by focusing on what matters most.

A helpful way to do this is to consider four questions: What is most meaningful? What is the highest priority? What is the most difficult? What is most urgent?
Let's start with meaning and value.

Some activities contribute more to our goals, wellbeing, or quality of life than others. When energy and concentration are limited, it's important to identify the tasks that will make the biggest difference. For example, attending an important meeting, spending time with family, completing a key piece of work, or taking part in an activity that supports your health may be more valuable than less important tasks that can wait.

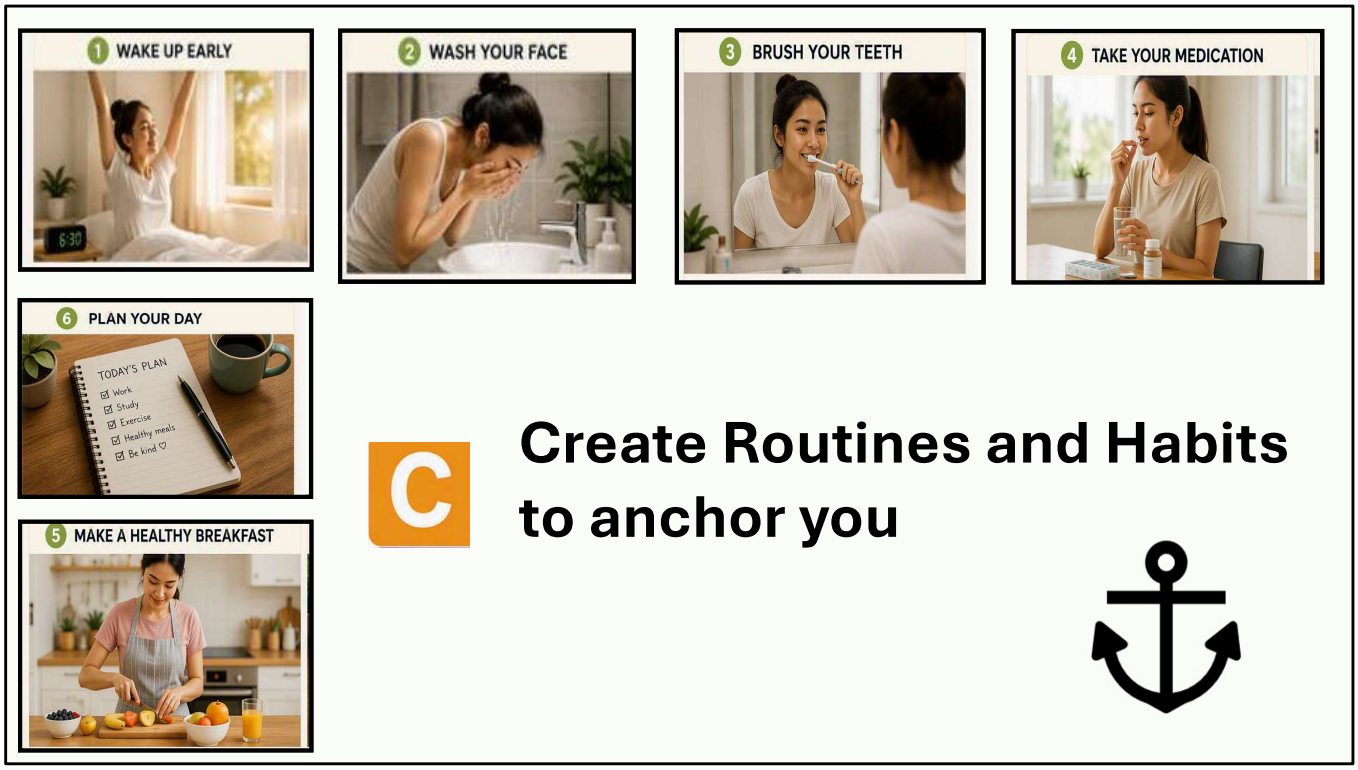
Next, think about priority. Not everything on our to-do list needs to be done today. Ask

yourself, 'What absolutely needs my attention right now?' and 'What could be postponed, delegated, or simplified?' By reducing the number of tasks competing for your attention, you can focus your energy where it will have the greatest impact.
It's also useful to think about difficulty.

Many people notice that their concentration varies throughout the day. If you know that your thinking is clearest in the morning, that may be the best time to tackle challenging activities such as report writing, problem-solving, planning, or decision-making. Less demanding tasks, such as checking emails or routine administration, can be saved for times when your energy is lower.

Finally, consider urgency. Some tasks have deadlines or consequences if they're not completed promptly. Identifying these tasks early can help prevent unnecessary stress and last-minute pressure. However, it's important not to treat everything as urgent. Sometimes what feels urgent isn't necessarily important.
A useful question to ask is: *'What is the one thing I need to achieve today that will make the biggest difference?'* Starting with that task can provide a sense of accomplishment and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

Prioritising helps you work with your brain, not against it. Focus on what has the greatest meaning, priority, difficulty, or urgency, and let go of the idea that everything needs done at once.



Let's talk about the power of routines and habits when it comes to managing brain fog. When we're experiencing brain fog, even simple daily activities can require much more effort than they used to. We may struggle to remember things, lose track of tasks, become distracted, or find ourselves constantly wondering, '*What was I meant to be doing next?*' This is where routines can be incredibly helpful.

A **routine** is simply a sequence of activities that we do regularly, often at the same time or in the same order each day. As shown on the slide, it might be waking up, washing, brushing your teeth, taking medication, having breakfast, and planning your day.

One of the biggest benefits of routines is that they act as a **memory aid**. Instead of relying on concentration or memory alone, the routine itself becomes the reminder. For example, how often do people forget to take lunchtime medication? This can happen because lunch occurs at different times each day, there aren't any other established activities linked to taking the tablets, or something distracts us at the critical moment. However, if taking medication becomes attached to an existing routine, such as eating lunch or making a cup of tea, it becomes much easier to remember.

Many people with brain fog notice difficulties with concentration and working memory. Establishing routines, using checklists, and following set sequences of activities reduces

the need to hold information in your head. It makes it less likely that important tasks are forgotten and reduces the mental effort required to get through the day.
Importantly, having a routine doesn't mean being rigid, strict, or doing everything perfectly. Instead, think of a routine as a helpful guide for your day. It provides a framework that supports you when your concentration or memory feels less reliable.

Another major benefit is **predictability**. When we don't know what's coming next, our brains have to work harder. We make more decisions, process more information, and expend more energy planning and organising ourselves. Having a predictable structure reduces uncertainty, which can lower stress and create a greater sense of control. Quite simply, when life feels more predictable, thinking often feels easier.

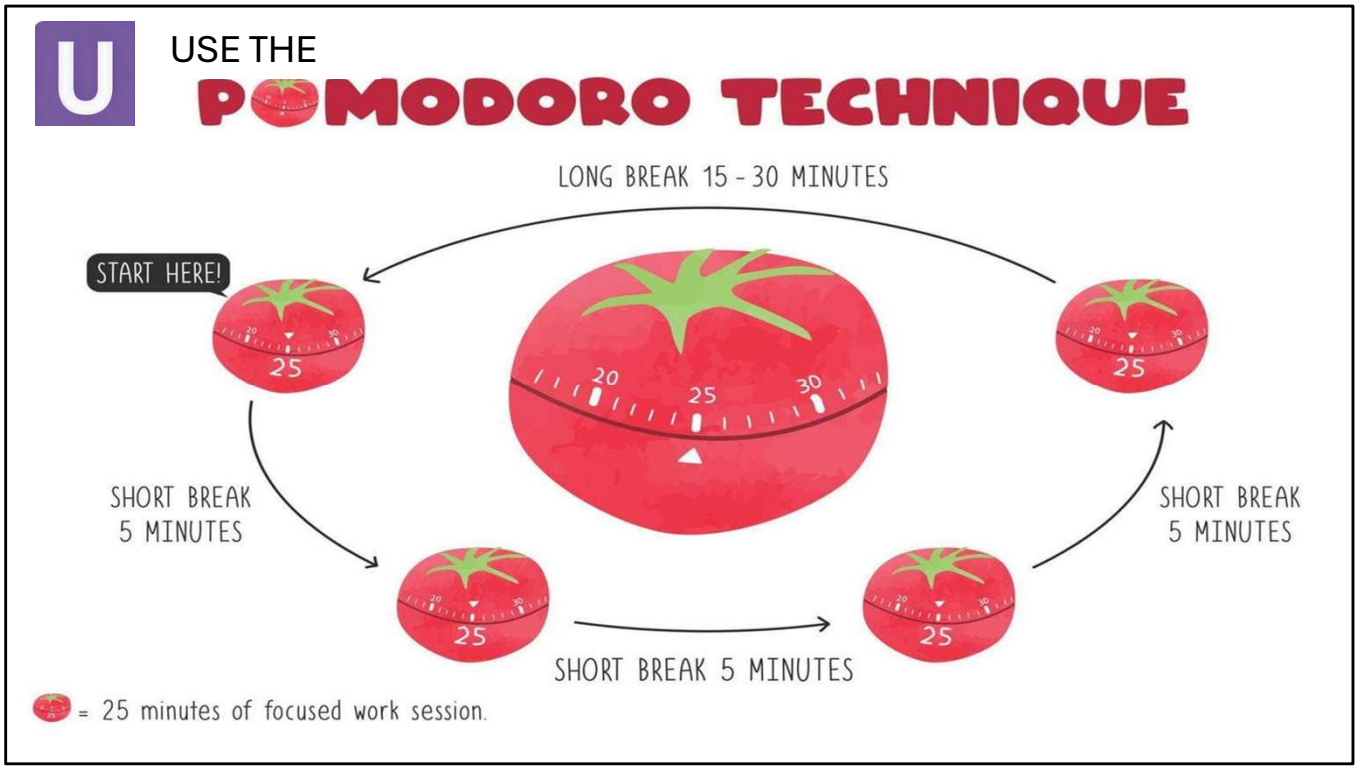
Routines can also help with **energy management**. Many people experiencing brain fog fall into a 'boom and bust' cycle. On a good day they feel motivated and try to do everything at once, only to find themselves exhausted and struggling for the next few days. A structured routine encourages us to pace activities more evenly, helping us spread our energy across the day and avoid overdoing it.

Having designated times for certain tasks can also improve concentration. Rather than constantly switching between activities and deciding what to do next, we can focus on one thing at a time. Fewer transitions often mean better focus, greater productivity, and less mental fatigue.

Over time, routines can develop into **habits**. Habits are behaviours that occur automatically with very little conscious thought. The less mental effort a task requires, the more cognitive energy we have available for the things that matter most.

Finally, maintaining regular routines around sleep, meals, hydration, movement, medication, rest, and planning supports overall brain health and recovery. These small, consistent actions can have a surprisingly powerful effect on reducing the impact of brain fog over time.

As the quote on the slide says, *'Over time, as daily routines become second nature, discipline morphs into habit.'*



One of the most important skills for managing brain fog is learning how to pace yourself. Many people living with brain fog describe having good days and bad days. On a good day, it can be tempting to do as much as possible, catch up on tasks, and make the most of feeling mentally clearer. The problem is that this can sometimes lead to mental fatigue, worsening concentration, and increased symptoms later on.

As discussed in earlier sessions, this is often known as the **'boom and bust' cycle**. We use all our mental energy when we're feeling good, then find ourselves struggling to think clearly or function effectively afterwards. Pacing helps us avoid this cycle.

Rather than working until we're exhausted and then taking a break, pacing encourages us to build recovery time into our day before fatigue becomes overwhelming. The goal is to use our energy sustainably and maintain concentration for longer.

One useful tool for pacing is the **Pomodoro Technique**, shown on this slide. The Pomodoro Technique is based on a simple principle: focus on one task for a set period of time, then take a short break.

Traditionally, this involves:

- Working in blocks of activity, this could be 5 mins or 30 minutes, adapt it to meet your activity levels.

- Taking a set **break**
- Repeating x 3
- Taking a longer break of **15-30 minutes** after completing 3 work sessions

The reason this works is that concentration requires energy. For someone experiencing brain fog, attention and mental stamina can be reduced, making it difficult to stay focused for long periods. By working in shorter, manageable chunks, we're asking our brains to focus for a realistic amount of time rather than trying to maintain concentration for hours at a stretch.

The breaks are just as important as the work periods. They provide an opportunity for the brain to recover, process information, and prevent mental overload.

During a break, you might:
- Stand up and stretch
- Walk around the room
- Practise some breathing exercises
- Get a drink of water
- Look away from your screen
- Spend a few minutes outside

The key is to give your brain a genuine opportunity to reset before returning to the task.

Another benefit of the Pomodoro Technique is that it can make large tasks feel less overwhelming. Instead of thinking, *"I need to write this report,"* you can think, *"I only need to focus on this for the next 25 minutes."* Breaking activities into smaller chunks often makes it easier to get started and maintain momentum.
Using a timer can help you stick to your agreed times.
It's also worth remembering your activity times may vary during the day and after significant periods of activity.

Don't wait until your brain is exhausted before taking a break.



The good news is that there are some practical strategies that can help support your brain and improve mental clarity over time.

The first is **breathing exercises**.

When we're stressed, worried, or overwhelmed, our bodies go into a heightened state of alert. This can make it much harder for our brains to focus on thinking, remembering, and processing information. Taking a few slow, deep breaths can help calm the nervous system and signal to the body that it's safe to relax. It doesn't need to take long. Even one or two minutes of slowing your breathing can help you feel more grounded and improve your ability to focus on the task in front of you.

The second strategy is **relaxation**.

Many of us spend our days constantly doing, thinking, planning, and problem-solving. When our brains don't get enough opportunities to rest, mental fatigue can build up. Activities such as mindfulness, meditation, listening to music, spending time in nature, or simply taking a quiet break can help reduce that mental overload. Think of relaxation as giving your brain permission to switch off for a little while and recharge.

The third strategy is **sleeping well**.

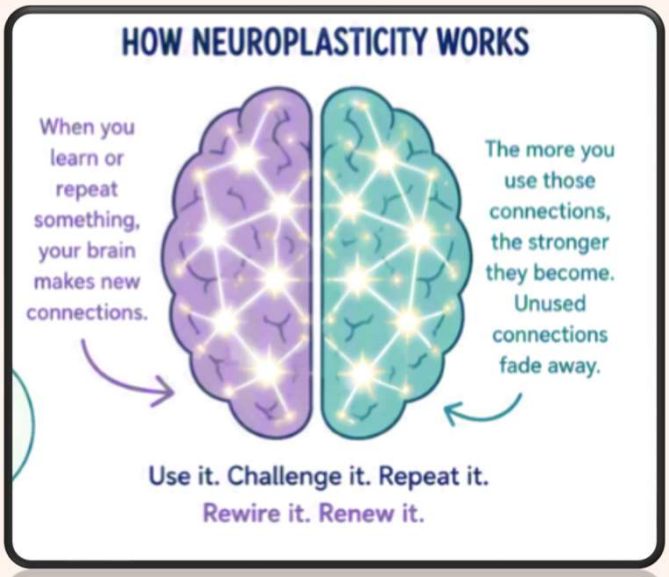
Sleep is one of the most powerful tools we have for supporting brain health. While we're asleep, our brains are busy processing information, strengthening memories, and recovering from the demands of the day. If we're not getting enough quality sleep, it's often much harder to concentrate, remember information, or make decisions. That's why protecting your sleep routine can have such a positive impact on reducing brain fog.

Finally, let's talk about **staying active**.
Physical activity isn't just good for our bodies; it's great for our brains too. Movement increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain, helping it function more efficiently. Being active can also improve mood, reduce stress, boost energy levels, and help us sleep better. And the important thing to remember is that activity doesn't need to mean going to the gym. A short walk, some gentle stretching, gardening, or even moving around the house all count.
When it comes to managing brain fog, it's not about finding one magic solution. It's often the small things we do consistently that make the biggest difference. Taking time to breathe, allowing yourself moments of relaxation, prioritising sleep, and keeping active can all work together to support a clearer, healthier mind.
So remember the key message from today's slide: **Breathe. Rest. Sleep. Move. Small steps really can lead to a clearer, brighter you.**"

Brain Training

Aids to brain training:

- Brain training app
- Jigsaw and puzzles
- Crosswords etc
- Everyday activities



You are not stuck, you are strengthening. One choice at a time.

One of the most encouraging things we know about the brain is that it has an amazing ability to adapt and change throughout life. This ability is known as neuroplasticity.

Neuroplasticity simply means that the brain can form new connections and strengthen existing ones through learning, practice, and repetition.

As shown on the slide, every time we learn something new, practise a skill, or repeatedly use a particular pathway, the brain creates and strengthens connections between brain cells. The more those connections are used, the stronger and more efficient they become. Connections that are rarely used can become weaker over time.

Think of it like walking through a field. The first time you walk across it, there's no clear path. But if you walk the same route day after day, a pathway begins to form. The brain works in a similar way. Repeated practice creates stronger pathways that become easier to access. This is particularly important when we're talking about brain fog.

When experiencing brain fog, people often worry that difficulties with memory, concentration, attention, or processing information are permanent. While brain fog can be incredibly frustrating, neuroplasticity reminds us that the brain retains the ability to learn, adapt, and strengthen skills throughout life.

This doesn't mean that symptoms disappear overnight or that brain fog is 'all in the mind.' Rather, it means we can actively support our brain by giving it opportunities to practise and build new pathways.

This is where brain training activities can be helpful.Activities such as puzzles, crosswords, memory games, brain-training apps, learning a new skill, reading, problem-solving, or even everyday activities that require focus and planning can all help challenge the brain. These activities encourage the brain to stay active and engaged.

What's important is not necessarily finding the perfect brain-training exercise, but regularly using your brain in meaningful ways.
For example:

- Learning a new recipe.
- Following directions on a walk.
- Planning a shopping list.
- Learning a new hobby.
- Completing a crossword or puzzle.
- Using a brain-training app.
- Having conversations and social interactions.

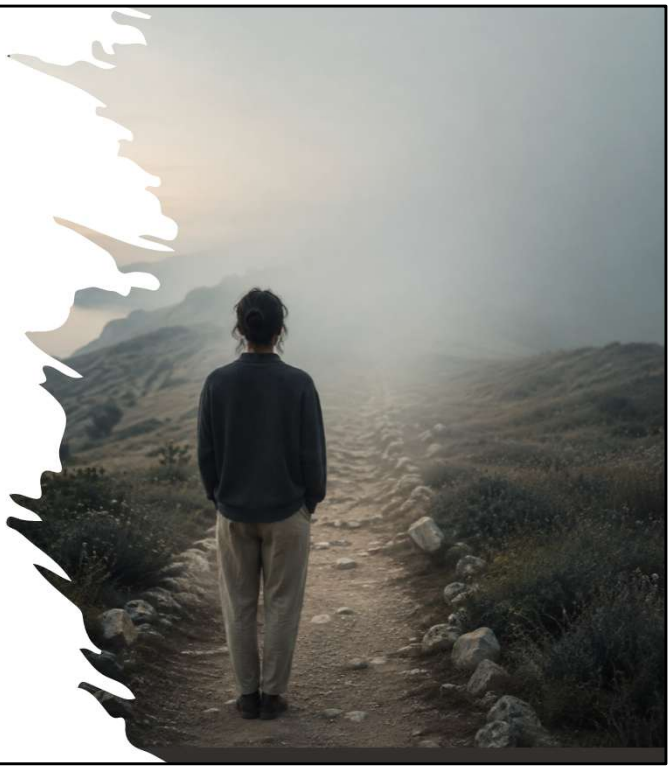
These activities all encourage the brain to build and strengthen neural connections.

However, it's also important to remember that brain training should be balanced with rest. Just as muscles need recovery after exercise, the brain benefits from periods of rest and restoration. The goal is to challenge the brain without overwhelming it.

Many of the strategies we've discussed throughout this session, such as prioritising tasks, using routines, practising concentration techniques, staying active, sleeping well, and managing stress, also support neuroplasticity. The healthier and more engaged our brains are, the better positioned they are to adapt and recover.

Conclusion

- Be patient and compassionate with yourself.
- Remember the FOCUS strategy to guide your brain fog management.
- Focus on progress, not perfection.
- Remember:
  - Your brain is adaptable
  - your skills remain valuable
  - With the right strategies, it is possible to live well with brain fog.



As we come to the end of today's session, I'd like us to take a moment to reflect on what we've covered.

We've explored what brain fog is, how it can affect concentration, memory, attention, planning, decision-making, and confidence. For many people, brain fog can feel frustrating, unpredictable, and at times overwhelming. It can often leave us wondering why tasks that once felt easy now require so much effort.
But hopefully today's session has highlighted an important message:

Brain fog does not mean you have lost your abilities. It means your brain may need a different approach.

Throughout this session we've explored a variety of practical strategies that can help.

We've discussed the importance of managing distractions, protecting our attention, and regularly checking where our 'spotlight' is focused.

We've looked at the value of planning and prioritising tasks so that our limited mental energy is directed towards the things that matter most.

We've explored how breathing exercises, relaxation, good sleep, and staying active

support brain health and improve our ability to think clearly.
We've talked about using diaries, technology, routines, reminders, checklists, and habits to reduce our reliance on memory and make daily tasks more manageable.
We've discussed pacing our activities, taking regular breaks, and using strategies such as the Pomodoro Technique to prevent mental exhaustion.

And perhaps most importantly, we've learned about neuroplasticity, the brain's remarkable ability to adapt, learn, and strengthen through practice and repetition.
What all of these strategies have in common is that they help us work with our brains rather than against them.

It's important to remember that there is no single solution to brain fog. Different strategies will work for different people, and what helps one day may need adapting on another day. The goal is not perfection. The goal is to build a personal toolkit of strategies that support you in everyday life.

I would encourage you to leave today with one simple question:
'What is one small change I could make this week?'

It might be scheduling regular rest breaks. It might be using a planner. It might be prioritising one important task each morning, practising a breathing exercise, or establishing a new routine.

Small changes may not feel significant in the moment, but small changes repeated consistently often lead to the biggest improvements over time.

As shown on the picture at the start of todays session, the path ahead may sometimes feel unclear. There may be days when brain fog feels more challenging than others. However, every strategy you use, every routine you build, and every adjustment you make is a step forward.

So my final message is this: Be patient with yourself. Be compassionate with yourself. Focus on progress, not perfection. Your brain is adaptable, your skills remain valuable, and with the right strategies, it is possible to live well with brain fog.
Thank you for taking part today

Resources



Read

- **Long COVID: Brain fog | Long-term effects of COVID-19**

Watch

Cognitive dysfunction

Do

Download a brain training app today e.g. luminosity, brain tree, cognifit,

There are a number of excellent resources available if you'd like to learn more.
Take some time to explore the reading materials, videos and practical tools suggested here.
As you leave today, I encourage you to choose just one strategy that feels realistic for you and give it a try this week.
Small steps are often the most sustainable.
Thank you for your time today, and I hope you've found some useful ideas to help you manage brain fog with greater confidence.