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## **Belmont Village Senior Living Offers a New Way of Thinking About Mental Fitness**

Increasingly, studies show that mental agility among older adults is not just a matter of luck. It was long believed that the brain did not change in adulthood, but recent research has shown that brain plasticity actually can occur when something new is learned and memorized. This breakthrough discovery means that it is possible with proper mental fitness to maintain, and in some cases even attain, cognitive function in aging.

However, learning is key. “To be effective, a mental workout has to meet specific criteria and include an educational component that is appropriately targeted to ability level,” said Beverly Sanborn, gerontologist for Belmont Village Senior Living.

To meet this challenge, Belmont Village offers a range of “brain fitness” programs that include mental and physical work-outs, with learning and support opportunities across the cognitive continuum. Brain plasticity occurs, in part, as a result of increased cell connections, which help the brain to compensate for lost cells. The Belmont Village programs are specifically designed to boost cognitive reserve and stimulate the growth of these connections in the hippocampus, where new memories are formed, in the frontal lobe, which is the seat of judgment and problem solving, and in the language areas of the brain.

The company’s three-tiered enrichment approach includes the **MBA Club** (for mind-body-awareness), which is designed for residents with no cognitive impairment who want to stay active and engaged. Activities focus on critical cognitive domains and residents set and track their learning goals with the assistance of a “personal trainer.”

Belmont’s **Circle of Friends** program is for residents with mild cognitive impairment and offers a specific calendar of research-based activities designed to help maintain function.

For residents with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, Belmont Village provides separate, secured Neighborhoods within its communities, where activities are tailored to individual abilities.

“Our goal is to provide the ‘just right challenge’ for each of our residents,” said Sanborn. We’ve found that programs are enhanced when residents with similar functional abilities participate together - residents are more likely to engage and less likely to become frustrated or bored, which opens the door for learning.”

For more information about Belmont Village Senior Living, please visit [www.belmontvillage.com](http://www.belmontvillage.com). # # #