



BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Your **TBH FLEX 1.0** course begins right now! Here are some best practices tips to get you off to a successful start.

GET READY! Start by determining the W's of your course: Who, What, When, and Where.

WHO? Consider who will be participating in your class. Are you offering it to residents of an active aging community or members of a fitness club? At the local library or club for area residents? What degree of cognitive challenge do your participants face? Your class will be most successful if your participants are at approximately the same level of cognitive ability. However, you can, for example, include family members or caregivers in the class. Once you have determined who you will include in the course, you can tailor the course to best fit their needs.

WHAT? Decide how you would like to run the course. The **TBH FLEX 1.0** course is designed for continuous, ongoing delivery across your calendar, with exercises that provide different student experiences each time they are taught. However, you can also offer the course as a series, using a selection of the classes to suit the time you have available. Enroll a specific group for the entire course, or offer **TBH FLEX 1.0** as a series of “drop-in” classes. Just remember that the course is best taught in a small group of 6 to 8 per class for optimal social engagement. You will also find modifications in your trainer materials for adjusting the classes to one-to-one settings or virtual delivery for continued learning no matter what the setting.

WHEN? Figure out what time of day might work best for your students. We recommend offering the program at least twice during the week, on different days and at different times to give everyone the chance to fit the **TBH FLEX 1.0** classes into their schedule.

WHERE? The **TBH FLEX 1.0** course is flexible and can be taught in person, online or using a combination of both for a hybrid class. For in-person classes, use a space large enough to comfortably hold the group as they engage in a variety of exercises that require movement in the classroom. The course is designed for “circle” formation seating. Having your group seated in a circle means they can easily see you and each other, making it easier for everyone to follow non-verbal cueing and engage socially as a group. If teaching in a hallway, be sure everyone can see and hear you as you lead the class. For online or hybrid classes, set your camera to show the other students and any class materials you may want everyone to see.

GET SET! Now that you've covered the basics, it's time to make sure you are well prepared to teach your **TBH FLEX 1.0** course.

READ THROUGH THE TOOLKIT MATERIALS. Everything you need to successfully teach the course is housed online in your toolkit. Familiarize yourself with all the materials, including the course as well as the trainer education, planning and marketing resources.



FIND YOUR TEACHING VOICE. Read through classes more than once to familiarize yourself with them. While the classes offer scripting, we strongly encourage you to find your own voice and phrasing for teaching the course. Try practicing with someone beforehand, so you get an idea of the flow of material.

PREPARE YOUR COURSE MATERIALS! Print out all the course teaching materials, including the games, logs, worksheets, and handouts for each class. Put the materials by class into separate folders to organize them. Pay careful attention to items where you will need multiple copies, and to the logs or card decks that you will need to collate or laminate in advance of a class. Make a note of additional items needed for each class that must be purchased or ordered in advance, such as food. For virtual delivery classes, email or distribute any worksheets or handouts needed so distance learners are prepared.

GO! These field-tested tips go a long way in making your course successful!

GET THE WORD OUT! Launching a new program can take a bit of promotion! Spread the word using the marketing resources in your toolkit. These include a video invitation you can add to your e-signage or member portal program, a community presentation with slides and interactive exercises you can use to introduce the course to your community, as well as suggested copy for newsletters, postings, and press releases. Finally, enlist colleagues and community leaders to help you build interest. Ask them to announce the course in their other classes or meetings. And don't forget to add the TBH class to your calendar!

SIGN THEM UP! The TBH FLEX 1.0 course is best delivered in a small group format, with 6 to 8 students in a class. The size limit is important to a successful class experience, especially with clients who have more memory challenge. For that reason, we strongly encourage you to pre-register folks for the course. This ensures you have attendance and reduces the chances that you will have to turn people away at the door. If you have more than 8 people for the class, you can add another section of the course to the calendar or create a waiting list for the next session.

COMMUNICATE YOUR CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS. Make the class topics available in advance, adding them to your community calendar or offering the class schedule to interested parties. Use the *TBH Student Welcome Letter* and blank class schedule in the Planning section of your toolkit to encourage participation. Arrange for reminder calls or emails to anyone who has registered or comes to the first few sessions to support continued attendance.

GET EVALUATED! Ask participants who attend regularly to complete the *TBH Student Survey*, found in the Planning section of your toolkit. Use either the text or picture-based surveys especially designed for FLEX students. It's a great way to get feedback and build on your success! You may submit the evaluations to Total Brain Health for us to collate and share the data back to you.



BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING PERSONS LIVING WITH MEMORY LOSS

The **TBH FLEX 1.0** course is unique among our programs in that it supports better cognitive well-being for those facing memory loss. Some best practices tips for teaching this course include:

GO SLOW. When determining your **TBH FLEX 1.0** course structure, be sure to allow ample time for your class to complete the training activities. Make sure you have the time to fully explore and enjoy the class training together, as that is key to a successful course. There is no need to rush, and better to leave more time for brain health training!

GO SHORT. Consider limiting class lengths by skipping section exercises as needed, especially if your group consists of several folks with great cognitive challenge. We have found that individuals dealing with greater cognitive loss benefit from and enjoy more frequent, shorter length classes. With memory loss, it can often be easier to hold focus and be meaningfully part of the conversation in a shorter length class.

FOLLOW THE THREE C'S OF COMMUNICATION. The intellectual challenges of memory loss can in many cases make it difficult to follow complex, idiomatic speech patterns. Our **TBH FLEX** series uses scripting that follows some longstanding advice known as the “Three C’s”:

- ✓ **Concise.** Use language that is direct and to the point. Avoid excessive description and digression in your speech, especially when giving direction. “Plain” speech is easier to follow, especially when we are having trouble holding our focus or keeping track of information due to memory loss.
- ✓ **Consistent.** Use language in consistent ways. Repeat phrasing, directions, and try and use the same or similar wording as you instruct the course. You will note that the introductory and ending materials for the TBH classes are almost identical in wording. This is intentional, as it offers consistent communication, making it easier for participants to follow and retain the directions.
- ✓ **Calm.** Speak in a calm, level tone of voice. Keep the pace of your voice even, and aim to speak with deliberate, steady delivery. Doing so makes it easier for everyone to follow your lead in the class.

FOSTER CONNECTIONS. One of the most valuable aspects of the TBH FLEX 1.0 course is the opportunity class members have to connect with each other. Guide members of the group to engage with each other, not just with you. Have participants direct questions and talk together with other classmates. Foster an environment that gives everyone ample time to respond in conversation, as some class members will need a few extra minutes to find a word or communicate a thought. Encourage your class to spend time together outside of the classroom too, as appropriate, supporting each other to engage in the brain healthy lifestyle activities they are learning in the classroom.

PRESERVE PERSONHOOD. Above all else, recognize that each of the class members are valued individuals who should not be defined by a disease. Foster a class environment that focuses on the persons in your classroom, and not on their losses. At all times set an example of respect and preserve the dignity of your group members.



NO JUDGEMENT, NO WRONG ANSWERS. Make it clear that your TBH FLEX classroom is a “judgement-free” zone, where everyone is welcome and accepted, where there are no wrong answers, and where just showing up and being part of the group is all that matters. In fact, going “off track” is not only okay, but sometimes leads the class down a path that is richer and offers more opportunity to connect and learn from each other. And that is also good for our brains!

HAVE FUN! We hope that throughout the course everyone – including the trainers! - will have fun, laugh a lot, and enjoy the warmth of new friendships.

... AND DON'T FORGET!

Photographs, completed class materials, student quotes, and the like are great ways to share the success of your **TBH FLEX 1.0** course! Create a bulletin board, share in your newsletters, on your website or online in social media. Be sure to “tag” Total Brain Health on Facebook or Twitter so we can help spread the word about the great work you are doing!