Neuro Futures Championship Game

CHANGING BRAINS

Materials

- Neuro Futures Technology Cards
- Bracket board
- Tape or stand for bracket board, depending on printing choice

10–20 min   **2–6 players**

Learning Objectives

- People's values determine which technologies are developed and used.
- New technologies change society, sometimes in unexpected ways.
- Scientists, engineers, and designers use their creativity to invent things and imagine the future, just like you do.
- Brain research benefits from many perspectives, including yours.

Big Questions

- How might future brain technologies change our society?
- How can we include many diverse perspectives and priorities in the development of brain technologies?

Note to Facilitator: This activity is designed as an open-ended, conversational experience. There are no right or wrong answers; the goal is to facilitate self-reflection and dialogue among participants. It is ideal for large events and other settings where the number of participants, and the time they spend on the activity, are variable—the activity can last a few minutes (if playing a single match) to 20+ minutes (if playing the whole bracket and engaging in deep discussion), with as many participants as can reasonably discuss together (ideally 2–6 participants).

Invitation for Visitors

"Would you like to play a game exploring the future of brain technology?"

Setup

Select 8 of the 12 Technology Cards and their corresponding velcro cards. Spread out the Technology Cards across the front of the table, facing participants. Attach the velcro cards (in random order) to the outermost positions on the bracket board, as in the image below:
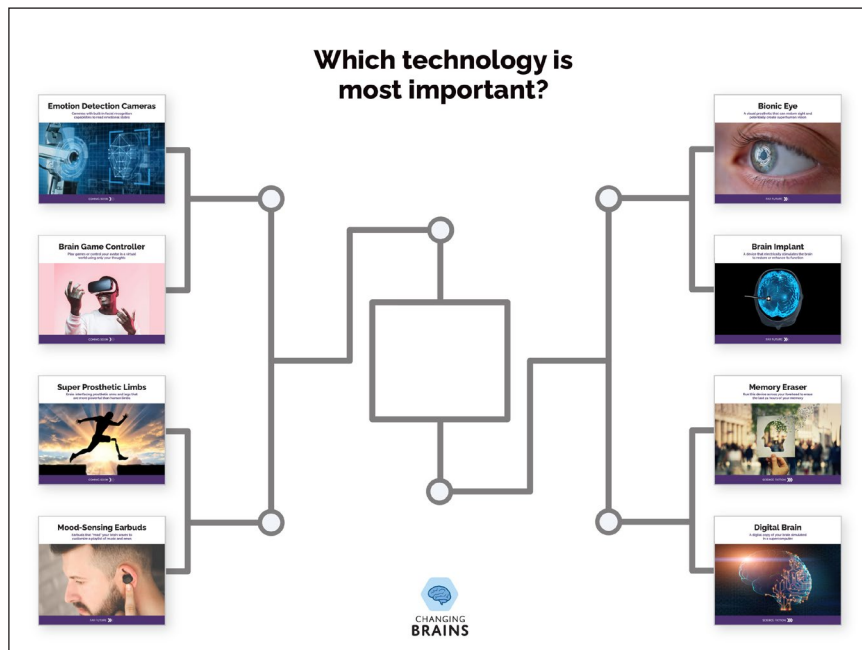
Playing the Game

Explain to participants that they will be deciding, as a group, which of these emerging brain technologies has the most potential to benefit society. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers—the goal is to explore their own priorities and values.

> *"These are some technologies related to the human brain, which are in various stages of development—they don't exist yet, or they exist in clinical trials but are not widely available. We are pitting these technologies against each other in a March Madness–style championship to determine which is the most important future brain technology."*

Point to the first pair of technologies, in the upper left corner of the bracket board.

> *"Our first match is [technology 1] versus [technology 2]. Which of these technologies do you think would be most beneficial? You can read more about them on these cards." (point out the corresponding Neuro Futures Technology Cards)*

You may wish to give a brief verbal description of each technology, in addition to referring participants to the Neuro Futures cards. Encourage participants to discuss their reasoning and debate each other until they come to a consensus. When a winner has been selected, move that velcro card forward to the semifinals bracket, leaving the other velcro card in place.

Continue on to the next pair of technologies, and repeat until each of the initial matches have a determined winner; then move on to the semifinals on the left side of the board, the semifinals on the right side of the board, and lastly the final match.

Announce the winning technology dramatically—"And the Neuro Futures brain technology champion is…"—and thank the participants for sharing their perspectives. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers, that the goal of this game is to help us to start thinking about these societal and ethical dilemmas before such technologies become widely available. sHaving these kinds of conversations can help prepare us to create the future we want to see.

Game Adaptations

Quick Version: If participants only have a few minutes to spend on the activity, invite them to determine the winner of a single match and then continue the game with the next group of participants.

Winner Tally: You may wish to keep a tally of the championship-winning technologies on a piece of paper, as participants are often curious about which technology has won most often.