

Picking Your Brain

By Ruby Tozzi

The brain is a highly complex instrument, with a long string of components that allows it to undertake a multitude of key body functions. High school freshmen Vimbai Ndlovu's potential aspiration is to study these connections. The first step in understanding Ndlovu's consideration of the neuropsychologist profession, is looking further into what exactly she would do in the position. When asked what her interpretation of the career was, she says that "...a neuropsychologist is someone who studies how the brain functions and how it works." According to the Department of Neurology, additional parts of the job include studying the relationship between brain activity and behavior, as well as conducting evaluations to characterize behavioral and cognitive changes resulting from central nervous system damage from disease or injury.

In expressing her specific intrigue in the studies, Ndlovu says, "I just find it really fascinating how the brain functions and I want to know more. Like how we have certain thoughts and how differently people think from each other; I just find that really interesting."

Studying the human brain and its many functions is currently "just an option" in the ocean of careers for Ndlovu. The primary factor that would provoke her to reconsider it would be, "How long it takes to become a neuropsychologist." It can take from 7-12 years to achieve the proper schooling to take part. First, persons must complete their doctoral degree in psychology with a neuropsychology concentration. Then, depending on the regulations put in place by their particular state, they must complete at least one year of an internship. The degree itself takes 4-6 years and internships typically last 1-4 more years on top of that. Despite not knowing anyone who is currently or formerly in neuroscience, and only being acquainted with

individuals interest in related careers like psychology, it is obvious that she became aware of this vocational availability elsewhere. “I don’t think I actually heard about it anywhere, I was just looking up what kind of doctors study the brain.” Ndlovu concurs that her attraction to the field is almost entirely through intrigue in the human mind, and she recognizes that there are many factors, in addition to the sheer amount of dedication it would take to get through the schooling, that make it a difficult feat. Most prevalent among the other challenges of this particular life path are its youth and expectations. This cross-branch between science and psychology is not yet developed; like any form of investigation or research it is ever-changing. It is particularly a significant amount of change in that any discovery or perceived certainty is almost the ground work for the entire branch. She includes, “I definitely think that is something interesting that I'd want to pursue [exploring science that has hardly any concrete].”

The brain works as a central for every single memory, decision, impression, perception, action, or status that any person has ever held. These concepts fascinate Vimbai Ndlovu and draw her interest to the field that studies the physical and conceptual functions of the brain: neuropsychology.