



HOW TO STAY SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD

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HOW TO STAY SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD

(and how to help others)

By

Trevor & Annie Boulton



The Brain Health Education Institute

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We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading this book and get a lot from the information contained in it.

It is NOT a book about mental health problems, symptoms and cures.

It IS a book about the causes of mental health problems and ways to avoid the things that can lead to addictions and mental illnesses.

It is a practical handbook written by Trevor and Annie Boulton, the founders of The Brain Health Education Institute to show people how simple things can adversely affect our brain function, thinking and behaviour.

It references the 1943 'Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs' and demonstrates that, if and when these needs are not met, the ability to attain optimum mental health is not possible.

The book is a result of many lifetimes of conversations and experience walking alongside disturbed people in all walks of life.

It includes our own personal stories and is a **BIG PICTURE (HOLISTIC) OVERVIEW of mental and emotional health** and the things we can do to establish and maintain it.

Enjoy the book!

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The 'How Are You Going' back cover can be used for Holistic Mental Health assessment and as a conversation tool for coffee shops, staff rooms etc.

Further Resources, Online Training Courses And Implementation Plans Are Available

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UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Connecting BODY, MIND & SPIRIT



BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT - Becomes car, driver and journey

BODY - A car body may be well polished and look fantastic but without a driver and a purpose for use, it might be simply an ornament.

Our body is the vehicle we inhabit. We must care for our body, as well as our brain which manages everything our body does. BODY begins with an overview of the role and function of our physical brain, what our brain needs in order to function correctly, how to maintain its basic chemistry, and how to know when these needs are not being met.

MIND - Our brain is a physical organ, yet it also houses our mind - where we learn, think, imagine and feel. Our mind is like the driver of a vehicle. We can educate our mind to determine our course in life. Often life happens around us, but rather than letting it happen by chance or through circumstances, we can take responsibility for our choices.

MIND explains our in-built, caveman-like responses to stress and the responses we learn in childhood to relieve that stress or shame; as well as how we carry those same responses into adulthood and how they become the ways we can cope with and deal with our shame.

SPIRIT - Purpose is compared to the journey a driver takes in a vehicle. SPIRIT looks at our purpose and meaning in life, as well as their roles in providing fulfilment and happiness; and how to deal with the thinking that can keep us from finding that purpose and ultimate fulfilment.

"Another body, mind and spirit analogy could be a smartphone. The physical body could be Samsung, mind (operating system) could be Android and the spirit (purpose) could be Facebook or YouTube" - Trev



MASLOW'S Order Of Basic Human Needs



Maslow's Order of Basic Human Needs is a motivational theory in psychology dating back more than 70 years, comprising a five tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. The foundational level, Physiological Needs, includes survival needs and deals with our need for food, water and sleep to survive and reproduce. If unmet, the human body struggles to function and all other needs become secondary until these needs are reasonably met.

Boundaries are essential to establishing good routines and sleep patterns. It is advisable to take some time to create boundaries around the type of food we will generally eat. How often will we allow 'sometimes' foods or 'treats'? What are our preferred meal times? Which drinks will we consume? When and how often will we use 'sometimes' drinks? What are our own sleep times? Our children's sleep times and routines? Involve the whole family in these discussions, so everyone is on the same page.

Boundaries are an essential part of helping us and a child feel safe and cared for.

Boundaries establish guidelines which assist a child to learn how to care for and to protect themselves. When working to set boundaries, start young and begin with something small and simple. Establishing boundaries early in life and continuing to set them as children grow means that during the teenage years, we can still have input and a great relationship with our children.

When setting boundaries, expect push-back for up to 6 weeks while a habit or pattern is being established. Persevere! It is so worth it! Boundaries concerning food, water and sleep will protect both the child's and parent's health, as well as building their mental and emotional resilience.

Together, we can elicit generational change by spreading the word that small changes to our hydration, nutrition, sleep habits and sugar consumption can radically improve our brain health, and build mental and emotional resilience.

Ensuring that the Maslow's Basement needs are met builds resilience and immunity.

"Because Food, Water and Sleep form the base of the triangle; it stands to reason that if these critical supports are lost, the whole system collapses.

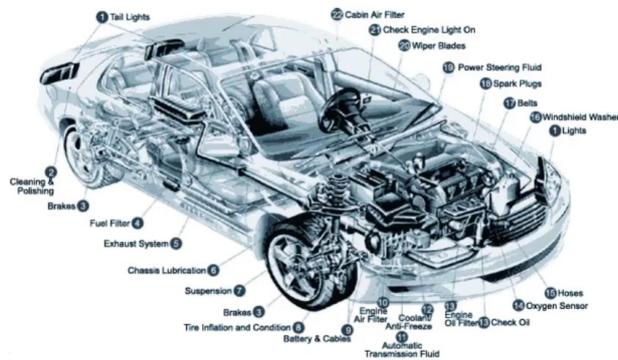
This was particularly true for me. After working for 8 months, 7 days a week, from 8am to 1am the next morning and living on junk food, coke and coffee, needing alcohol to get to sleep; my thinking was distorted, behaviour erratic and moods unpredictable.

The result was a complete mental and emotional breakdown, leading to psychiatric care, family breakdown and the end of my career. All of my physical resources were expended, my brain was dehydrated and unable to function correctly due to the ongoing lack of sleep.

Fortunately, once the physical supports are firmly re-established a process of mental, emotional and intellectual growth can begin again. Life can be rebuilt on a much firmer foundation, often with revised objectives. A Ferrari and a Human Body are both Amazing Machines" - Trev

The Body

BOTH ARE AMAZING MACHINES



A vehicle is an amazing piece of engineering, both body and engine.

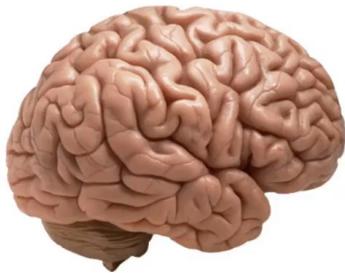
Finely tuned, it can perform well. However, the human body is of THE most amazing design and balance; and it is surprisingly resilient and flexible. Each cell comprises mainly water and functions harmoniously with all the others. The human bodily organs function in perfect harmony, seemingly automatically.

We continuously breathe to oxygenate our entire body. Our heart beats rhythmically pumping our life's blood around our body. We eat, drink and make waste. We perspire to cool our body and have goosebumps when we feel cold. Our muscles and skeleton hold our body together and upright. Our chemistry and immune system keep us well and functioning.

"I am totally amazed at the complexity and design of our human body. But the most amazing thing is that all of the genetic information and blueprints for all of our body construction, body chemistry and brain design function is encoded in the first (single) cell of what divides and divides to become a human embryo" - Trev

The Human Brain

More Powerful Than
200,000,000 Desktop Computers
(Mainly Made of Water)



THE HUMAN BRAIN

More Powerful than 200 Million Desktop Computers

The average human brain weighs about 1.5kg (3lb) and looks like a big, grey, wrinkly sponge about the size of your two fists put together. It is comprised of 78% water. If the water was removed, 60% of dried brain weight is fat.

While we are awake, our brain generates up to 25 watts of power; enough to illuminate a light bulb. Our brain has the thinking capacity of more than 200 million iPads. Our brain's hardware has amazing potential. The software, however, is often sadly lacking.

The brain is basically the headquarters of the human body. Electrical currents pass throughout the entire brain and nervous system to perform an incredible number of tasks. It controls body temperature, blood pressure, heart rate and breathing. It handles physical movement such as walking, standing or sitting. It accepts a flood of information about the world around us from our various senses - seeing, hearing, smelling, touch and taste. It thinks, dreams, reasons and experiences emotions.

All this, even when we are sleeping, is coordinated, controlled and regulated by our brain.

BRAIN CHEMICALS are called neurotransmitters and help signals cross from one neuron, or nerve cell, to the other. Neurotransmitters play a key role in the function of the central nervous system and can either prompt or suppress the further signalling of nearby neurons. Many events can trigger neurotransmitters, but rather than being in the passenger seat, there are many ways we can intentionally cause them to flow. Being in a positive state has significant impact on our motivation, productivity and well-being. Endorphins, Dopamine, Serotonin and Oxytocin are the quartet of neurotransmitters responsible for our happiness.

Endorphins are our own private narcotic - our feel good chemical and natural pain killer. Endorphins are responsible for blocking physical pain and for our feelings of pleasure. Endorphins are released during exercise. You may have heard the term 'runner's high'. This is endorphins at work and the reason that exercising is so good for our mental health.

Dopamine is another feel good chemical. Dopamine is the motivation molecule in charge of our pleasure and reward system. Dopamine motivates us to take action toward goals, desires and needs; and gives a surge of reinforcing pleasure when we achieve them.

Serotonin is our 'happy hormone', the brain chemical responsible for regulating our moods. It is the leadership chemical which is responsible for feelings of significance, importance, pride and status. Serotonin is also responsible for social behaviour, appetite and digestion, immune function, sleep, memory and sexual function. Therefore, it has a wide variety of functions that keep humans happy and on track. 80-90% of serotonin is manufactured and lives in our gastrointestinal tract.

Oxytocin is our love chemical. Oxytocin creates intimacy, trust and builds the healthy relationships which make us feel satisfied. Oxytocin is the best chemical of all, giving us all the warm and fuzzies. It's the bond between mother and child: the intense feeling of safety, of knowing someone has got your back, of morality and trust which promotes connectedness and calmness. The cultivation of oxytocin is essential for creating strong bonds and improved social interactions.

We can produce endorphins and dopamine on our own - whereas serotonin and oxytocin are triggered relationally and attempt to manage Endorphins & Dopamine. Serotonin and Oxytocin are the chemicals that make our society great.

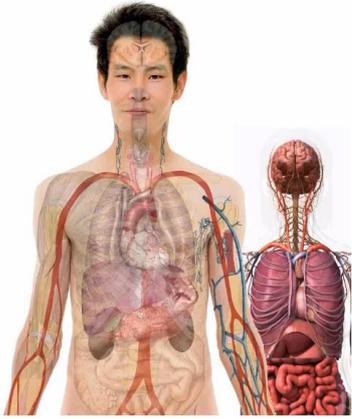
Cortisol is our primary stress hormone. We release it when we are under any sort of pressure. It is our evolutionary-based fight or flight response. The amount of cortisol in our body is driven by the amount of stress we are experiencing. In addition, caffeine consumption, our eating patterns, how physically active we are, and our sleep patterns all affect how much cortisol is released into our system. Cortisol binds to receptors on our fat cells, liver and pancreas making energy sources available for muscles to use to fight or flee. It also temporarily inhibits other body systems, including digestion, growth, reproduction and the immune system.

To better understand the role of brain chemicals, it is important to note that we are predominantly visual and social animals. We respond to things we see and we belong in a 'tribe'. This is how the human race has survived so far.

"When you see how exercise, diet, hydration and relationships interact to affect our brain chemistry, the concept of Holistic Mental Health starts to become clear"



WATER SUSTAINS LIFE



WATER
For Body & Blood



WATER + OIL
Cooling & Lubrication

WATER SUSTAINS LIFE. Water is stored all over us. In our brain and our body, in our liver, kidneys, stomach, bladder, spinal fluids - everywhere! However, more than half is actually inside our cells. As a car engine must have water to function, so every single cell in the human body is dependent on water. Humans can only survive a few days without water.

The body needs water to transport water-soluble nutrients to organs in the body, to transport toxins and waste products out of the body via urine, and to send electrical messages between cells. For example, water allows organs to function, muscles to contract and relax, and for eyes to focus on images. Water also controls our body temperature, is necessary to digest food and drink, to lubricate our joints and to keep our tissues healthy and pliable.

Even 1% dehydration is a key factor in the cause of headaches, loss of focus, fatigue and poor mood. Thirst is a poor, early sign of dehydration. By the time we feel thirsty, we may already be dehydrated and thirst can be quenched before the necessary body fluids have been replaced. Even slight dehydration impacts brain function, mood and energy; and can produce symptoms of memory loss, mental confusion and dissociation.

Air-conditioning, coffee, alcohol, caffeinated drinks, cigarettes and energy stimulating foods all dehydrate our bodies.

Blood loss, vomiting and diarrhoea, fever, shock, burns, hypothermia, excessive use of drugs and stimulants, over-consumption of alcohol, infectious disease, malnutrition and diabetes can also cause dehydration.

Dehydration can lead to weight gain, while hydration is essential to weight loss.

If we drink a lot of diuretics, like coffee, tea, soft drink or alcohol, our kidneys start to shed sodium. This means we need to drink more water to replace it. This is not good for our brain or body. These fluids are the wrong type for our brain and body. Water is the fluid our system needs.

Studies have shown that by simply drinking 2 glasses of water, half an hour before meals, brain function, mood and blood sugar can be dramatically improved.

Maintaining adequate hydration is very important to optimise brain function.

As a guide, it's recommended adults consume 8-12 glasses of water a day. How much we need depends on our physical activity, our age, body size, health, whether you are expecting a baby and even the weather. The best way to tell if we are consuming enough water to hydrate our body is by the colour of our urine. A pale, wheat coloured wee is ideal, while both yellow and orange wee indicate that we require more water.

Consume most water during the day to assist with sleeping well throughout the night. Avoid or minimize sweetened beverages such as all soft drinks, energy drinks, sweet teas and fruit juices in order to decrease lethargy or brain drain.

The body's thirst sensation diminishes in people over 50 years of age, and continues to diminish with age. Many senior citizens suffer dehydration.

Unintentional Chronic Dehydration contributes to, and even produces pain and many degenerative diseases. These can be prevented and treated, simply by increasing water intake on a regular basis.

Water is the BEST energy drink

"I now know that water is the basic ingredient of our blood. So, a lack of water has a major affect on my blood sugar levels. That's why I often look for food when I am dehydrated. I drank absolutely no water leading up to and for years after my break-down... unless you count Coke, Coffee and Beer as water" :)

FUEL QUALITY IMPACTS PERFORMANCE



A car's performance is optimal with the right fuel. Regardless of how good the car looks or its engine size, it won't work without the right fuel. If you were to put diesel in a petrol car, the engine would be in need of a full overhaul.

Nutrition

Our brain is a mere 2% of our body weight, but it uses 20% of our energy resources. When our stomach sends a hunger message to our brain, our stomach isn't interested in nutrition. Its interest is in satisfying the hunger message. Performance is not high on its agenda. Yet, nutrition is fundamental to good energy supply, brain function, health and well-being. Nutrition is often overlooked when people have mental health concerns. Yet, the first signs of malnutrition are generally psychological.

Food is necessary to life. Our body can only survive for about 6 weeks without it. Yet, rather than performance, we find a variety of reasons to eat, besides indulging our appetite. We do eat when we are hungry, but we also eat for taste, for enjoyment and for energy. We eat at social occasions and celebrations. We eat when we are tired, thirsty, bored, for comfort and the list goes on. Rarely does our brain decide what we require for performance, rather, our nose and tongue generally dictate the type of food we eat.

The right nutrients will maximise our potential. Nutrition directly affects IQ, learning, concentration, sleep and behaviour. Poor food choices or a lack of food can cause us to become sluggish, sad, irritable or anxious to mention just a few symptoms.

Anti-Oxidants and Anti-Inflammatory Foods nourish and protect our brain.

Anti-Oxidants are naturally occurring chemicals found in vegetables and fruit that counter the negative impact of free radicals in our bodies. Eat at least 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables, although research suggests 8 - 12 serves of vegetables is ideal. Use a variety of colours to ensure maximum benefit.

Anti-Inflammatories - Fish is nature's best source of anti-inflammatory, omega-3 fats. Salmon, Mackerel, Sardines, Herrings, Trout or any other cold water fish are high in omega-3 fats. Studies show that people who eat fish just once a week reduce their risk of Alzheimer's by 60% and also reduce their risk of dementia and mood disorders.

Anti-inflammatory foods slow down cognitive and memory decline and reduce inflammation in the brain. Inflammation is an innate response to injury, stress, illness, poor gut function and eating toxic foods (high-toxin, high-sugar, high-processed, high-gluten, etc.) All of these induce an inflammatory response. When this response becomes the norm for our body, it becomes a low-level feature in our physiology and problems arise. A lack of knowledge, unmanaged stress and poor food choices can push people off the cliff of inflammation. David Perlmutter, M.D., a neurologist from Naples, Fla., has made a very strong case for inflammation as the primary contributor in Alzheimer's. In his words, "the brain is on fire." Brain tissues affected by Alzheimer's are rife with inflammatory chemicals.

Food and Mood - Our brain feeds on stable glucose or blood sugar levels and some people don't maintain these. When we have that low feeling, we have a lot of physiological symptoms. Feeling uncomfortable in our body due to low blood sugar may be interpreted by our brain as anxiety (I feel shaky or scared - I must be anxious) or exhaustion (I can't get up off the couch - I must be depressed).

Our brain functions best with routines or patterns. Ensuring we eat regular meals every 4 - 5 hours will provide a steady energy flow to the brain and establish good habits. Food is best digested when we are relaxed, not stressed. Food should be well chewed to release saliva and digestive juices.

Mealtimes are a great time for the family to connect and talk over the day, not to sit in front of the TV or computer mindlessly shovelling in food.

Eating balanced, regular meals provides a steady stream of energy rather than high sugar foods which give a spike, followed by a slump. Protein throughout the day will also boost brain chemistry. For example, chicken, eggs and fish provide the building blocks for serotonin and dopamine which help with calmness, happiness and motivation. Sadly, serotonin and dopamine can't be made from ice cream. : (

Folic Acid - Sometimes people who are diagnosed with depression have lower levels of Folic Acid. A deficiency may cause dementia or cognitive problems. To combat this, eat lots of leafy greens like spinach and kale; dark green vegetables; soy beans; sunflower seeds; oranges and beetroot.

Sugar, Processed Foods and Gluten are Three Mood-Busting Foods to avoid. Just as foods can uplift your mood, they can also quickly bring it down. The top three foods that can trigger a poor mood are Sugar, Processed Foods and Gluten.

Sugar - Refined Sugars are essentially just carbohydrates robbed of nutrients. Sugar is addictive and can be a hard habit to break. Avoid foods that are loaded in simple sugars, such as Soft drinks, Chocolate bars, Lollies and Fruit Juices. These can create radical spikes and drops in blood sugar.

Sugar can lead to fluctuations in blood sugar which can bring on mood swings, but its role in poor mood actually goes much deeper than that. Entire books have been written on this topic, such as William Duffy's book, Sugar Blues. There are at least three potential mechanisms through which refined sugar intake could exert a toxic effect on our mood and mental health: Sugar (particularly fructose) and grains contribute to insulin and leptin resistance and impaired signalling which play a significant role in our mental health.

Sugar suppresses the activity of BDNF (Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor), which promotes the health of our brain neurons. BDNF levels are critically low in both depression and schizophrenia which animal models suggest might actually be causative. Sugar consumption also triggers a cascade of chemical reactions in our body that promote chronic inflammation. In the long term, inflammation disrupts the normal functioning of our immune system which is linked to a greater risk of depression.

Processed Foods - The list of potentially mood-busting ingredients in processed foods is a long one. Aside from sugar and gluten, they may also contain trans fats, artificial colours, monosodium glutamate (MSG), artificial sweeteners and other synthetic ingredients linked to irritability and poor mood. Trans fats are especially widely used. We generally see them in margarine, biscuits, cakes, frozen meals, fried foods, sweets, chips, fish fingers and many dairy products. Saturated Fats (most animal fats) are unhealthy as they 'clog' up the arteries causing heart disease.

Avoid Chemical Food Additives - especially preservatives and colourings

Gluten, a protein found in grains such as wheat, rye and barley, may negatively impact mood and brain health. In fact, a number of studies indicate that wheat can have a detrimental effect on mood, promoting depression and even more serious mental health problems such as schizophrenia. One mechanism that can help explain the mysterious connection between wheat and mental health problems is the fact that wheat inhibits the production of serotonin.

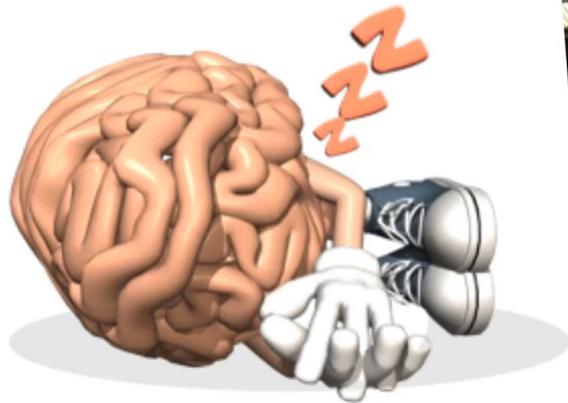
The greatest concentration of the Neurotransmitter, serotonin, is found in our gut, not our brain! Serotonin is involved in mood control, depression and aggression. Wheat, in particular, has been implicated in psychiatric problems, from depression to schizophrenia. Preliminary research indicates that wheat is responsible for neuro-toxic activity.

White flour foods like white breads, crackers, cakes and biscuits metabolise very quickly and will sky-rocket our blood sugar levels. Soon after, we have a drop and tumble effect, so we won't feel great.

It's important to make smart carbohydrate choices like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes which also contribute important nutrients and fibre.

'I now know that my diet of fatty, sweet fast foods and the fact that I did not eat more than one meal per day was a major cause of my diagnosed anxiety and depression which led to my multiple suicide attempts'

SLEEP IS BRAIN ^{And Body} MAINTENANCE



If we were to drive a car continuously, the engine wouldn't cope and it would eventually break down. We take our car off the road for maintenance and we need to do the same for our brain and body. Sleep is essential to our brain functioning. After just 2 days without sleep, the brain will start hallucinating.

The Greatest Benefit of Sleep

Sleep impacts our health in every area but researchers have recently found sleep's greatest benefit to be physical: cleansing. Our body has a great system for flushing out waste, the lymphatic system, but it does not extend to our brain. As the brain tightly regulates everything, it is kept highly secure behind the blood-brain barrier to avoid contamination, but it does have waste to get rid of.

The brain has its own disposal system, the Glymphatic System which pumps cerebral spinal fluid, CSF, through brain tissue to remove waste. The waste is then flushed into our circulatory system, then into our lymphatic system where it is flushed out of our body with all other waste. The Glymphatic System requires a lot of energy and seems to be about 10 times more active during sleep. This is why our brain uses as much energy when we are asleep as it does when we are awake. Brain cells also shrink up to 60% during sleep so CSF can wash through faster. Waste build up has links to serious brain diseases like Alzheimer's. If we don't sleep every night, our brain can't cleanse itself of toxins properly.

Missing sleep can interfere with attention, awareness, ability to process information, reasoning and problem solving skills. When tired we are more easily distracted, less able to implement new strategies, less able to confront new situations, far more reliant on habit (doing what we have always done) and less able to control our mood and performance.

When tired, emotional capacity is diminished which may result in an inability to handle stress, being easily upset over trivial things, moodiness, increased depressive feelings and burnout, decreased empathy, being more likely to pick a fight, relationship troubles, agitation, decreased libido, irritability or aggression, anxiety, sadness, slumps in attention, thinking and focus, sluggish behaviour, hunger, zoning in and out, and mood swings.

Children's Signs of Tiredness include clumsiness, crying, clinginess or constantly demanding attention, boredom with regular toys and fussiness with food.

Sleep and Health Facts

The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Journal found that inadequate sleep affected more than 700 genes, including those dealing with the immune system, brain function and the body's response to stress. Muscles and organs can fully recover when we are wide awake, while the brain cannot.

It was found that 7-9 hrs sleep is the recommended amount. More than 9 hrs sleep means we are more susceptible to obesity. Less than 7 hrs lowers our immune system, meaning we get ill more often and are 3 times more susceptible to viral infections. Less than 6 hrs sleep is associated with cognitive decline, with an equivalence of 4-7 yrs of aging over time. Less than 5 hrs sleep can increase the risk of diabetes and high blood pressure. Less than 4 hrs sleep doubles the risk of heart disease.

Young people sleeping less than 5 hours per night triple their chance of getting a mental illness.

Sleep and Healing

Sleep gives us time to repair muscles and cells, as well as strengthening our immune system. Sleep and rest provide the quickest recovery time when we are unwell or injured. This allows the brain to focus on fighting infection and cell repair.

Sleep and Learning

Sleep provides the brain time for a nightly mental clean-up. Studies show that if we get sleep straight after practicing something that takes fine motor skills, for example, typing or playing an instrument, it helps us retain that knowledge faster. That is, neural connections or pathways are better established.

When we sleep, our brain takes everything we've seen and done throughout the day and filters through it. It looks for patterns, sifts through what it finds unessential and decides what to turn into a memory. This process is called Memory Consolidation.

Sleep and Safety

A lack of sleep contributes to a greater than two-fold higher risk of sustaining injury. One night without sleep is equivalent to being legally intoxicated.

One of the brain's main roles is to protect itself and its body. Our decisions are often based on previous choices which we have survived, and have thus proven safe. This can result in us doing the same thing over and over, such as, going to the same restaurant, sitting in the same spot and eating the same food. Sound familiar? Always consider your reliance on habit when making decisions or confronting new situations.

Innovation, creativity and trying new things may be quashed when tired. Our thinking is muddled and our decision making is poor. When the brain is tired, it is unable to process well. We are more likely to make poor decisions, to take risks and to indulge in risky behaviours.

Sleep and Mental Health

We are more likely to be happier after a good night's sleep. Research reveals we learn better after a good night's sleep and can better cope with stressful situations. A good night's sleep and regular rest helps build positive relationships and ease conflict.

Tips to Develop Good Sleep Habits For Children (and adults too)

Food and Drink - Avoid sugars and caffeine intake after lunch.

Exercise - 30 minutes of activity or exercise, preferably outdoors, early or during the day will help with sleep and mood.

Bedroom - Separate sleep and entertainment by ridding the bedroom of all electronic equipment. De-clutter your bedroom. A tidy, cool, restful, quiet and dark room helps sleep.

Bedtime Routine - Establish a time for going to bed and waking up, as well as a routine for getting ready for bed: have a regular bath time, put on pyjamas, clean teeth and go to the toilet. Reduce stimulation to prepare for sleep by removing toys and talking quietly in soothing tones. Reduce the light and create a quiet wind down time with a chat, a song, reading a book, a cuddle or playing some quiet music.

Persist to develop good habits as settling and sleep may not always come easily. Any new habit takes 4 - 6 weeks to establish. Forming good sleep patterns in the first years of life can help maintain routines with children as they grow.

Small children do require a day time nap. Often as they grow, they may still sometimes need a daytime sleep to catch up on missed sleep. Adults, too, can easily miss out on quality sleep in the business of life. A great way to catch up on sleep is to have a daytime rest or power nap.

"I was brought up to believe that needing sleep was a sign of weakness. The people who taught me that are all dead now.

There is a reason that hospitals have beds for patients instead of chairs. We heal best, both physically and mentally, whilst sleeping. That's why intensive care units put severely injured patients into an induced coma and psychiatrists medicate people whose trauma stops them from sleeping.

For me, the first sign of needing more sleep is loss of control over my emotions, I can burst into tears for no apparent reason and I have no patience or resilience.

P.S One of the worst sleep disrupters is technology in the bedroom"

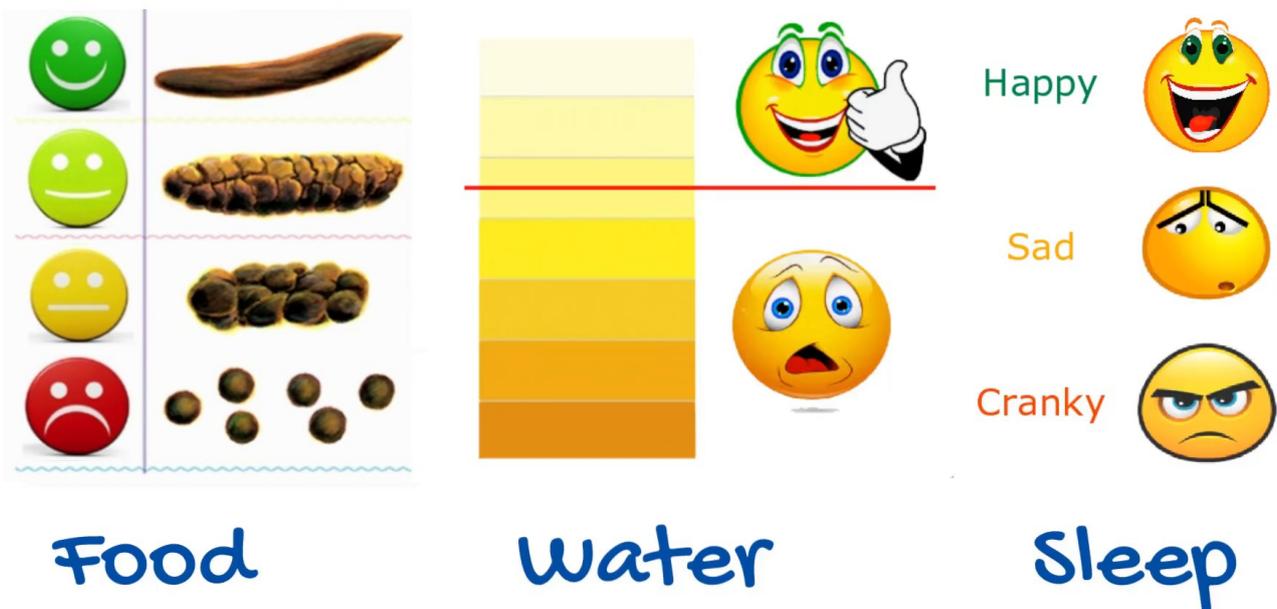
Effects of Sleep deprivation

The illustration shows a human torso with callouts to the brain, heart, lungs, and intestines. Lines connect these callouts to lists of effects of sleep deprivation.

- Irritability
- Cognitive impairment
- Memory lapses or loss
- Impaired moral judgement
- Severe yawning
- Hallucinations
- Symptoms similar to ADHD
- Risk of diabetes Type 2
- Impaired immune system
- Increased heart rate variability
- Risk of heart disease
- Decreased reaction time and accuracy
- Tremors
- Aches
- Other:*
 - Growth suppression
 - Risk of obesity
 - Decreased temperature

Age	Recommended	May be appropriate	Not recommended
Newborns <i>0-3 months</i>	14 to 17 hours	11 to 13 hours 18 to 19 hours	Less than 11 hours More than 19 hours
Infants <i>4-11 months</i>	12 to 15 hours	10 to 11 hours 16 to 18 hours	Less than 10 hours More than 18 hours
Toddlers <i>1-2 years</i>	11 to 14 hours	9 to 10 hours 15 to 16 hours	Less than 9 hours More than 16 hours
Preschoolers <i>3-5 years</i>	10 to 13 hours	8 to 9 hours 14 hours	Less than 8 hours More than 14 hours
School-aged Children <i>6-13 years</i>	9 to 11 hours	7 to 8 hours 12 hours	Less than 7 hours More than 12 hours
Teenagers <i>14-17 years</i>	8 to 10 hours	7 hours 11 hours	Less than 7 hours More than 11 hours
Young Adults <i>18-25 years</i>	7 to 9 hours	6 hours 10 to 11 hours	Less than 6 hours More than 11 hours

Physiological Performance Dashboard



Although this chart always brings a laugh, it is actually the cornerstone of 'How To Protect Your Mental Health'.

These 3 simple feedback loops empower us to manage our health, both physically and mentally. This is the best way to identify changes that could eventually be detrimental to our mental health.

This is our early warning system where a change in sleep patterns could indicate a lack of safety or an issue that could be shameful.

A change in bowel habits or hydration indicates an impending change in moods and behaviour. Small adjustment here can ensure "A Healthy Brain".

Food - Sausage Poo

What we eat and drink affects our toileting. When we eat sufficient vegetables and fruit, and drink sufficient water, we make a sausage poo. When we don't, we struggle to poo regularly and may only produce bunny bullets. Constipation makes us feel yucky and can be quite painful. Research shows more and more children are constipated and medicated for it, when diet will generally rectify the problem. Eating plenty of vegetables and fruit will produce a sausage poo which is easily and regularly expelled, and results in improved mood and behaviour.

Water - White Wee

When we drink enough water to properly hydrate our body, our wee is a pale, wheat colour. We call this white wee for small children. Small children can learn to manage these feedback loops and are very interested in wee and poo, so start early. When we aren't drinking enough water (yellow or orange wee), we may have headaches and feel tired, lethargic and demotivated.

Sleep - Smiley Face

Good or poor sleep shows on our face and through our behaviour. When we wake up and are feeling good, we know we have had sufficient sleep. If we are cranky and whinge a lot, we need extra sleep and rest. Having boundaries around our sleep needs will ensure we go to bed early enough to have good and sufficient sleep. Removing technology from bedrooms and stopping screen use one hour prior to sleep time will assist also.

Sugar - Hyperactivity

Sugar inhibits sleep and ideally is not to be consumed after lunch. Too much sugar makes us hyper and creates problems with learning and attention as our brain races to cope with the energy spike. As the sugar rush subsides, we generally have a sugar slump and feel irritable, tired and flat. Sugar is added to almost everything these days. Some examples which people use regularly are - Fruit Juice which contains about 7 teaspoons of sugar, Soft Drinks and Flavoured Milk Drinks, both contain about 10 teaspoons, a large thick shake (from Hungry Jacks or MacDonaldis) contains around 27 teaspoons of sugar. Learn to read labels: 4g = 1 teaspoon.

Fruit is a great and healthy substitute for something sweet. You can retrain your taste buds!

Food, Water, Sleep and Sugar consumption affects our thinking, mood, behaviour and therefore our well-being.

The basic needs are provided for children by their parents. As children grow, it is important to empower them to make wise choices, as in no time they will be young adults and will need to make their own choices concerning how they care for themselves. Self Care is paramount to Mental Health. The mental health of many young adults becomes compromised as they leave home to live on their own. Often, in enjoying their freedom, they overlook their brain's fundamental requirements for healthy food, water and sleep.

About New Mothers

A condition often diagnosed as Post-Natal Depression can be a combination of interrupted sleep, poor nutrition due to the breast feeding, dehydration caused by milk production and constant personal boundary infringements by the baby. If you notice that a new mother is not coping well with her new responsibilities, you can organise for others to help with small sections of the problem. The helpers can ensure that the mother is fed well by bringing occasional meals and by arranging some personal time to give the mother regular breaks and much needed sleep. These are small things that can make an enormous difference to the person's mental health. This assistance can help to save a marriage and ensure that the new mother does not enter a cycle of diagnosis, stigma, medication and social isolation.

The Teenage Years

Often when teenagers leave home to do further studies in another city, for the first time they have to start looking after themselves. This is a crucial time for their mental health. So often we see bright students fall into the trap of eating fast food on the fly, neglecting sleep and drinking anything except water.

This leads to a lack of mental and emotional resilience. The pressures of working part time, loads of study, paying the bills, doing the housework and an inability to say **NO** to peers, is a recipe for disaster.

Far too often this leads to a trip back home - 'tail between the legs' with all of the associated self doubt, guilt and the shame of failure to meet their own and everyone else's expectations.

When the situation is viewed through the Maslow model, it's obvious that as the foundational physical needs are not met, the ability to learn and to cope emotionally fails. We recognise this as 'Burn-Out'.

"Maybe it is because these feedback signs are so simple that many adults fail to appreciate their true value as an holistic emotional health diagnostic.

Following-up on our 'Amazing Brain Show' in Early learning Centres, where we established more than 12,000 Wee Police, educators and families regularly tell of behavioural improvement since the kids started checking for "Orange Wee", "Sausage Poo" and "Morning Smiles"

SAFETY & SECURITY

Family and Community Connections



SAFETY AND SECURITY - Family and Community Connections

Whilst shelter is essential to safety, in this book, we are predominantly concerned with feeling safe. Safety Needs include our natural desire for our world to be ordered, predictable and within our control. Today, feeling safe would include feeling safe and secure with the people within our home, at school and in the workplace, as well as feeling secure in our job, finances and even our health.

"When we feel unsafe, we are continually on edge. Our brain chemistry is swamped with stress hormones to the point where we cannot think, learn or socialize normally. Safety feelings can be negatively impacted by marriage problems, workplace insecurity and financial worries. If these issues are not resolved we cannot move up the Maslow scale to a state of well-being."

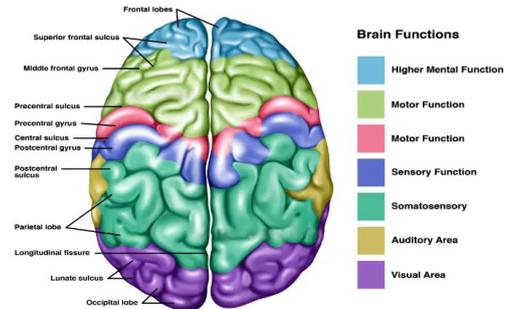
The Mind

PRIMAL OPERATING SYSTEM (DNA)



Pre-programmed to manage body chemistry and physical maintenance, breathe, eat, drink & sleep.

Pre-programmed to fight or flee to survive, belong to a tribe and reproduce the species.



THE MIND - Primal Operating System

Every animal has a brain. The human brain however, is unique among the animal kingdom and has the ability to use higher brain function such as thought, analysis, reasoning and action.

Our primal brain's basic programming is to '**Fight or Flee**' when in danger to survive. This is our spontaneous reaction when we sense danger. When we feel threatened in any way or worried, real or imagined, our brain is programmed to release chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol into our body. These chemicals quickly alter the way we think, feel and behave. They make it difficult to think clearly, to process information or to take in new information. Scientists believe that we relate and learn best when we are happy and relaxed. This is when our brain processes information most efficiently.

STRESS HORMONES

CORTISOL is our primary stress hormone. We release it when we are under any sort of pressure. It is our evolutionary-based fight or flight response. The amount of cortisol in our body is driven by the amount of stress we are experiencing. In addition, caffeine consumption, our eating patterns, how much physical activity we do and our sleep patterns all affect how much cortisol is released in our system.

Cortisol binds to receptors on the fat cells, liver and pancreas which increases glucose levels available for muscles to use to 'fight or flee'. Cortisol temporarily inhibits other systems of the body, including digestion, growth, reproduction and the immune system.

ADRENALINE, another stress chemical, primarily binds to receptors on the heart and heart vessels. This increases heart rate, force of muscle contraction and respiration.

When stressed by excessive demands, our brain function is impaired which means new ideas, new concepts, creativity and imagination are stifled. However, we can learn to challenge the thoughts and feelings connected to stress in order to manage our stress. By working out our values - who and what is important to us, our responsibilities, what is real and imagined - we can clear our conscience and give ourselves peace.

More information on brain chemicals can be found starting on page 63.

"I was under continuous stress, both at work trying to reach the unachievable targets set for me by the head office in New York and at home, because I was not spending enough time with the family. The stress hormones and the amount of caffeine I was consuming to keep alert kept me from sleeping properly, so I used alcohol to put me to sleep."



WE FEEL SAFE WHEN WE BELONG TO A TRIBE

Family

Team

Hood

School

City

Interest

State

Religion

Country

Occupation



WE FEEL SAFE WHEN WE BELONG TO A TRIBE

A young child relies on its parents to provide for their needs. Children learn to expect and rely on their parent to be a source of warmth, provision and comfort. As the child grows, they learn to trust that their needs will be met.

Our first sense of belonging is with our parents, yet all throughout life we continue to seek belonging. We belong to a kindy or a school. We join a sporting club, craft or music group. We all have an innate need to belong, to 'fit' somewhere. A supportive and well-managed home, school or work environment is good for our mental health. We feel safe where we can grow in autonomy, in learning to do for ourselves, to develop self-control and to understand our limits and responsibilities. In a safe environment, we even feel safe to fail and try again. People who only do as they are told, who are always forced to follow the rules, live in fear and are the ones who end up suffering the most. Our feelings of control, of stress and our ability to perform at our best, are all directly tied to how safe we feel in our tribe. "Feeling unsafe around those we expect to feel safe with - those in our tribes, our carers, our peers - fundamentally violates the laws of nature and how we were designed to live." Simon Sinek

"When you look closely at the ethnic groups represented in the team picture above, it becomes apparent that they would all belong to other tribes based on their country of origin. It is not inconceivable that if they were not bonding in their sporting team, they might all be opponents on the streets of a big city. We are designed to look for safety and protection from our common interest groups."

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Connecting BODY, MIND & SPIRIT



Mind explains our caveman-like responses to stress, the responses we learn in childhood to relieve that stress or shame, how we carry those same responses into adulthood, and ways we can deal with our shame.

"Actually, we are not far removed from our basic 'Survival At Any Cost' caveman programming. As we become socialized, we are taught to modify our initial reactions to stressful situations.

It's when we are 'Running On Empty' that our lower nature is exposed for all to see. When we run out of resilience, we quickly return to 'Survival Mode' and act like tired and hungry toddlers."

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The 'How Are You Going' back cover can be used for Holistic Mental Health assessment and as a conversation tool for coffee shops, staff rooms etc.

Further Resources, Online Training Courses And Implementation Plans Are Available

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HOW ARE YOU GOING?

BODY

What Foods Are You Eating?

Are You Drinking Much Water?

Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

MIND

What Are You Feeding Your Mind?

Exercise? Relaxation? Reflection?

What Thoughts Keep You Awake?

**BACK COVER
WITH CREDIT**

