# HOW TO STAY SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD

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# IN A

# CRAZY WORLD

(and how to help others)

By

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**The Brain Health Education Institute**

# 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.**

**Understanding how to manage your own mental health is an essential foundation for protecting a child's mental and emotional well-being.**

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!

*Trevor & Annie Boulton*

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This book expounds the 5 steps of Maslow's Plan for optimum mental health.

# 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.

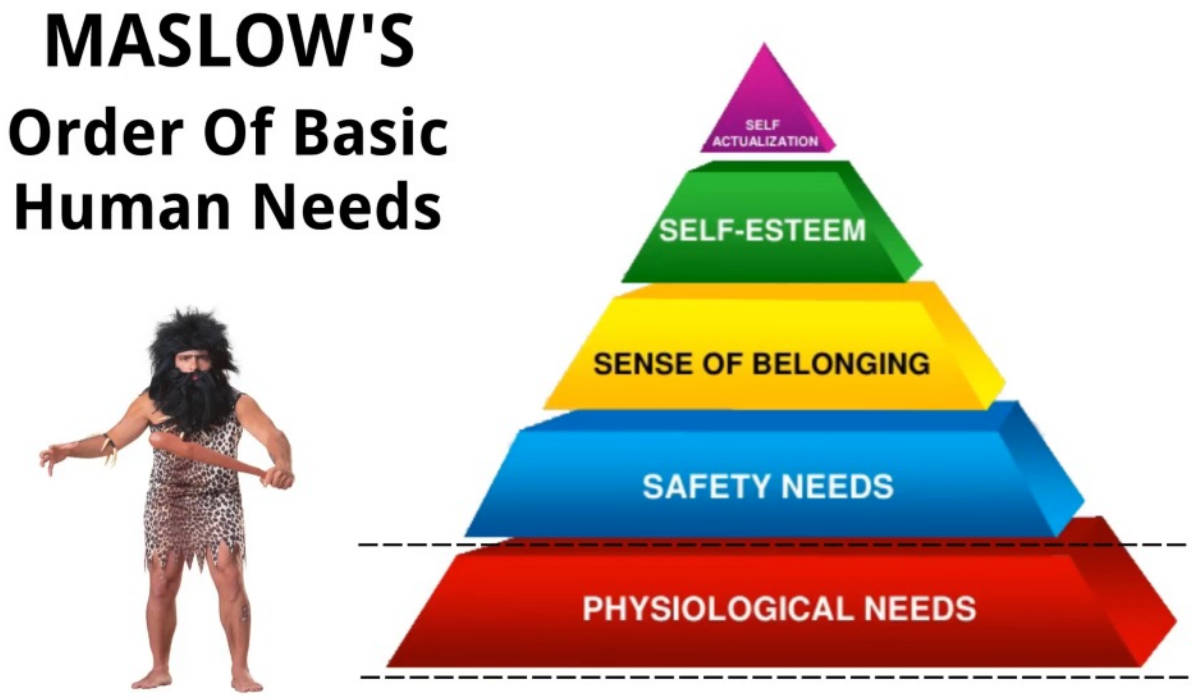
Our body is the vehicle we inhabit. We must care for our body, as well as our brain which manages everything our body does. BODY begins with an overview of the role and function of our physical brain, what our brain needs in order to function correctly, how to maintain its basic chemistry, and how to 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** 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.*

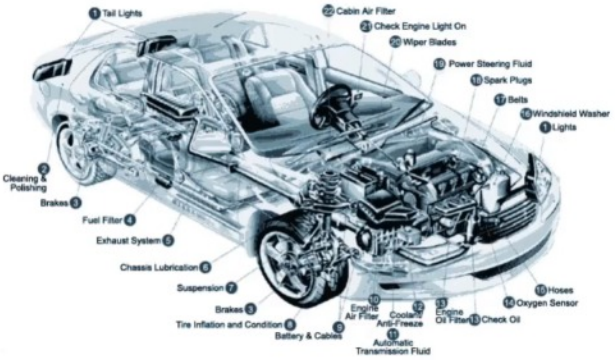
*This was particularly true for me. After working for 8 months, 7 days a week, from 8am to 1am the next morning and living on junk food, coke and coffee, needing alcohol to get to sleep; my thinking was distorted, behaviour erratic and moods unpredictable.*

*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 becomes 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 transfats, artificial colours, monosodium glutamate (MSG), artificial sweeteners and other synthetic ingredients linked to irritability and poor mood. Transfats 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.

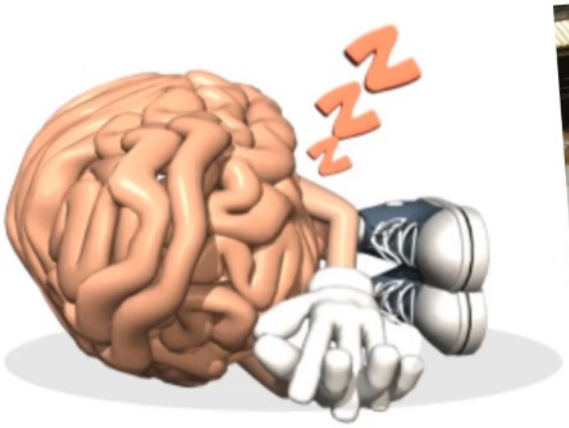
The greatest concentration of the Neurotransmitter, serotonin, is found in our gut, not our brain! Serotonin is involved in mood control, depression and aggression. Wheat, in particular, has been implicated in psychiatric problems, from depression to schizophrenia. Preliminary research indicates that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

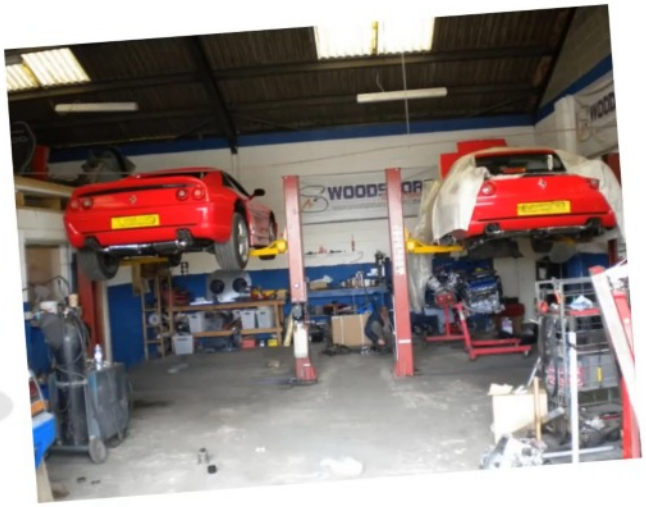
**White flour** foods like white breads, crackers, cakes and biscuits metabolise very quickly and will sky-rocket our blood sugar levels. Soon after, we have a drop and tumble effect, so we won't feel great.

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.

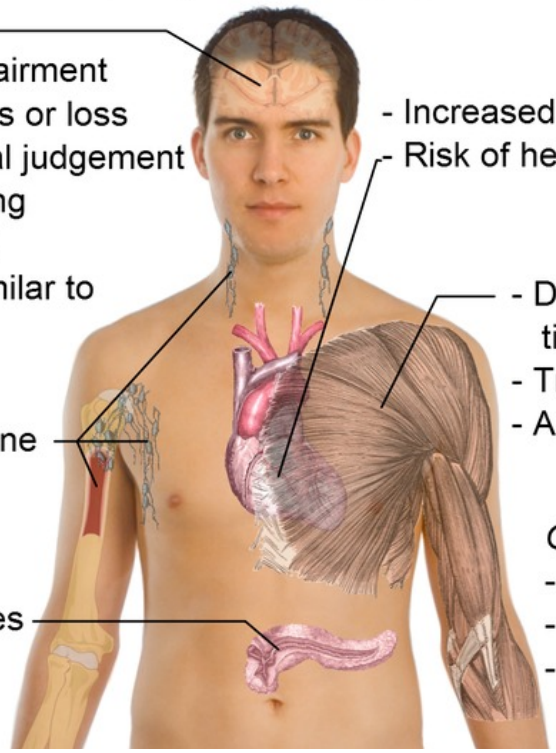
*"I was brought up to believe that needing sleep was a sign of weakness. The people who taught me that are all dead now.*

*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.*

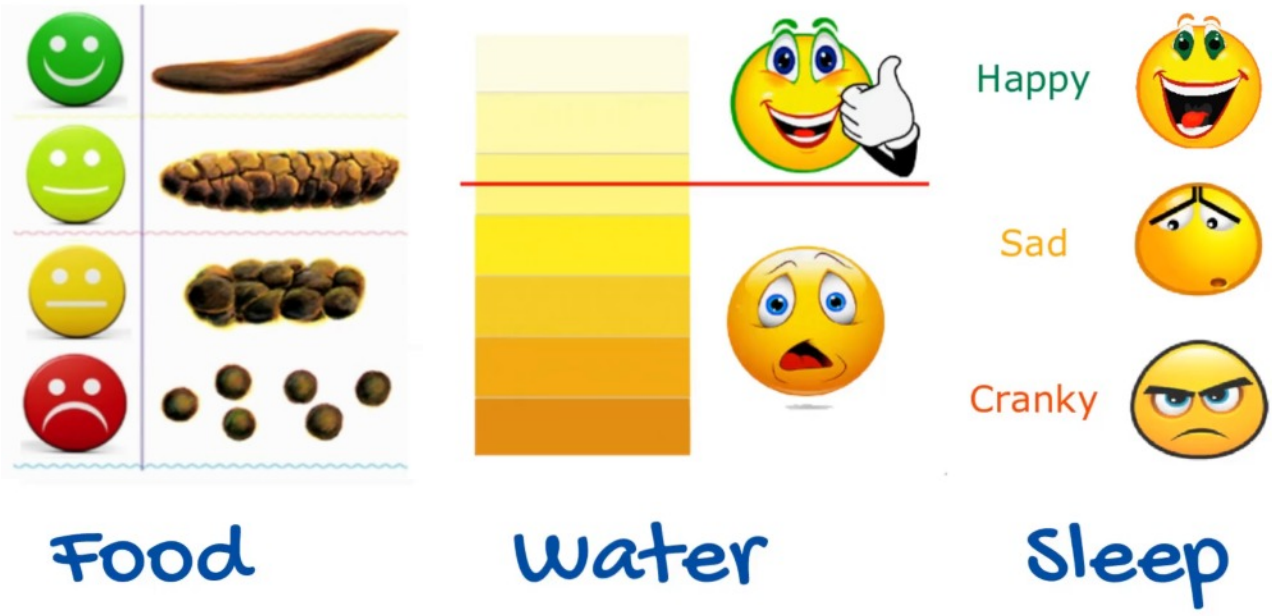
**P.S One of the worst sleep disrupters is technology in the bedroom"**

Effects of
## Sleep deprivation




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

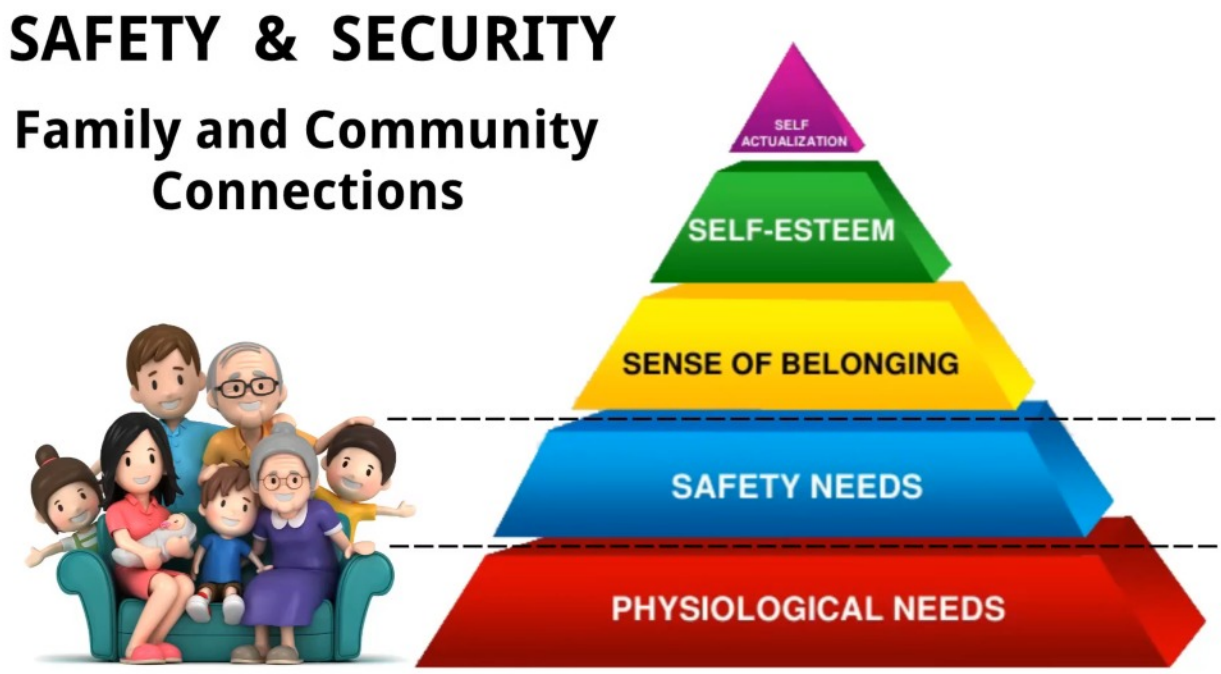
This leads to a lack of mental and emotional resilience. The pressures of working part time, loads of study, paying the bills, doing the housework and an inability to say **NO** to peers, is a recipe for disaster.

**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 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.

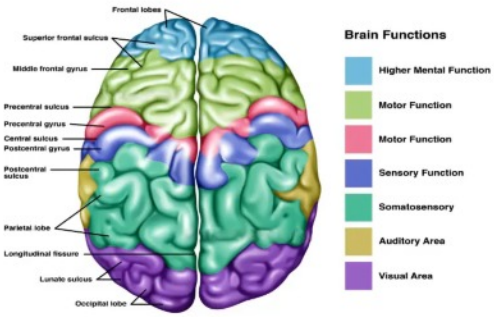
*"When we feel unsafe, we are continually on edge. Our brain chemistry is swamped with stress hormones to the point where we cannot think, learn or socialize normally. Safety feelings can be negatively impacted by marriage problems, workplace insecurity and financial worries. If these issues are not 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**

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 ethic 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."*


**THE STILL FACE EXPERIMENT - Building Strong Foundations**

We know that healthy relationships between children and caregivers are important for building strong brains. Starting with newborns, a responsive child-caregiver bond builds a strong foundation for development through "serve and return" interactions.

"Serve and return" works like a game of tennis or volleyball between child and caregiver. The child “serves” by reaching out for interaction with eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, babbling or touch. A responsive caregiver will “return the serve” by speaking back, playing peekaboo, or sharing a toy or a laugh. These back and forth exchanges are the building blocks of children's early brain development. They help children learn how to control their emotions, to cope with stress and to learn skills that will serve as a foundation for later development. A caregiver who is sensitive and responsive to a young child’s signals will provide an environment rich in "serve and return" experiences.

**Quality Time**

It is important to build quality time for children and loved ones into our day. Connection doesn't require a certain quantity of time, it relies on the quality of the time spent together.

Be aware of and seize precious moments that present themselves to connect with each other. Some of the best options for quality times are at meal times and bed times, at the start and end of the day. Managing our own stress is also important. An unstressed caregiver has a greater positive impact on a child's well being. "Serve and return" is essential to all relational well-being.

**Still Faced Technology and Virtual Autism**

A generation is becoming so addicted to social technology that they are "virtually autistic" and unable to be stimulated in the real world, according to one of the world's foremost brain experts.

During typical face-to-face meetings, only 10 per cent of communication comes from spoken words. Baroness Greenfield found that "people growing up as native users of Facebook and other social media are losing the ability to use the other 90 per cent of communication that comes through visual and other queues which impact their interpersonal skills. This might lead to autistic-like traits … and we are going to have what is now increasingly called 'virtual autism': an impairment of interpersonal skills due to excessive use of screens and not enough rehearsal of face-to-face interactions."

This film clip is used with permission of Zero To Three who have an amazing array of early childhood resources.

**Scan The QR Code To Watch**

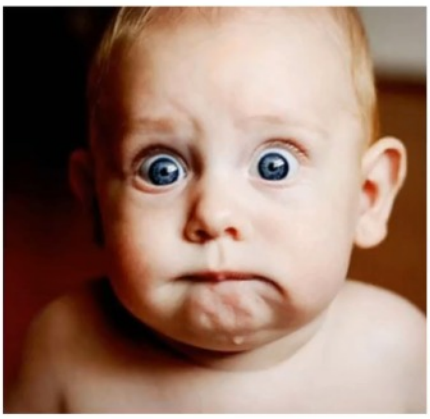
**The Still Face Video**

Or visit www.zerotothree.org/resources


*"When I first saw this video I instantly recognized the same feelings of abandonment and rejection that I had felt whilst a toddler.*

*Later in life I came to recognize abandonment and betrayal as a common part of the stories of the homeless and mentally ill people I was to work alongside*".

# TRAUMA



An overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope

**TRAUMA - An Overwhelming Amount of Stress that Exceeds One's Ability to Cope**

What happens when a child serves and no one steps up to return the ball? Over time, failing to respond when a child reaches out will weaken brain architecture and impair the development of skills, abilities, behaviour and health. Some children are deprived of "serve-and-return" experiences due to chaotic environments, violence in the home, or caregivers struggling with a mental health problem or addiction.

Because responsive relationships are both expected and essential, their absence is a serious threat to a child's development and well-being. Healthy brain architecture depends on a sturdy foundation built by appropriate input from a child's senses and stable, responsive relationships with caring adults. If an adult's responses to a child are unreliable, inappropriate, or simply absent, the developing architecture of the brain may be disrupted, and subsequent physical, mental, and emotional health may be impaired.

The persistent absence of "serve and return" interaction acts as a "double whammy" for healthy development. Not only does the brain not receive the positive stimulation it needs, but the body's stress response is activated. The developing brain is flooded with potentially harmful stress hormones which results in feelings of insecurity and begins to build a negative self image.

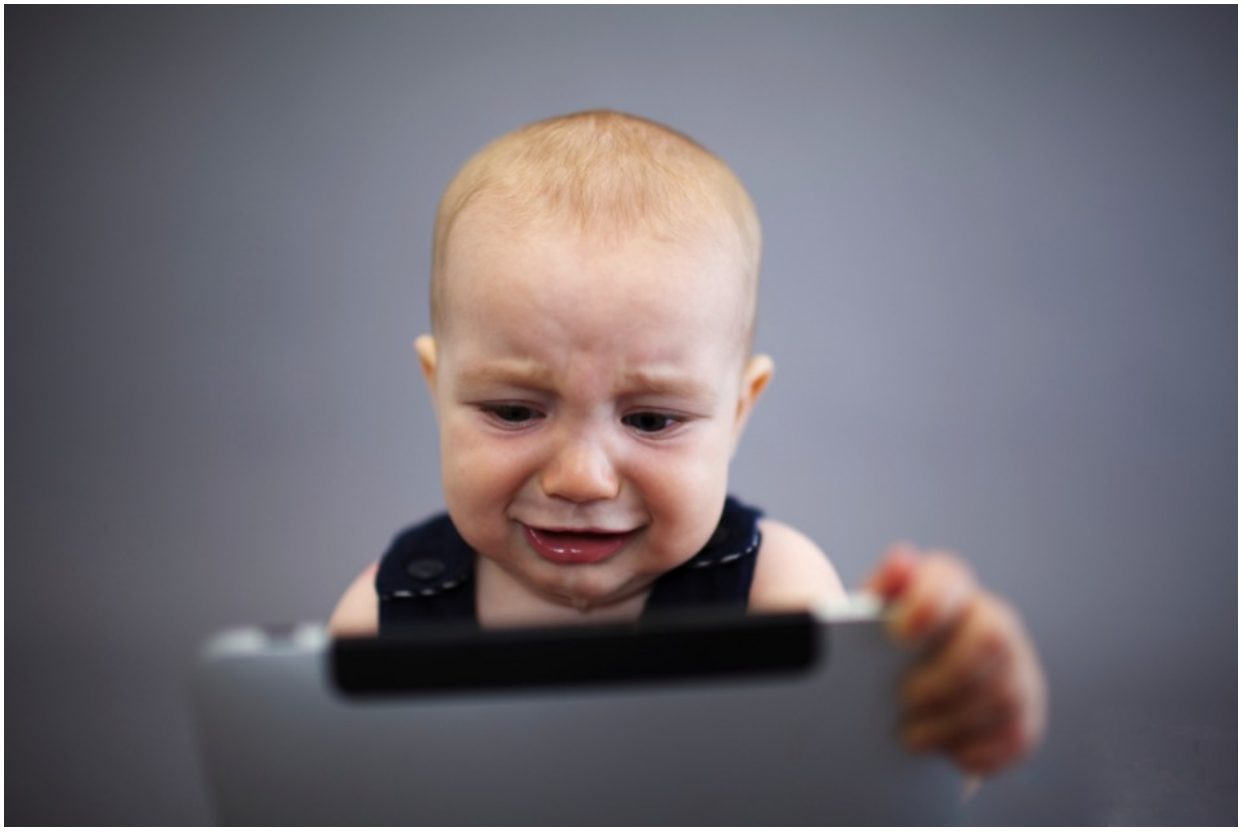
**Screens**

Most of us spend a growing portion of our day looking at screens, such as computer monitors, televisions, tablets or smartphones. These devices are also attractive to children as they offer entertainment and, in some cases, a degree of interaction. However, devices also have the potential to interfere with "serve-and-return" interactions.

A caregiver who is interacting with a smartphone may miss a child's cues or "serves". Over time, these missed opportunities for child-adult interaction can add up and have a negative impact on brain development. Similarly, children who spend time on devices may "serve" less frequently which also limits the number of child-adult interactions they experience during crucial periods of development.

There is a new phenomenon called AI: Artificial Intimacy, where a child can 'bond' with their screen. This limits their ability to read human emotional signals. Technology should be limited for young children and cannot replace a deep, human connection.

"*A traumatic event can devastate personal growth, relationships, learning and everything else above the lowest section of the Maslow triangle. If not resolved, this can become PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).*"




**Basic Operating System**

The four infant behavioural responses identified as a means of seeking the parent's care and attention in the 'Still Face' video were the Fake Cough, Self Comforting, a Loss of Control and Withdrawal. These behaviours develop in varying degrees as we grow and can become Sicknesses, Addictions or Co-dependency, Violence and Isolation. An infant learns to respond in unhealthy ways, hoping for some response or relief from the pain of not connecting in healthy ways. This generally creates a negative self-image and mindset.

The child begins a life that is based on a feeling that nothing can be done, of hopelessness and powerlessness. The child learns the unwritten rules of the dysfunctional family; Don't talk! Don't trust! Don't feel! Don't think! However, many of these children will grow up to be over-achievers and appear quite successful in the early years of their lives; yet, they will struggle with feelings of low self-worth and have difficulty in relationships. They very often find it hard to believe that anyone could love them.

They attempt to seek approval by frantically serving their parents, family or community; only to experience "burn out" because they give too much of themselves away. Some will not survive well. They will become addictive or develop some other form of compulsive or rebellious behaviour.


**BEHAVING CONTRARY TO OUR PERSONAL VALUES LEADS TO SHAME - Who Have I Become?**

One day, we awake to find these negative patterns of behaviour have become "normal" and we are behaving contrary to our personal values. We may be trapped in the coping mechanisms of addictions, poor relationships, jobs or people-pleasing. We realise we are out of control and are powerless to change.

We respond to those around us through our primary operating system of fight or flight, or passive compliance. We find ourselves living with a variety of the following: bitterness, resentment, anger, withdrawal, fear, anxiety, sadness and poor concentration. We feel deep pain, guilt and shame.

*"Over the years, I have noticed that most people who have experienced 'Who Have I Become', recognise this as their breaking point. They often called it their breakdown, meltdown or nervous breakdown. It is then that they start to try to shift responsibility from their own shameful immature DNA behaviour to any outside source, such as an addiction or a mental illness.*

*My 'Who Have I Become' moment was when I was home on stress leave; so broke that I could not provide the next meal for my newborn baby. I used my last couple of dollars to buy a bottle of cheap wine to drink myself into oblivion. Then I went back in to the mental hospital to have others treat my 'Mental Illness'*".

# SHAME IS THE ENGINE

# THAT DRIVES ADDICTIONS

**SHAME IS THE ENGINE THAT DRIVES ADDICTION - What is Shame?**

Renowned, U.S. clinical psychologist, Gershen Kaufman once wrote, "whenever feelings of shame are encountered, they can be reduced by becoming addicted to something." After more than 40 years of dealing with people who have been suffering from addictions, Rev. John Tully said, "Shame is the engine that drives all addictions." Shame is a particularly intense, and often incapacitating, negative emotion involving feelings of inferiority, powerlessness and self-consciousness, along with the deep desire to conceal our deficiencies.

Traditional psychoanalytic theory focuses directly or indirectly on the object of addiction: alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, work or relationships. **Healing comes when it is realised that it is not so much the object of addiction that is paramount, but the process that permits the attachment to develop.** Shame-based syndromes are usually at the root of this process. They begin in childhood when "normal" development is interrupted and becomes twisted or pathological.

The trigger can be sexual or physical abuse or another broadscale trauma. Often it is more discreet, such as when a parent is detached and not providing assurance to the child that he or she is loved, respected, cared for and appreciated. The child may sense that they are not worthy or significant in the family and therefore insignificant in the scheme of life. They may grow with the self-perception that they are damaged.

Some become co-dependent or seek endlessly to please someone else in an effort to appear "significant". This people-pleasing may become especially evident in the workplace. These people are desperate to be seen as "good workers". In reality, they are unwittingly being driven by two key aspects of what is known as "disgrace shame": self-blame and self-criticism. Their hidden critic whispers, "I **S**hould **H**ave **A**lways **M**astered **E**verything". As their pain deepens, they live in a state of "dis-ease". They stumble into friendships and relationships, and test activities and boundaries at random. Some of these pursuits will be satisfied in a season, only to be replaced by others that are more problematic, such as the desire to oppose authority (oppositional personality disorder) or to take up smoking, drugs, alcohol, gambling, antisocial and unsafe sexual behaviours or violence.

Addiction reduces pain by temporarily making deep-seated, negative feelings bearable; but it reproduces shame and constantly reactivates the shame cycle. Anything can become addictive. Shame and guilt are different. Guilt involves self-judgments about specific acts. Shame involves a generalised concept of a negative self. Shame, along with distress, is also the source of depression. So what to do?

The first thing to understand is that not all shame is negative. "Discretion shame" is a stabiliser of conscience. It enables us to recognise fitting and appropriate responses or behaviours in order to live as whole human beings. However, in the midst of disgrace or "toxic" shame, attention turns inward and generates the torment of self-consciousness. Disgrace shame is characterised as thoughts of sudden, unexpected exposure, coupled with blinding inner-scrutiny. Whether all eyes are upon us or only our own, we feel deficient as individuals: diseased, defective, shy, embarrassed, alienated, isolated and deeply disturbed. Disgrace shame requires healing. It is overcome only when the original unity within the self is restored. This is governed by our willingness to make confession of our shame and accept our need of an holistic experience of forgiveness that is rarely, if ever, gained in isolation from others. Some form of help or appropriate therapy is essential. **Once shame is confronted, both the abandonment of addiction and the road from chaos to serenity can be remarkably expedient.**

Rev John Tully, OAM, was a Uniting Church minister and addictions counsellor on the Gold Coast - John passed away on April 13th, 2015.

"*My addictions of choice were alcohol, inappropriate relationships and workaholism. Surely if I looked successful and made lots of money I could overcome my shame! - It didn't work.*"


There are many people who habitually experience strong, emotional swings which drive them to uncontrolled behaviour which they later regret. The growing child seems to gain the idea, "I should not make a mistake". A mistake is not acceptable to either parent, or to myself. This leads to an inappropriate belief system where the person grows to believe: I **S**hould - **H**ave - **A**lways - **M**astered - **E**verything - **S H A M E**

Failure to fulfil this unrealistic, perfectionist idea will lay the foundation for emotional insecurity and crippling low self-esteem. The person begins to live his or her life from within a cocoon or prison of shame. Such pain and shame become unbearable. It becomes an identity, the way the growing person views and considers themselves.

This pain must find a balance in pleasure if the pain is to be bearable. The pleasure often comes from acting out: smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol to become instantly sophisticated and adult, experimenting with other chemical substances like drugs, or activities like gambling and sex that bring great pleasures to flood the body.

The "Pleasure" message is carried by the neuro-transmitter Dopamine. Dopamine was once released naturally by the tastes of food or the stimulation of praise and a warm cuddle of approval. If the natural release of this pleasure message is lost or denied, a series of introductions by friends or older family members will enable the "feeling" and "flush" of pleasure to be released by artificial or inappropriate stimulation.

The feeling can be released on demand by using a ‘substance’ like nicotine, alcohol, cannabis, or any one of a number of substances that are readily available where loneliness, fear and insecurity mingle. A "flush of pleasure" can be released by work, pleasing others, gambling, getting angry, the cultivation of ‘lust’ or engaging in an "activity" with or without friends.

These are many of the addictive substances or activities that various people have used and discovered which will change feelings or which may be used to avoid loneliness or fear. When used for this purpose, these will sooner or later promote shame and reward dependent or addictive behaviour. There are many addictions that people do not identify as addictive behaviour because there can be dependencies and addictions without a substance.

The natural balance of pain and pleasure will be inverted by using substances to mask pain. As one very unhappy young person said, "when I started taking illicit drugs, especially heroin, I would sit in the streets and watch all the ‘funny, straight’ people go by". This person was one who could not achieve at school. Normal life was so painful for him, and many like him, that an "upside-down world" appears more desirable than facing reality.

Shame is very often the engine that drives addiction. Shame may have its source in criticism; physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse; poor communication with parents and within the family; or in the rigid dogmatism of unquestioned "authority" in the family. Many young people gain a sense of power as they rebel against parental, familial and societal values. The pleasure of the power gained through identifying with a subculture or peer-group often reinforces the pleasure of rebellion and may become another addictive agent that imprisons and restricts the true development of the human person.

*"Just knowing that addictive behaviours are an indication of shame that is being masked can lead to a true evaluation of our mental health. Just as covering the fuel indicator on the dashboard doesn't fill the tank or overcome the problem, addictive cover-ups don't resolve the real issues. Addictions are not the problem, they are just the indication of an underlying problem.*

*When issues are resolved, the addiction (anaesthetic) is no longer necessary*"


**REVEALING SHAME STARTS THE HEALING**

We have learnt to cope by suppressing our emotions and our pain. The healing of shame happens as we learn to appropriately express our feelings and problems. We admit to ourselves, "I have a problem". We become aware of what we do to cope. We talk to another person about it, a counsellor or a safe and trusted friend, in a safe place where we can be honest with ourselves and the other person. This person will listen to us and help us recognise, observe and share our emotions. We realise that feelings do not always require a response. Feelings are not always trustworthy. They will pass and we can let them go. We can grow, live responsibly and have self-worth. We can forgive and be forgiven.

The way we are built to respond to 'wrong doing' is with feelings of guilt and shame. We all have a conscience: something inside that tells us right from wrong. Sometimes wrong is done to us, other times we do wrong and sometimes stuff just happens, but guilt and shame are emotions that we must look at to discover how to heal and live a whole life. What we do with them is what is important. All emotion can be healthy when it is identified and directed appropriately.

We biologically grow closer when we come together to achieve, to get something done and to share our hardships. Trust begins to emerge when we have a sense that another person is driven by things other than their own self-gain. With trust comes a sense of value: real value for who we are.

"Value, by definition, is the transference of trust. You can't convince someone you have value, just as you can't convince someone to trust you. You have to earn trust by communicating and demonstrating that you share the same values and beliefs."

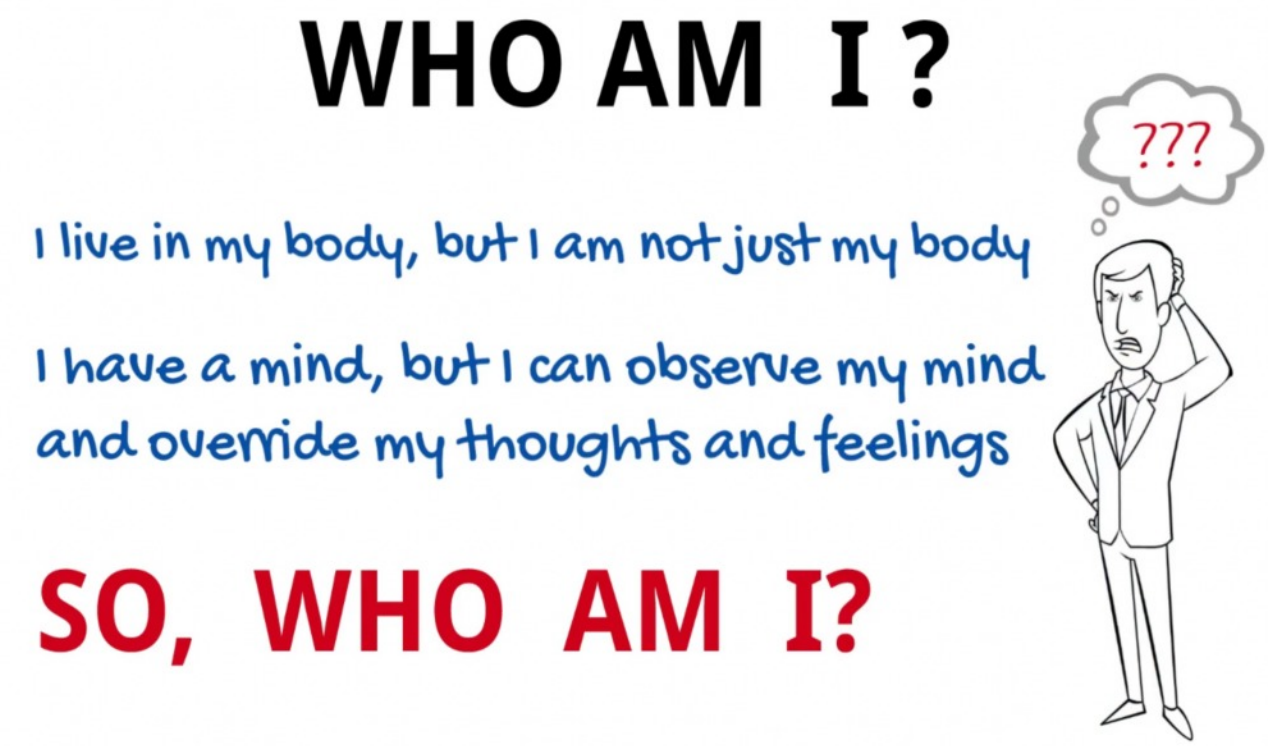
Simon Sinek

*"I lived for so long with my secrets that I was always in fear of discovery and never felt real peace. I lived with the thought that if people knew the real me, they would leave me and I would have to face abandonment again.*

*A real relationship is based on intimacy - 'In To Me I See' and 'In To Me I Allow You To See'. Once we expose our flaws to a safe person, we can learn to live honestly with the 'real us'.*

*Someone in my journey told me, 'whatever you bury alive, stays alive - AND GROWS.' How true that was for me.*

***When you face the pain, you get the new life!"***




**WHO AM I?**

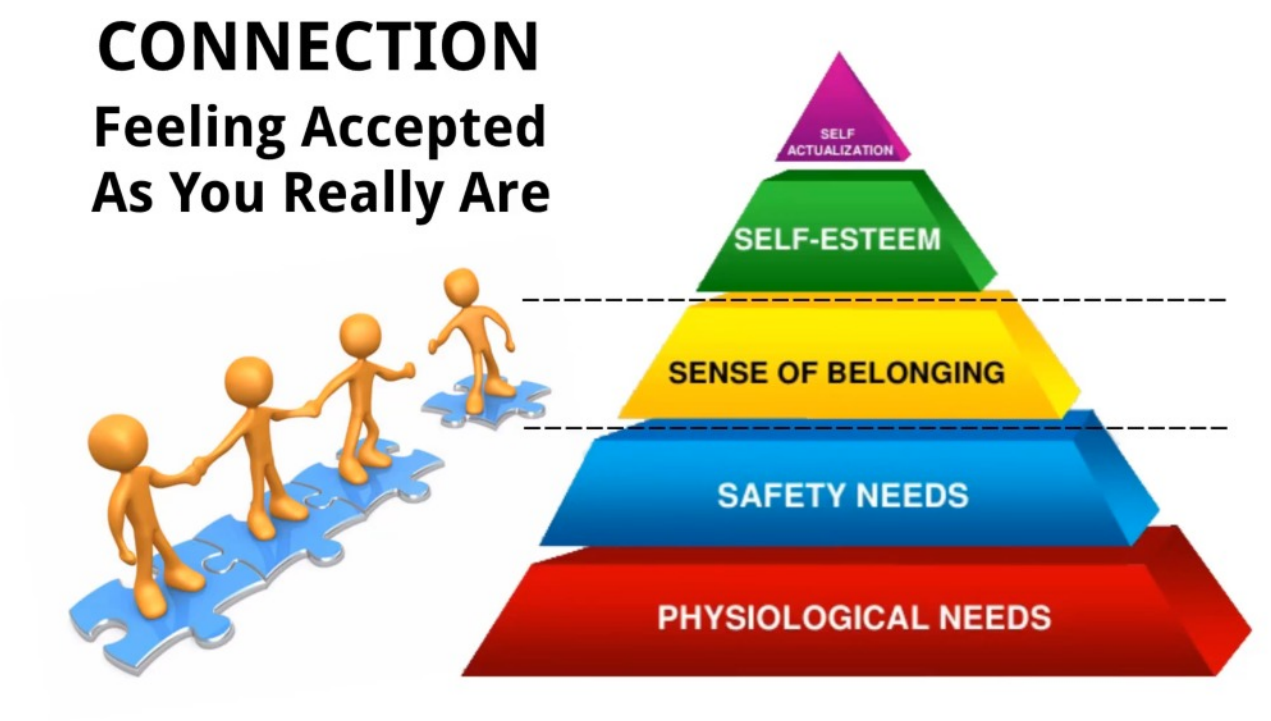
When you learn or experience things, electrical messages flow back and forth from one neuron to another, over and over. From birth until the age of three, the brain forms more than 1 million neural connections per second (Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child).

Our brains are constantly changing and creating new pathways. This means that everyone is able to learn and is capable of change. The brain attaches feelings to our thoughts and experiences. We build a bank of emotions as well as thoughts and attitudes. This is how we survive and navigate through life.

We learn from all of our experiences. We build a bank of information and store it in our memory, both conscious and unconscious. This becomes our belief system which determines our attitudes; that is, how we view the world, how we think, feel and behave. Often, we share the same standards and values as those closest to us. Sociologists use the term "the mirror self" to describe how a person forms a self-image. In essence, the mirror self works like this: we reflect the values, expectations, perceptions and habits of those closest to us. If people spend enough time together, they 'reflect' one another's mannerisms, speech, attitudes and philosophy.

Anyone without standards and values is at the mercy of everybody else's values. As parents, it is important to understand our own values, so we pass them to our children and guide them in forming their own. What are the habits and behaviours that we are modelling for our children? Don't just teach children, ask for their opinions and respect their answers. This helps them think for themselves and to gain confidence. Problems often arise when adult role-models in life let us down. As we become aware of what our standards and values are, we may challenge them or disagree with them if they don't work for us.

*"It was a big day for me when I realized that I was more than just my body. All of the problems I was having were related to the impatient needs of my body. If all of our identity is in a physical body that is aging and deteriorating daily, we don't have much to celebrate".*




**CONNECTION**

**Feeling Accepted as You Really Are - Sense of Belonging**

Human connection brings complex values and security to our lives. Relationships give us a sense of belonging; to a parent, to another person, to a group; a sense of identity in contrast to others in that group; an almost therapeutic-support system; and a reason not to feel lonely. We learn from others' experiences and insight and we learn together by pursuing new experiences alongside those we live with and befriend.

And on a very basic level, therapy involves this principle as well. Sitting and reading a book about psychology will rarely be as beneficial as sitting and talking with a therapist or counsellor. It's the interactive exchange that makes all the difference.

Many people are so unhappy that they find a therapist or counsellor to work through their struggles. Plenty more people are content enough with their lives, but there are some who are truly happy. Where does that happiness come from? Does money buy it? Self-confidence? Safety? Support systems? A fulfilling job? Pets? Everyone's combination of life experience is different, but repeated studies have identified that some groups tend to be happier than others.

Recent studies have looked a bit closer at the happiness quotient of two, specific (though very different) groups - People who live in "walkable" neighbourhoods and People who are involved in church.

**Both had one major factor in common - human relationships.**

First, churchgoers. A church's "secret ingredient" for making people happy, says the study, are the social ties people build when involved in a religious community. This is not to say that private spirituality is without positive psychological value. Past studies have found that spirituality reduces both stress and depression, but those who attend church and build relationships there, are consistently happier than those who attend and do not build relationships.

Second, the study on walkable neighbourhoods and well-being. Walkable neighbourhoods provide easy access to post offices, parks, restaurants, playgrounds, barbershops and club meeting venues. People who live in walkable neighbourhoods tend to build "social capital", that is they are more likely to meet people, become involved in community volunteer work, build relationships through that work, and ultimately feel happier.

A child (and we all) needs at least one dependable, significant adult in their life. Everyone deserves self worth and the dignity of their own thoughts and opinions. When we listen to another person, it means that what they say matters, more importantly, they matter. If we've been 'shut up' for years, we shut down our creativity and confidence. We all need attention.

A word about self help. Whilst self help techniques such as meditation and yoga etc, may be beneficial, they produce an individualistic mentality which privatises our issues. The problem being, the person is most likely already isolated. We cannot live in isolation. There is no self that exists, other than how self exists with others. We must learn to express emotion in healthy and constructive ways or we end up expressing destructively. A child may hammer a toy, but an adult punches a wall. The message in the head is the same regardless of size.

*"Once I could be the real ME, I was free to be a legitimate part of a group. I joined a serving community feeding and housing the street-people, joined Rotary and looked for ways to let the world know the keys to a better life through understanding holistic mental health*".


**UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH - Spirit**

In this book, Spirit looks at purpose, its role in providing fulfilment and happiness, and how to deal with the thinking that can keep us from finding that purpose and ultimate fulfilment. Emerging research shows that 'meaning in life' predicts better physical health outcomes. Greater meaning has been associated with a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease, reduced risk of heart attack among individuals with coronary heart disease, reduced risk of stroke, and increased longevity.

In 2014, the British National Health Service began recommending a five step plan for mental well-being, based on meaningful lives.

The steps are:

**1. Connect with our family and community**

**2. Physical exercise**

**3. Lifelong learning**

**4. Giving to others**

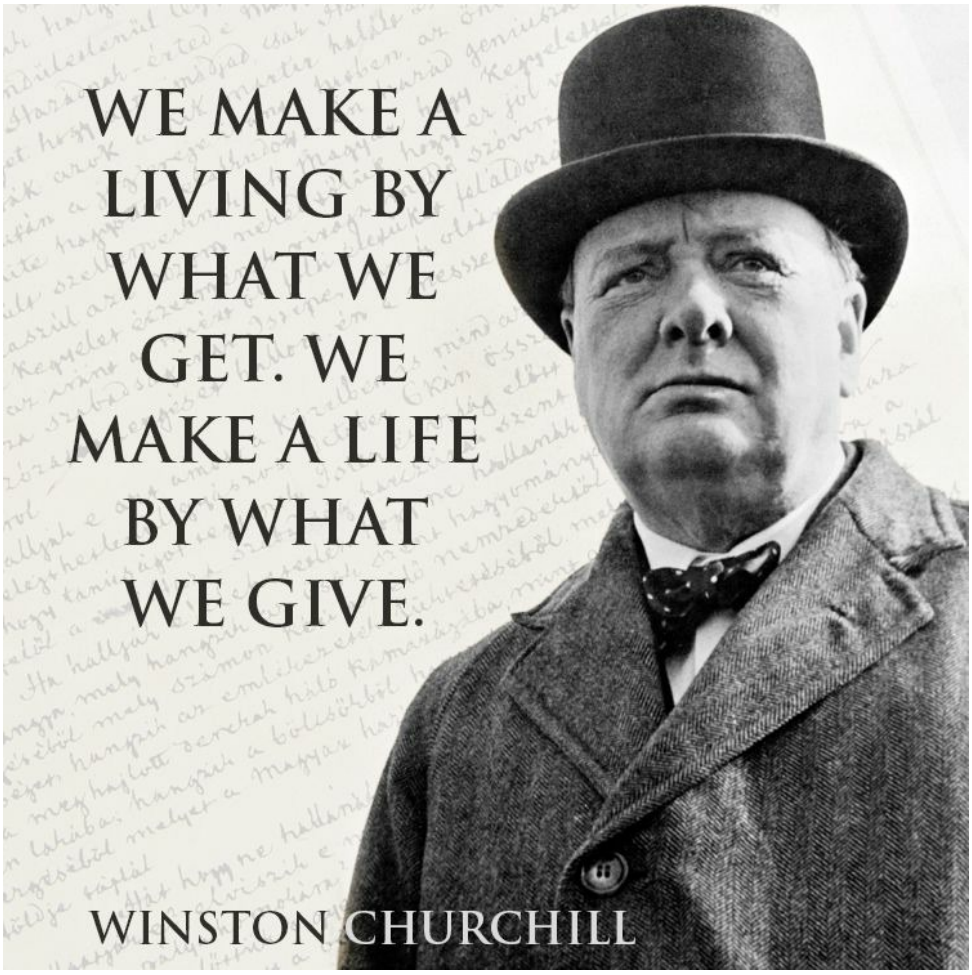
**5. Being aware or mindful of the world around you**

Researchers in positive psychology have found that following these steps leads to fuller engagement in activities, greater contribution to society through utilising one's personal strengths, greater meaning based on investing in something larger than ourselves and improved life satisfaction.

Large data studies of 'flow' experiences (a state of complete immersion in an activity) have consistently suggested that humans experience meaning and fulfilment when mastering challenging tasks. The experience comes from the way tasks are approached and performed, rather than the particular choice of task. A classic example is of two workers on an apparently boring production line in a factory. One treats the work as a tedious chore, while the other turns it into a game to see how fast she can make each unit, and achieves 'flow' in the process.

Our attitude toward tasks is far more important than what we actually do.

"*Just as the car is of little value unless we undertake a journey, our Body and Mind are of little use unless we have a purpose in life*".




**PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY**

Purpose - Having a great vehicle and a great driver is pointless unless you are going somewhere.

Most people only move from one situation to another when they are forced to move by some pressure or force of circumstance. If I have an accurate map which will enable me to navigate across a strange city and I don't read it, I am unlikely to reach my desired destination. I must locate my present position and my desired destination to be able to navigate.

As we care for ourselves, come to know who we are and become aware of where we are in our relationships; we can take our first steps toward making choices that will enrich our own lives. This will assist us to move toward our purpose which will provide fulfilment and happiness. Only when we know our present position, can we navigate toward a goal.

When we know who we are and where we are, we can cease to be driven by impersonal forces in the world around us. We can begin to plan and take control of our journey through life. When we know who we are and where we are, we can understand a little of our present behaviour and make decisions about the kind of future we want to aim for. If our future is different to our present lifestyle, we can choose to make changes to achieve our goals.

Always remember: we were each born for a reason, a purpose, for something bigger than just ourselves. We have to 'drive'; no one else is going to do it for us.

**It is our own personal responsibility to develop and build ourselves into the person we want to be and to live the kind of life we want to live.**

*"The purpose we define for ourselves does not need to be set in concrete. As we move toward our goals, we find new options that we did not know existed until we actually started the journey.*

*As they say, you cannot steer a ship until it leaves the dock."*


**"You have to learn about thousands of diseases, but I only have to focus on fixing what's wrong with ME! Now which one of us do you think is the expert?"**


**FIT FOR PURPOSE**

We are all designed differently to perfectly fit our purpose.

We all have desires and talents to use and develop that will give us our own, unique purpose in life. At different times and different stages in our lives, that purpose may change. Having a purpose or a goal helps us know where we are going in life and helps us work out what to do to get there.

Our habits will help build who we are. Developing and building a system of 'healthy' habits and routines will shape us into who we want to be. We can start by working on small achievable changes to be more effective, instead of starting out by setting big goals which can be daunting and often unachievable. Every single day, take one small step that moves you in the direction of your purpose. Write down your goal and break it down into smaller goals and then even further into small, actionable steps.

When we have a goal and work on it, it works on us to change and develop us. We become better people in the challenge of pursuing our goals.

Do you have goals? Can you write them down in a sentence or two? Is the goal worth persevering for? Are the goals worth giving our time, our effort and the price to achieve them?

Dopamine is the brain chemical that ensures we achieve our goals. Dopamine is why it is important to write our goals down. When they are achieved and we cross them off, no matter how small, we get a burst of dopamine. Dopamine is why having a vision is so important and why measurable milestones or goals are necessary. If we feel we are making progress toward our vision, we keep going forward because dopamine motivates us.

We can learn how to harness our own reward systems by finding out what motivates us and our children. The act of seeking and finding activates our reward circuits. Learn to enjoy the quest of setting both long-term and short-term goals and taking small steps toward them every day. Challenge yourself. Even to simply drive home from work a different way every day, preferably without the use of your GPS, will boost dopamine. Working on a goal without fail for 45 days will train your brain to stimulate dopamine production in a new way.

Sadly, 50% of people around us have no idea where they are going. Another 40% will go wherever they are led. The 10% left know where they are going, but fewer than half of them will be prepared to pay the cost of getting there.

*"An orchestra can play a great symphony when all of the different instruments play their individual parts and combine as one sound. Just as all of the instruments look and sound different, so it is with human beings. We all have unique gifts to bring to a group, just as all of the above vehicles are designed to fit their purpose.*"


Three questions that we could use to help us work out our purpose are -

**What would I do if I knew I couldn't fail?**

**What would I do even if nobody paid me to do it?**

**What makes me come alive?**

Learn to be curious! Ask questions! Look around for people and organisations to journey with. Look for those who share our values and ideals. Look for those who appreciate us and our unique talents. Our life's journey will then be making a difference and will also support our mental health and well-being.

Like anything else in the journey of life, a particular purpose will not be a fixed point that we arrive at and stay at forever. The world changes too often. We change too often. It is the constant search for staying connected to our ongoing purpose that keeps us on target, curious, developing, growing and giving.

"*This book is, for us and at this particular stage of our lives, our purpose. Having both experienced mental health issues earlier in life and having worked teaching about Mental Illness and ways to support yourself and get help, we knew from our own personal life and the research now available that we wanted to do Protective, Holistic Mental Health. This is a passion Annie and I share. It makes us come alive. Our talents, skills, abilities and gifts intersected here where there is a great need in the world around us.*"


As we become aware, learn about ourselves, and care for ourselves and others, we find self worth. We find we are not only able to do good, we want to do good; we want to give and to be kind to those around us.

We may also find purpose and fulfilment in planning and achieving something that is important to us. If we feel too pressured to have a goal or a plan for our own future, we may be better suited to joining in with another person's vision or purpose. There are many organisations who need volunteers to provide a variety of services to our communities and beyond.

Another purpose could be in the way we decide to rear our children and the way we treat our friends and peers. Intentional random acts of kindness may be our purpose. We are wired to need each other. We thrive on the feedback that we receive when we do something beneficial to another, especially when there is no return. This kind act releases our positive brain chemical: serotonin**. Looking for ways to be grateful everyday and ways to share our gratitude will beneficially change who we are and how we view life.**

"*One Christmas, we volunteered to peel vegetables for a drug rehabilitation centre that processed vegetables to raise funds for their work. This mundane chore, which is hard work when done for hours, gave us an opportunity to work alongside others, to encourage them and to help keep the facility open. The task was tedious but the feeling we had at the end of each day was extremely satisfying. If you check the section on brain chemistry, you will see why.*"


**WE ARE NOT BUILT TO TRAVEL ALONE**

Life is meant to be shared. This is why helping others is so important to us. The one thing we all have in common is the need for human interaction, not in a superficial 'social media' way, but in a genuine, heart-to-heart, authentic way. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are all great ways of 'sharing' important life events. However, status updates and clever posts are by no means a substitute for real interaction and intimacy. Authentic relationships also boost our happy brain chemical: serotonin.

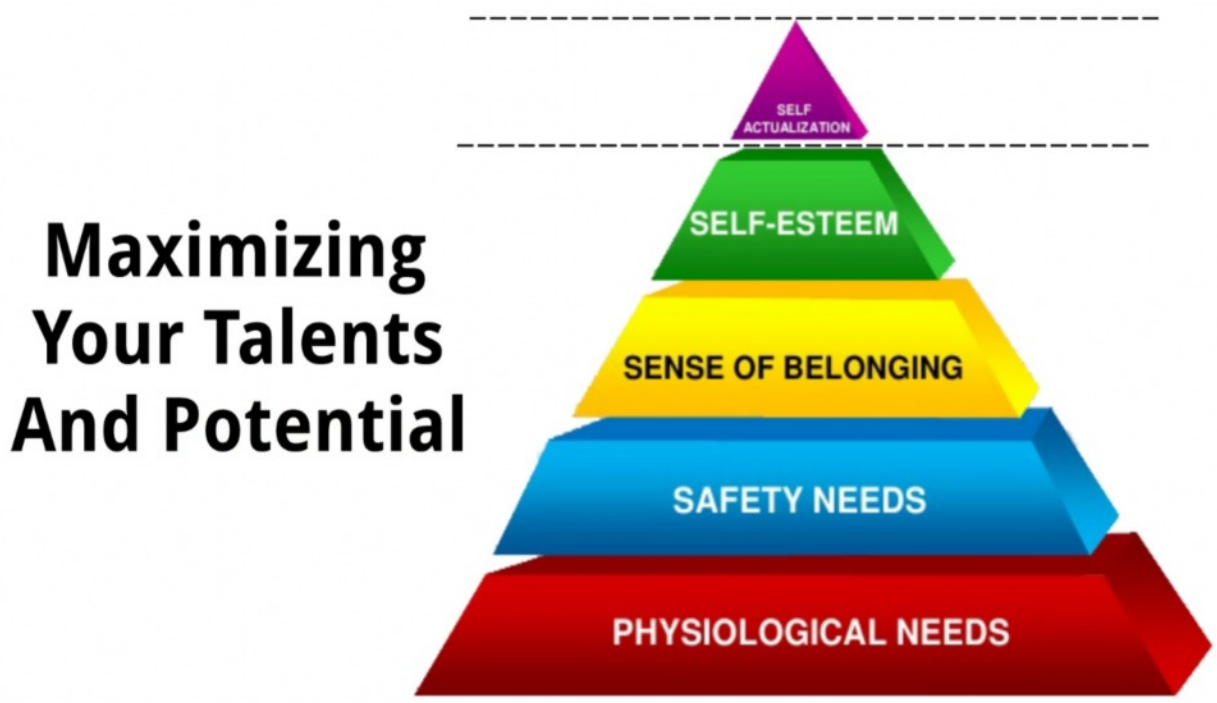
Real relationships and intimacy require us to share our deepest feelings, hurts, failures, doubts and fears, as well as acknowledging our weaknesses. It means trusting others enough to take off the mask; to be real and ask for help when needed.

True authenticity requires courage and humility. It is risky, but we only grow by taking risks. In strong, solid relationships we experience mutuality: the art of giving and receiving. It is depending on each other, building reciprocal relationships, sharing responsibilities and helping each other.

Whether it is with a significant other, or with friends, family members or co-workers, invest time in building significant, authentic and intimate relationships into our lives.

Have you ever had an experience that took your breath away and looked around for someone to share it with? Life is meant to be shared. We are born that way. It's in our DNA. It's how we get through life. It's like having a mechanic sitting next to you as you get off the beaten track.

"*For the first half of my life I was a loner. It was not until I met Annie that, with her understanding and support, I was eventually able to have a truly transparent relationship. It is amazingly peaceful to live with someone when you don't have the fear of exposure hanging over you.*"




Self-actualized people are those who are fulfilled and doing all they are capable of. The growth of self-actualization, coined by Maslow in 1962, refers to the need for personal growth and discovery that is present throughout a person's life. For Maslow, a person is always 'becoming' and never remains static in these terms.

**Maximizing Your Talents and Potential**

Learn the art of being present and celebrate the small wins. Be kind and remember the importance of what we achieve everyday, rather than being too focused on achieving massive goals. Having a daily checklist and ticking off what we do accomplish, can be an act of celebration. Find positive ways to reward ourselves as we move forward, develop and achieve. One step forward will usually generate a second step forward.

*"I have learned that champions aren't just born; champions can be made when they embrace and commit to life-changing positive habits."* *Lewis Howes*

As we learn about who we are and what is important to us, we may find our circle of people will change. It is helpful to seek out like-minded travel companions for our journeys. People who will encourage us. People who will love and support us. People who will speak words that give us life and build us up, rather than tear us down.

People who will challenge us and be honest with us, so we can stay on track. People who will see the potential we have and allow us opportunities to grow into that potential.

A crucial thing we can do to live purposefully is to develop high-impact habits. Habits with high impact will accelerate our process of purpose. An almost lost art of focus that can be used each morning is to develop a habit of devoting 20 minutes to meditation or prayer, 20 minutes to exercise and 20 minutes to reading aloud. We live in an electronic world that moves at the speed of light and these habits will open our mind, our heart and our spirit to purpose like no other.

Low-impact habits will drain our enthusiasm, our energy and our efforts, and delay or prevent us finding our purpose. What we do with our time and our energy will determine the outcome of our life. Digital entertainment and social media will consume our time. Time is precious.

It is important for our well-being to develop personal boundaries and to take responsibility for how we treat ourselves and how we allow others to treat us.

Personal Boundaries act as a filter to permit what is acceptable into our lives and what is not. Without a strong sense of self worth and without boundaries that protect and define us, we tend to derive our sense of self worth from those around us. To avoid this situation, have clear and decisive limits which others must respect, and be willing to do whatever it takes to enforce them.

Healthy boundaries improve our self confidence and our ability to communicate with others. Healthy boundaries put us more in touch with the reality around us and enable us to have more fulfilling relationships which give more stability in life.

"*The great thing about life is that just like playing 'Snakes and Ladders', we can move up and down the Maslow scale many times in our life. It's never too late to start again.*"

# EVENTS CAN CHANGE YOUR PURPOSE


There is one thing we can be sure of in life and that is change. We all grow and move on to different things at different times. Some things we know are coming, others take us by surprise and others come as a shock. When a disaster occurs or relationships end, whether they be personal, work or family relationships, we all need time to learn to cope, adjust and heal.

Below is a 7 stage adjustment process for how we deal with and process, loss and the associated grief:

**1. Shock and Denial:** We generally react to learning of loss with numbed disbelief.

**2. Pain and Guilt:** As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain.

**3. Anger and Bargaining:** Frustration gives way to anger. We may lash out and lay blame.

**4. Depression:** Reflection and Loneliness: A period of sad reflection and loneliness.

**5. The Upward Turn:** We start to adjust and life becomes calmer and more organised.

**6. Reconstruction and Working Through:** We become more functional and practical.

**7. Acceptance and Hope:** We learn to accept and deal with the reality of the situation.

We are all unique and have different expectations of ourselves and life. Some are normal but others are unrealistic. We view life from our own perspective and sometimes this perspective or perception needs adjustment. Be kind to yourself and take time to heal. Live one day at a time, some will be good and some not so good, but you will move on.

Life will always present challenges, it's how we respond to and deal with those challenges that impact our lives. Fear is a natural part of life. Fear of failing often prevents people from any form of change, whether that change is of our choosing or is forced upon us. Fear stands for False Evidence Appearing Real. Often our obstacles are simply that: false evidence that we think is real. Never be afraid to ask for help. If the first person you ask is not the right person to help you, ask another, and another, until you find the right help. Support and help is always there if you look and persist.

*"It's when we feel that our life's dreams have been shattered, through divorce, redundancy, illness or even an empty nest, that we are the most vulnerable to distorted thinking and indiscreet behaviours that can further complicate the situation.*

***This is also the time to be aware of the moods and attitudes of friends or associates who may be experiencing life-changing events. This is when we see the greatest risk of self-harm."***

## THE BIOCHEMISTRY OF HOLISTIC MENTAL HEALTH

### Brain Chemistry - ENDORPHINS

Endorphins are neurotransmitters responsible for our survival. Endorphins are produced as a response to certain stimuli, especially stress, pain or fear. They enable us to press on in spite of circumstances, to endure and survive.

The primary role of endorphins is to mask physical pain. Endorphins are solo chemicals which means we can make endorphins on our own. We don't necessarily need another human being for the release of endorphins. They are our own private narcotic, our feel-good chemical, our natural pain killer. There are more than 20 kinds of endorphins. One type is even stronger than morphine. They are responsible for blocking physical pain but also, for giving us our feelings of pleasure. It's widely believed that these feelings of pleasure exist to let us know when we've had enough of a good thing, such as too much food, sex and even companionship.

Endorphins also encourage us to go after something in order to feel the associated pleasure. Endorphins originate in various parts: the pituitary gland, spinal cord and throughout other parts of the brain and nervous system. They mainly interact with receptors in cells found in regions of the brain responsible for blocking pain and controlling emotion.

The caveman was not the fastest, nor strongest 'animal' on earth but was very good at one thing which other animals lacked: great endurance. When hunting, man could track an animal for hours and hours, and miles and miles. Even when man was tired or injured, he pressed forward. This is human nature and it actually feels good; so good, in fact, that man would volunteer to go hunting again the next day, just like we get addicted to exercise. To this day, this is a good system for the survival of the group.

Today, the classic example of an endorphin rush is a runner's high. During heavy exercise, when we push our body harder than ever before, we feel good. Even when we are done with the run, we feel fantastic and continue to do so for hours afterward. Although we may be in so much pain later due to the muscle damage done during the run.

This is exactly what endorphins are designed to do. They enable us to push on, push through and achieve our goal.

Symptoms of Endorphin Deficiency may include cravings for chocolate, alcohol or drugs; crying over small issues; an increased level of sorrow; an inability to accept losses or an extreme sensitivity to pain.

**Some Ways to Increase Endorphins Naturally are:-**

1. Sniff some vanilla or lavender: Endorphin production can be influenced by certain aromas which can lift our mood

2. Take some ginseng

3. Exercise: If you struggle with exercise, take a group exercise class as friends will spur you on when you sag

4. Have appropriate sex: Sex is one of nature's great relaxants and a joyful de-stressing activity which also burns calories

5. Savour some chocolate: The bad news is, only one or two small squares of quality dark chocolate is recommended

6. Listen to music

7. Eat something spicy

8. Laugh daily: Children laugh up to 300 times a day, but adults may only laugh 5 times a day. Laughter is one of life's great medicines. As the Bible says, 'a merry heart does like a good medicine' (Proverbs 17:22)

Research shows laughter can help to lower blood pressure; reduce stress hormones; boost immune function by raising levels of infection-fighting cells; trigger the release of endorphins and produce a general sense of well-being.

**Brain Chemistry - DOPAMINE**

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter, a feel good chemical responsible for sending messages between the brain and nerve cells of the body. Dopamine is the motivation molecule in charge of our pleasure and reward system. Dopamine is a solo chemical, meaning we can make dopamine on our own. We don't necessarily need another human being for the release of dopamine in our bodies. Dopamine motivates us to take action toward goals, desires and needs; giving us a surge of reinforcing pleasure when we achieve them. Dopamine is the feeling we have when we find something we were looking for, or when we accomplish what we set out to achieve: the feeling we get when we cross something off our to-do list.

Dopamine ensures we achieve our goals. Dopamine is why it is important to write our goals down and cross them off: this act gives us a burst of dopamine. Dopamine is why having a vision is so important; why measurable milestones and goals are necessary. If we feel we are making progress toward our vision, we keep going forward, because dopamine motivates us. Dopamine is responsible for bodily functions such as movement, memory, sleep, mood, pleasurable reward, behaviour and cognition. It helps control nausea and vomiting. If you are feeling sick or nauseous, it may be because your dopamine levels are low.

Dopamine should come with a warning though - it is highly, highly addictive.

For the caveman, dopamine existed to help them go looking for food. Humans would not have survived if they had waited until they were hungry to go looking for food because there was no guarantee of finding it. When we eat we get dopamine, which is partly why we find eating pleasurable. When we see something that reminds us of something that feels good, we want to repeat that behaviour to get that feeling. That's dopamine.

If we were going for a walk, saw an apple on a tree and we wanted to eat that apple; we would get a small hit of dopamine. That hit focusses us in on our goal. Then, as we start walking towards the apple tree and as the apple gets a little bigger, we feel we are making progress and we get another hit of dopamine. When we get to the tree, we get even more dopamine as we eat the apple.

People with high levels of dopamine are likely to gravitate toward taking risks, such as skydiving and bungee jumping.

People with low levels are more prone to addictive behaviours. People with low levels have an increased susceptibility to alcoholism and are more likely to abuse drugs or consume too much food. These unhealthy behaviours also release dopamine into the body, contributing to the cycle of addiction.

Too little dopamine can leave you unfocused, unmotivated, lethargic and even depressed. People who exhibit low energy and poor motivation often rely on caffeine, sugar or other stimulants to get through the day. Some people who are low in dopamine compensate with self-destructive behaviours to get their dopamine boost. This can include the use and abuse of caffeine, alcohol, sugar, drugs, shopping, sex, video games, online porn, power, gambling or excessive internet use.

Dopamine is crucial to learning. When the brain is presented with an unexpected reward, dopamine increases and prompts the limbic reward system to take note and remember how to repeat such a positive experience. On the other hand, negative encounters hamper dopamine as a signal to avoid repeating them. This is a vital learning mechanism which also involves memory formation and motivation. The brain establishes a new temporary neural pathway to process new information or stimuli. Each replication of that same experience triggers the identical neural firing sequence which strengthens the synapses among neurons involved. When this occurs, a 'memory' is formed, allowing the brain to reliably access the information. An act of learning has been initiated, reinforced and embedded. This is how we memorize facts and figures or language.

**There are both healthy and unhealthy ways to increase dopamine.**

You can healthily increase dopamine by eating the right food. A diet high in Tyrosine will ensure you have the basic building blocks needed for dopamine production. Foods known to increase dopamine are all animal products, almonds, apples, avocado, bananas, beets, dark chocolate, coffee, fava beans, green leafy vegetables, green tea, lima beans, oatmeal, sea vegetables, sesame and pumpkin seeds, turmeric, watermelon and wheat germ. Foods high in natural probiotics also increase dopamine levels, such as yogurt, kefir and raw sauerkraut and curcumin which is the main active ingredient in the spice tumeric. Interestingly, the health of our intestinal flora impacts the production of neurotransmitters. An overabundance of bad bacteria leaves toxic byproducts in our gut which lowers dopamine levels. Sugar will give a temporary, unhealthy boost that is more drug-like than food.

Exercise will boost dopamine, especially if a goal is attached to it, and is in part responsible, along with endorphins, for the runner's high. Mindfulness, creative hobbies and listening to music can also help.

We can learn how to harness our own reward systems by finding out what motivates us and our children. Enjoy the quest of setting both long-term and short-term goals and taking small steps toward them each day. By taking on new challenges we will feel more alive, focused, productive and motivated. The act of seeking and finding activates our reward circuits. Even getting a promotion is a great dopamine boost. Starting a new exercise program, learning a language, or challenging yourself to drive home from work a different way every day, preferably without the use of your GPS, will boost dopamine.

Working on a goal without fail for 45 days will train your brain to stimulate dopamine production in a new way.

Unhealthy ways to increase dopamine can be gateways to self-destructive behaviours and addictions. Examples are alcohol, drugs, nicotine, gambling and even our mobile phone. If we were to wake up in the morning and crave a drink, we might be an alcoholic. In the same way, if we wake up in the morning and have to check our phone before we even get out of bed, we might be addicted. If we can't be without our phone, if we walk from room to room in our own home holding our phone, we might be an addict.

We are not designed to experience a continual dopamine high. A constant hunt for dopamine leads us to being driven by addictions, greed and lust.

Many common symptoms of dopamine deficiency are similar to those of depression. A lack of motivation or enthusiasm, fatigue, apathy, procrastination, an inability to feel pleasure, low libido, sleep problems, mood swings, hopelessness, self doubt, memory loss, an inability to concentrate, restless legs and ADHD are associated with decreased dopamine activity.

**Brain Chemistry - SEROTONIN**

Serotonin is a brain chemical responsible for regulating people's moods. It is our 'happy hormone'. It is the leadership chemical and is responsible for feelings of significance, importance, pride and status. Serotonin is also responsible for social behavior, appetite and digestion, immune function, sleep, memory and sexual function. It has a wide variety of functions which keep us happy and on track.

We are social animals and social recognition is important to us. Serotonin re-enforces relationships to give us feelings of fulfillment, love and trust; such as the relationships between parent and child, boss and employee, coach and player, and caregiver and the one receiving care. This is why we have graduations and give out awards. If we fulfilled all the requirements to graduate and simply received an email stating, "Congratulations! Please print your certificate with the attached pdf", we wouldn't feel as good. Instead, we have a big ceremony to celebrate accomplishment. In the audience are our family, friends and teachers: everyone who supported us and watched our backs. We show up on the day, go up onto the stage, receive our diploma and it feels great! We feel our status and our pride rise when we have serotonin in our veins and our confidence rises also. The best part is, at the exact moment we receive our diploma, we feel a burst of serotonin go through our body.  And our parents sitting in the audience also receive a shot of serotonin and feel immense pride watching our graduation.

This is what serotonin is trying to do. Its job is to re-enforce our relationships. Think about the speeches we give. If an award is given to somebody, we say, "I couldn't have done it without..." We thank God, mum and dad, family and friends, and they look on thinking how proud they are. We work to make them proud.

Great teams don't want to win the trophy, they want to win for their support team: to make the coach proud, to make their parents proud! This raises our status, our confidence and it feels good. We, in turn, will look after others, so that they may accomplish the same. This is what serotonin is trying to do. The value of family or belonging to a tribe means we can trust each other. We feel safe. Benevolence and random acts of kindness also give us bursts of serotonin.

Today's problem is that we can trick serotonin. We live in a materialistic society, so we often judge status on how much money we make. Sadly, any conspicuous display of wealth raises our status. This is why logos are put on the outside of clothing. They're no good on the inside, nobody can see them! We all want a pair of Gucci shoes and designer glasses. How good does it feel to own them, to wear them? Our confidence rises when we put them on, a display of status feels great! The problem is, there is no real relationship being re-enforced in this scenario. We can trick the system. That's why we attempt to accomplish things, accumulate more and more material possessions, yet we never feel successful because there was no relationship in it. We have tricked the release of serotonin. A lack of serotonin may also be the reason people fall into gangs and criminal activity. These cultures bring experiences that facilitate serotonin release. Unhealthy, attention-seeking behaviour can also be a search for how serotonin makes us feel.

Symptoms of deficiency may include loneliness, depression, sleeping disorders, anxiety, irritability, aggression, stress, behavioural problems, premenstrual syndrome, binge eating and carbohydrate cravings. When we eat a lot of carbohydrates, especially sugary ones like dessert, it produces a surge of serotonin in the brain which can make us feel happy and sleepy for a while. This is why we can get 'addicted' to carbohydrates.

80-90% of serotonin is manufactured in the digestive system where it helps to regulate gastric functions. Serotonin is synthesized by an amino acid called tryptophan. Tryptophan is the source of serotonin in the brain. The only source of this amino acid is from certain foods. Increase tryptophan and you increase serotonin which will result in relaxed mind and mood, better concentration, better sleeping patterns, calmness and feelings of security.

**Some guidelines to promote serotonin production through various activities and to break those poor patterns and negative cycles include:**

1. Drink milk regularly: high levels of Tryptophan are found in milk and especially whey, as well as cottage cheese and lean meats like chicken, turkey, salmon, tuna and eggs. Other foods include bananas, pineapple, tofu, soy products, nuts, seeds, oats, beans, lentils and spinach.

2. Eat a balanced diet: tryptophan is mainly found in protein but the human body works in synergy, so proper nutrition must be balanced for absorption and synthesizing.

3. Sleep: give yourself a good night's sleep every night. Good and well patterned sleep increases serotonin production. Develop a good sleep pattern with a glass of warm milk before bed. Eat a banana before bed if hungry.

4. A healthy body and regular exercise: exercise increases the level of neurotransmitters in the brain.

5. Have a time set aside each day for relaxation: meditation, reflection or prayer can provide a relaxed positive mood, so have some quiet time in a relaxing or soothing place.

6. Natural sunlight promotes serotonin and is a natural mood elevator.

7. Avoid too much caffeine: caffeine can give a good energy boost but this is short term. Caffeine's good mood wears off after a few hours and can also disrupt sleeping patterns.

8. Reflect on past significant achievements: this allows the brain to re-live the experience. Our brain has trouble telling the difference between what's real and what's imagined, so it produces serotonin in either case.

9. Practicing gratitude reminds us that we are valued and have much to value in life, so learn to be grateful. If you need a serotonin boost during a stressful day, take a few moments to reflect gratefully on friends, past achievements and victories.

**The benefits of serotonin are improved mood, sleep, immune system and gut function, which all can lead to weight loss. From this, REM sleep improves, dreams come back and sleep quality as a whole often improves, leaving people feeling rested when they wake up. Serotonin also helps us feel like we belong.**

**Brain Chemistry - OXYTOCIN**

Oxytocin is the neurotransmitter known as the love chemical which creates intimacy and trust, and builds healthy relationships. It helps us to feel satisfied and gives us all the warm and fuzzies. Oxytocin occurs naturally, is made in the hypothalamus and is stored and released by the posterior pituitary gland in the brain. Oxytocin is thought to be the superhero that produces nurturing and relaxing sensations, countering the production of cortisol and bringing all of the stress responses back to normal.

Oxytocin produces an intense feeling of safety, of knowing that someone has your back. It promotes calmness and connectedness. The cultivation of oxytocin is essential for creating strong bonds where people look out for each other and it improves social interactions.

This chemical communicates with the reproductive system during childbirth and lactation, and causes new mums to form a loving bond with their babies after birth. It has been linked to sexual arousal and is the primary hormone released during an orgasm. It is also found in men and has effects on testosterone production and the movement of sperm.

Oxytocin brought us into this world. Oxytocin usually starts the labour process. In cases where that doesn't happen, synthetic oxytocin is given to start the birthing process. If oxytocin is flowing normally after birth, a mother will love her child no matter what. Bonding, giving, loving and caring are related to longevity, optimal health, better mood and better reproductive function.

Oxytocin shifts people’s focus from themselves to another, to their family or tribe.

Some benefits of oxytocin are more refreshing, restful sleep; more coping ability; lower blood pressure; less stress; decreased pain levels; improved healing; reduction in cravings and weight loss.

Oxytocin inhibits addiction! When we have oxytocin in our body, it is very difficult to get addicted to something. Oxytocin boosts our immune system. It helps us live longer. Oxytocin increases our creativity and our ability to solve problems. Oxytocin is really good for us, it is not addictive and it feels great! Although, it does take time to build up.

**Some ways to increase oxytocin include:**

1. Playing soothing music: This helps raise the mood and build a connections. Think about when you are trying to be intimate with someone early in relationship. Singing and dancing together is helpful too.

2. Sincere listening: Showing we care about what another person has to say by not playing with a phone or looking away. Sincere listening will raise oxytocin levels for both parties which will build a connection and allow for bonding.

3. Meditation or prayer: Focusing on loving others in meditation is better for oxytocin than a standard mindful meditation. Breathe in for 8 secs and out for 8 secs, 10 minutes a day.

4. Spending time with friends in person.

5. Doing something adventurous or exercising with another person or more than one other. This forms a connection with others and reduces fear. The amygdala plays a major role in controlling fear and anxiety, detecting threats and linking to defence behaviours. Raising oxytocin decreases amygdala response which makes you less fearful. This means if you can take more risks in life: you can have more success.

6. Laugh more.

7. Tell people you love them.

8. Get a massage: Relaxing can raise oxytocin.

9. Acts of human generosity: Defined as giving of your time and energy, expecting nothing in return. Doing nice things for people without expecting anything in return. Give gifts, no matter how small. Studies show receiving gifts raises oxytocin, but giving means you will receive it also.

11. Pat an animal, if you are an animal person, especially your own pet.

12. Appropriate physical contact: Hug more. Hugs reduce cardiovascular stress and even improves the immune system. Eight hugs a day is recommended. Hugging seems to be one of the best way to increases oxytocin and our connection with others.

13. Become more trustworthy: Being trusted by someone else raises our oxytocin. We tend to trust someone when they trust us.

**Oxytocin is only produced in relationships, it is not a solo chemical.**

**Brain Chemistry - CORTISOL**

Cortisol is the stress hormone made by our two adrenal glands, one located on each kidney. The pituitary gland, located inside the brain, regulates the amount of cortisol released by the adrenal glands.

Cortisol is essential for life and helps to maintain blood pressure, immune function and the body's anti-inflammatory processes.

We share feelings of stress and anxiety with all other social animals. If we saw a herd of gazelle grazing and if one gazelle thought it heard a rustle in the grass, it would suddenly jerk its head up. This is what cortisol does. Cortisol is designed to keep us alive. It is the first stage of fight or flight. It makes all of our senses hyper-attuned to look for danger and it injects glucose into our muscles so we are ready to go in case we need to fight or flee. Cortisol rapidly increases our heart rate and makes us start looking vigilantly to find the source of danger.

The interesting thing about cortisol in a social environment is, if others sense that you are nervous, they get nervous too. So, all of the other gazelle go and jerk up their heads. They didn't see anything, they just saw that one gazelle over there startled. So, they all freaked out and all started looking for the danger. This is a good system! The gazelles who didn't even hear the rustle will see the lion, they will all run and will live another day!

The same applies in the workplace. If we go to work and someone says, "I think there are going to be layoffs", we all panic. "What do you mean, where, when, who?" We all get paranoid. "Oh, I shouldn't have said or done..." We start to get crazy, our hearts start to race. That is what cortisol does, it is trying to keep us alive.

If we wake up in the middle of the night and hear a bump, what do we do? Jump and wake our partner up. What do they do? They jump also. As we are visual animals, we trust our eyes and go looking. If there is nothing there, we bend over and give a big sigh of relief. Cortisol then leaves our body, we relax and our heart rate goes back down.

To increase our heart rate, cortisol shuts down systems, such as our growth and immune system, to gain energy to fight or flee. We are not supposed to have cortisol in our system all of the time. It's supposed to be present briefly for danger and then gone.

So, if we go to work in a place that doesn't make us feel like we belong or feel safe, we have little bits of cortisol constantly in our system, making us feel paranoid! "I know my boss hates me, is out to get me and hates all of my ideas."

Cortisol inhibits the release of oxytocin. If we work in a place where we feel unsafe, we are biologically inclined to feel less empathetic and less generous. We don't care about each other, because we are too busy trying to protect ourselves. Our immune systems are now compromised by the constant presence of cortisol.

We live in a country with some of the best medical services and hospitals in the world. So why are diabetes, heart disease, cancer and mental health conditions on the rise?

If parents come home stressed out, their kids feel and take on that stress and they accept that this is what work is: something that makes you short tempered and unhappy. So, as they grow older, they expect the same. Even worse, studies show that parents who come home upset and angry due to excessive amounts of stress at work, have such a negative impact on their kids that these children can become bullies.

**Some of our workplaces are literally killing us. So what do we do?**

Leadership is not a rank nor a position, it is a decision, a choice. If you decide to look after the person to the right of you and to the left of you - you have become a leader. In the movie 300, the Spartans were the greatest fighting force of all time. One of the things that made the Spartans great wasn't their muscles nor their spears, it was their shields. They stood shield to shield and their loss was less because their shields were big. When they were children, they were told, you either bring your shield home or you come home on your shield. The punishment for losing your shield was tremendous. In battle, if you could not defend the person on the left or the right, you have weakened the whole. It is the shield that matters, not the spear. It is your willingness to sacrifice that matters. We may not give up our lives, but some of our time and energy. It may be simply talking face to face rather than email or text. Our willingness to sacrifice for someone so that they feel safe, will make us better leaders.

The 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) have been highly effective for years in beating dopamine addictions. The first step is to 'admit you have a problem'. AA knows if you master all of the eleven steps but not the twelfth, you will remain addicted.

If you master the twelfth step, you will beat the disease. The twelfth step is the commitment to help another alcoholic. This is service. Service to another. Oxytocin wins. Serotonin wins. The more we look after each other, the safer we feel, the more we feel like we belong and the more we will work together to confront the dangers outside. Do this for others and others will do the same for us.

When we have an increase in cortisol, we get a quick burst of energy, our memory function is improved, immunity increases and there's a decrease in sensitivity to pain. Necessary changes if we are being chased by a bear. The problem is chronic stress! When stress is high for prolonged periods, cognitive function and memory is impaired (brain fog), thyroid function is suppressed, we experience swings in blood sugar levels, decreased bone density and muscle tissue, higher blood pressure, lowered immunity, increased inflammation response, slower healing and increased abdominal fat. The body begins to lose its ability to regulate. We can greatly help manage cortisol levels and regain our health by changing our diet, having an exercise routine, getting enough sleep and reducing stress levels.

Switch to an anti-inflammatory diet using whole foods. Poorly managed blood sugar levels and high levels of inflammation can contribute to high cortisol levels and other hormonal imbalances. Following an anti-inflammatory diet, one low in processed foods and high in antioxidants, fiber and essential nutrients, is key to balancing hormones and controlling our cravings. These same strategies can also help with adrenal support, allowing you to reach and maintain a healthy weight, to boost energy during the day and help us sleep better at night.

Some of the most significant dietary contributors to inflammation and high cortisol levels include: high-sugar, high-glycemic diets with many packaged foods, refined grain products, sugary drinks and snacks; consuming high amounts of refined and transfats; drinking too much caffeine and alcohol; insufficient intake of micronutrients and antioxidants; not consuming enough fibre which makes it hard to balance blood sugar; and not consuming enough healthy fats or protein which can lead to hunger, weight gain and high blood sugar.

Some of the most useful foods for lowering cortisol and stabilizing blood sugar include vegetables, fruits, coconut or olive oil, nuts, seeds, lean proteins like eggs, fish, grass-fed beef and probiotic foods, such as yogurt, kefir or cultured vegetables.

Chronic stress is now linked with just about every health problem out there. Stress affects most people at least to some degree and impacts health by sending chemical signals around the body, to the heart and blood vessels, immune system, lungs, digestive system, sensory organs, and brain. Stress has the power to increase breathing, heart rate, pain and muscle tension; change our appetite; and give us sleep-related problems.

**Thankfully, there are many ways in which we can reduce stress:**

1. Prayer, meditation and mindfulness: These practices have been shown to help train the brain and body to turn off the stress response and promote more relaxation. These benefits are possible without impairing alertness, concentration or memory. Many studies show that daily meditation or healing prayer for just 15 to 30 minutes can offer significant reductions in cortisol. Participating in a regular, mindfulness-based stress reduction program also offers significant reductions in cortisol and stress-related symptoms or diseases. Using these methods can also improve brain and heart health while bolstering our immune system.

2. Deep breathing exercises: Taking deep breaths helps turn down the sympathetic nervous system and kick in the body's natural relaxation response by activating the parasympathetic nervous system. Diaphragmatic breathing is an easy technique to learn on your own and practiced throughout the day will relieve muscle tension and anxiety.

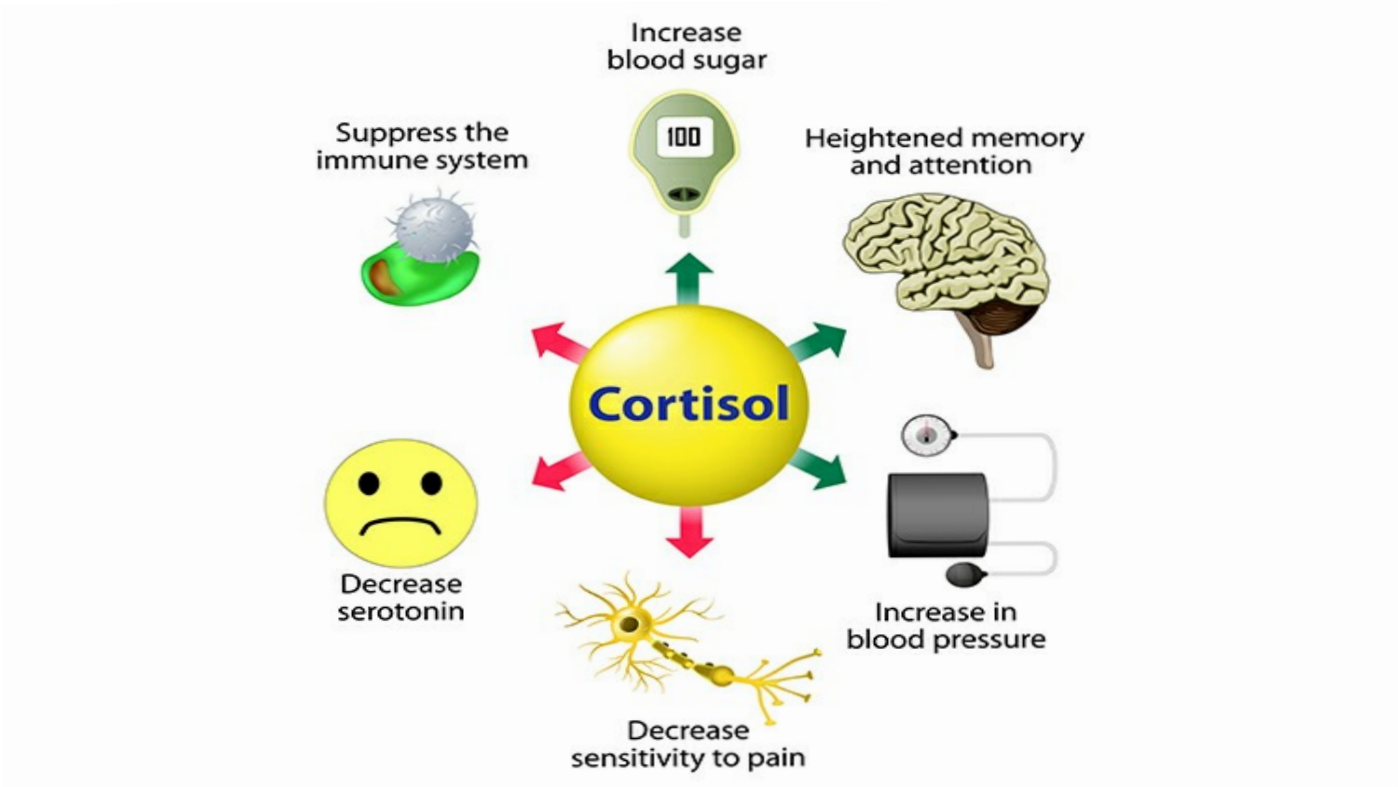
3. Spending time in nature or outdoors: Studies show that physical settings play a role in stress reduction and being in nature is a well-documented way to promote relaxation. Try going for walks or runs outside, spending time at the ocean, walking through forests, gardening at home, or doing other things outdoors and away from technology to reduce anxiety.

4. Exercise regularly: According to research published by Harvard Medical School, regular exercise, about 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week, is one of the best ways to manage stress, balance hormones, improve sleep quality and aid normal metabolic functions such as balancing blood sugar levels.

5. Try essential oils to promote relaxation. Essential oils, such as lavender, myrrh, frankincense and bergamot, contain potent active ingredients that have been shown to naturally lower cortisol levels, reduce inflammation, improve immunity, help with sleep and aid digestive functions.

6. Have enough sleep: Getting enough sleep helps control cortisol production, but having high cortisol levels can make it hard to rest. In people with normal circadian rhythms, cortisol levels rise during the early morning hours and then drop very low at night prior to and during sleep. People who develop high cortisol levels can wind up feeling the opposite. They feel wired and anxious at night, but then feel fatigued during the day. Therefore, they can't sleep well at the times they're supposed to. By taking the steps listed previously, we should be able to rest more easily. Ideally, we would aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night to reset our circadian rhythms and bring hormones back to balance.

Symptoms of high cortisol levels include: weight gain, especially around the abdomen; a puffy, flushed face; mood swings; increased anxiety; poor sleep; tiredness, including feeling tired but wired; increased urination; irregular periods and infertility problems; higher susceptibility to infections; high blood pressure; acne or other changes in the skin; higher risk of bone fractures or osteoporosis; muscle aches or pains; changes in libido; and excessive thirst.

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## THE BRAIN BUDDY HANDBOOK

### You CAN help - Get Involved

At some point in their lives, most people will experience a thinking disorder of some degree. Usually, there is someone close to them who knows how they normally think and behave. That person is the first to recognise the difference. Unfortunately, because of the stigma of MENTAL ILLNESS, many will just avoid the person and try not to notice their abnormal, and sometimes embarrassing emotions and changed behaviours.

More than 90% of mental health problems can be overcome with early intervention. The distorted thinking needs to be addressed and corrected before it becomes habitual.

A BRAIN BUDDY is someone who acts like a fire-spotter or mental health lifesaver; a person who is prepared to help the sufferer by discussing the issues with them and getting them the help that they need. When thinking problems arise, the sufferer usually does not have the awareness, motivation or energy to get help for themselves. So they do need outside help.

### It's NOT Permanent - It WILL Pass

If I HAVE a broken leg, people don't say, "I AM broken leg", They say, "I HAVE a broken leg". Unfortunately, if people have bipolar, they don't say "I HAVE bipolar", they say "I AM bipolar". We are not our temporary illness; it is not our identity, it is generally just something we are going through. It is not our destination or a life-sentence. Beware of being labelled with a diagnosis. Your temporary condition is not YOU, it is just a temporary condition.

There are times in our lives when we are more likely to be mentally stressed. Most of life's transitions are stressful. Leaving home, puberty, divorce, childbirth, redundancy, travel and bereavement are just a few examples. With the right support and proper brain care, we will pass through these times without needing medication and return to our normal lives without any long term effects.

These times help us to recognise our warning signs and to exercise better self care. A Brain Buddy can watch for the early warning signs whenever they see someone going through a time of transition.

## It's Not MENTAL - It's PHYSICAL

The human brain is a physical organ that operates like a computer. It manages our body and protects us from harm. It is more powerful than 200 million iPads. Our brain knows how to make blood, grow fingernails, fix a broken leg and balance the chemicals that our other organs need to function correctly.

The brain needs correct nutrition, hydration and rest in order to think properly and manage the body and its immune system. Like any computer, if it is not maintained properly, it will malfunction and need some corrective action. Most thinking disorders are actually the brain operating under excessively stressful conditions. Incorrect thinking and perceptions can lead to unusual behaviours. Normal thinking can usually be restored if it is quickly recognised as physical in nature and altered before it becomes established as a chronic thinking pattern.

A Brain Buddy will look past the outward MENTAL symptoms and recognise any PHYSICAL conditions which could be causing the brain to think erratically. Early intervention can be the key to avoiding long term mental health disorders.

## Food, Water and Get Some SLEEP

The brain requires correct resources. If we run our motor vehicle on sub-standard fuel it will perform erratically. Poor performance is the vehicle's early warning indicator. Some of our brain's early warnings of poor nutrition are dizziness, brain fog, agitation, fatigue, edginess, mood swings, easily over whelmed, feeling flat, irritability, anxiety, exhaustion, sadness, fear, depression, lack of motivation, shakiness and trembling. The warnings of dehydration include lethargy, irritability, headaches, dizziness, insomnia, anxiety, confusion, dry eyes, dry mouth, poor concentration, nausea, sunken eyes, dark urine, hunger, sleepiness and seizures. Some warnings of sleep deprivation are poor decision making, irritability, aggression, anxiety, sadness, depression, attention deficit, poor thinking, lack of concentration, suicidal thoughts, sluggish behaviour, hunger, zoning out, mood swings, burnout, easily stressed, not coping, poor performance, upset over trivial things and risk-taking.

**These symptoms can be mistaken for mental health issues and, if left untreated, can become long term thinking patterns. Food, Water and Sleep are fundamental to brain function.**

## Get Professional Counselling

Many of our thinking problems are based on the stressful relationships and workloads that we all encounter as a part of life. When appropriate, it is preferable to get professional help to talk through these issues and learn new ways of dealing with them. Trauma, particularly in our early years, can lead to self-destructive thoughts and behaviours. Shame is the engine that drives addictions and should be dealt with professionally.

Professional Counselling enables people to confront their problems with new tools and new ways of thinking. The earlier counselling begins, the more beneficial it will be.

A Brain Buddy can recognise and challenge irrational thinking, help to ensure optimum Food, Water and Sleep and get professional help to deal with the underlying problems. If a person's brain does not have its core physical requirements met, the person will not have enough resilience and energy to seek outside help for themselves. **Don't tell them to go to the doctor or to look after themselves - DO IT WITH THEM.**

## Get Some Others To Help

As an example, 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, 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. These things can help to save a marriage and ensure that the new mother does not begin a cycle of diagnosis, stigma, medication and social isolation.

**Brain Buddies are 'people who like to help people'.**

**They are constantly, but quietly, on the lookout for impending mental health problems and are there when it matters most.**

# BRAIN BUDDIES ARE LIFE SAVERS

## What Our Brains Need:

### Food for Brain Health

Eat a variety of coloured vegetables and fruit. A minimum of 3 colours per meal is recommended. Include lean proteins, fish 1-3 times a week is ideal. Use whole-grains instead of white flour foods. Limit the intake of highly processed, high sugared foods and drinks.

Eat regular, balanced meals and snacks to keep blood sugars stable. Every 4-5 hours is ideal. Eat breakfast within 60 mins. of getting out of bed.

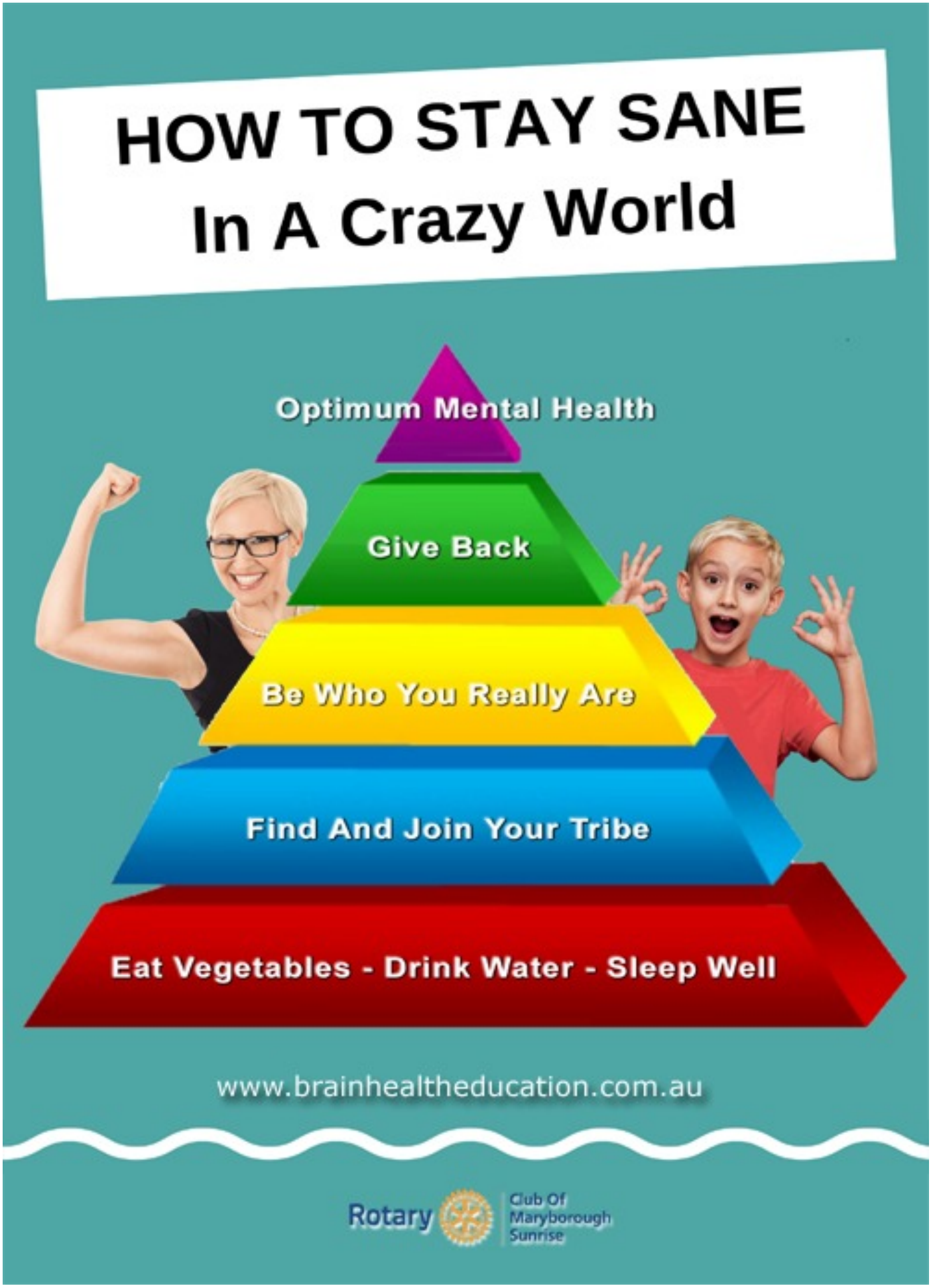
### Water for Brain Health

Drink an average of 8-12 glasses of water a day. Soft drink is not water. The colour of your urine should be a pale wheat colour as a guide to proper hydration. Limit sugary drinks to one small drink per day. Avoid or limit energy drinks, coffee and alcohol.

### Sleep for Brain Health

Include activity or exercise during the day, outdoors if possible.

De-clutter your bedroom by removing electronic equipment, phones, computer, TV etc. Make your bedroom peaceful, dark and cool: ideal for sleeping. Develop a bedtime routine. Set a regular bedtime that will ensure plenty of sleep and a regular wake up time. Be mindful of high sugar, caffeinated drinks and food intake after 2pm.

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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?

## SPIRIT

How Are Your Relationships?

What Is Your Current Goal?

How's Your Progress?