

# Positive Mental Health Scotland

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## Mental Health Awareness Workshop

**Led by Mark Fleming**

**Founder and Director, Positive Mental Health Scotland**

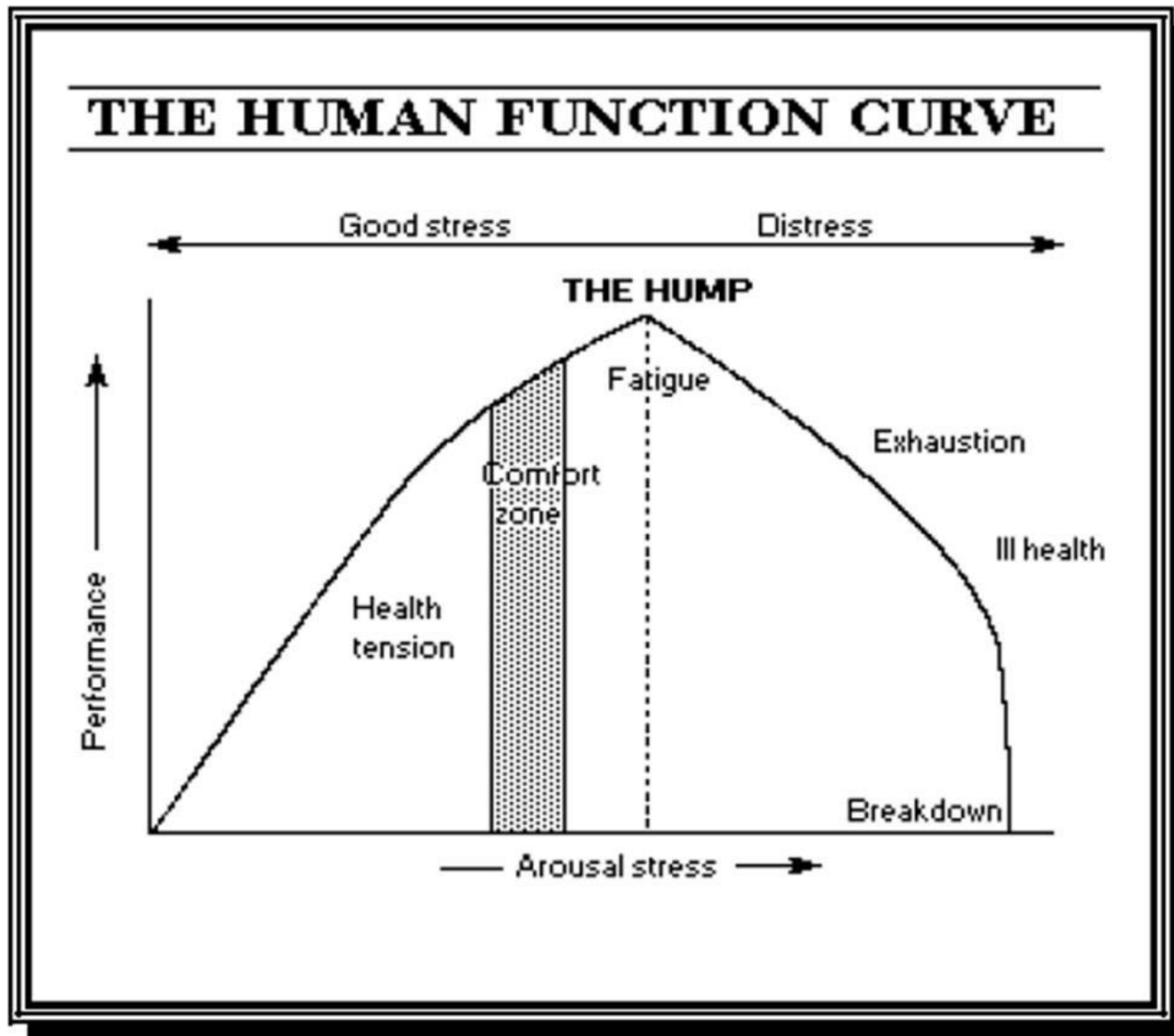
**Scottish Director, Sports Chaplaincy UK**

## Stress Management

- **What is stress?**
- **Meet your happy brain chemicals (neurotransmitters)**
- **How to increase their levels and deal with stress**

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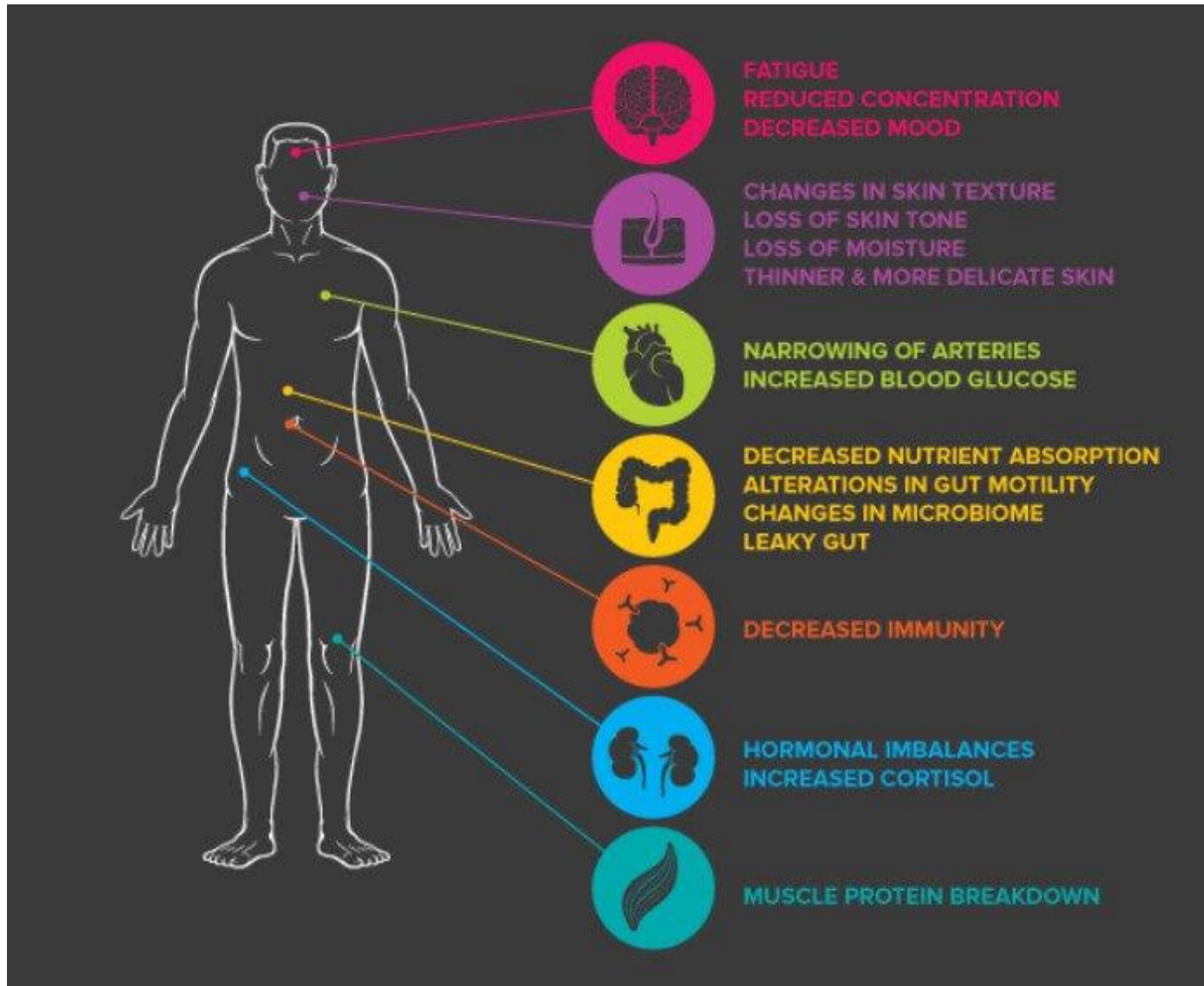
## 1<sup>st</sup> Definition of Stress

“the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”

(by Endocrinologist Hans Selye, at McGill University Montreal in 1936)

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## Causes Of Work Related Stress

### Work overload

- Too much responsibility
- Long hours
- Excessive travel in work
- Job insecurity
- No positive feedback
- Bullying
- Problem with boss
- Problem with coworkers

### Work underload

- Too little responsibility
- Low pay
- Excessive commute
- Office politics
- No promotion prospects
- Discrimination
- Problem with clients
- Harassment

- Dissatisfaction with current role or performance
- Poor work environment (noise, isolation, danger)

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## **Stress is not a term of psychiatric diagnosis, but...**

“stress is a factor in 75% of all illnesses and diseases that people suffer from today”

(American Medical Association, 2007)

“between 75% and 90% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress related problems”

(American Institute of Health, 2013)

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## Meet your happy brain chemicals...

When your brain releases  
one of these chemicals,  
you feel good.

Dopamine



Serotonin



Oxytocin



Endorphin



- You know when you feel energised or are about to receive a reward or achieve a goal?

That's **dopamine – the motivation molecule!**

- You know when you feel content, valued and purposeful?

That's **serotonin – the happy hormone!**

- You know when you feel secure, socially bonded and loved?

That's **oxytocin – the cuddle chemical!**

- You know when you feel euphoric or any natural extreme?

Those are **endorphins – the euphoric effect!**

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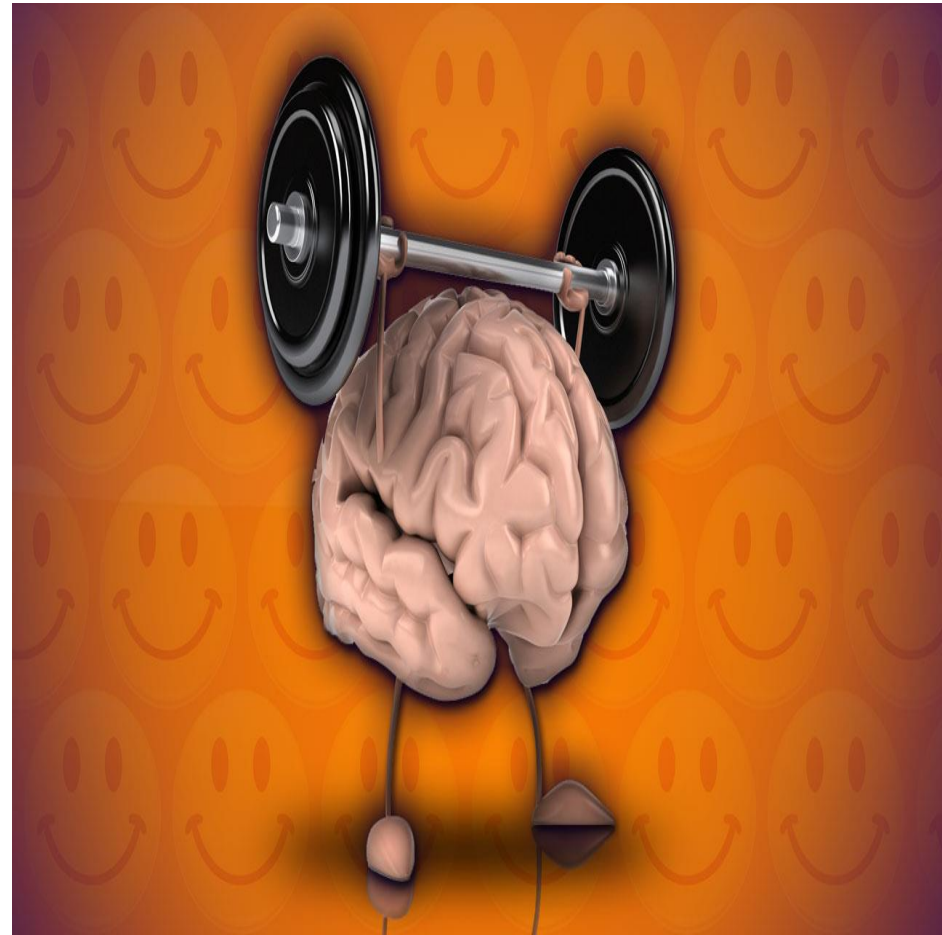
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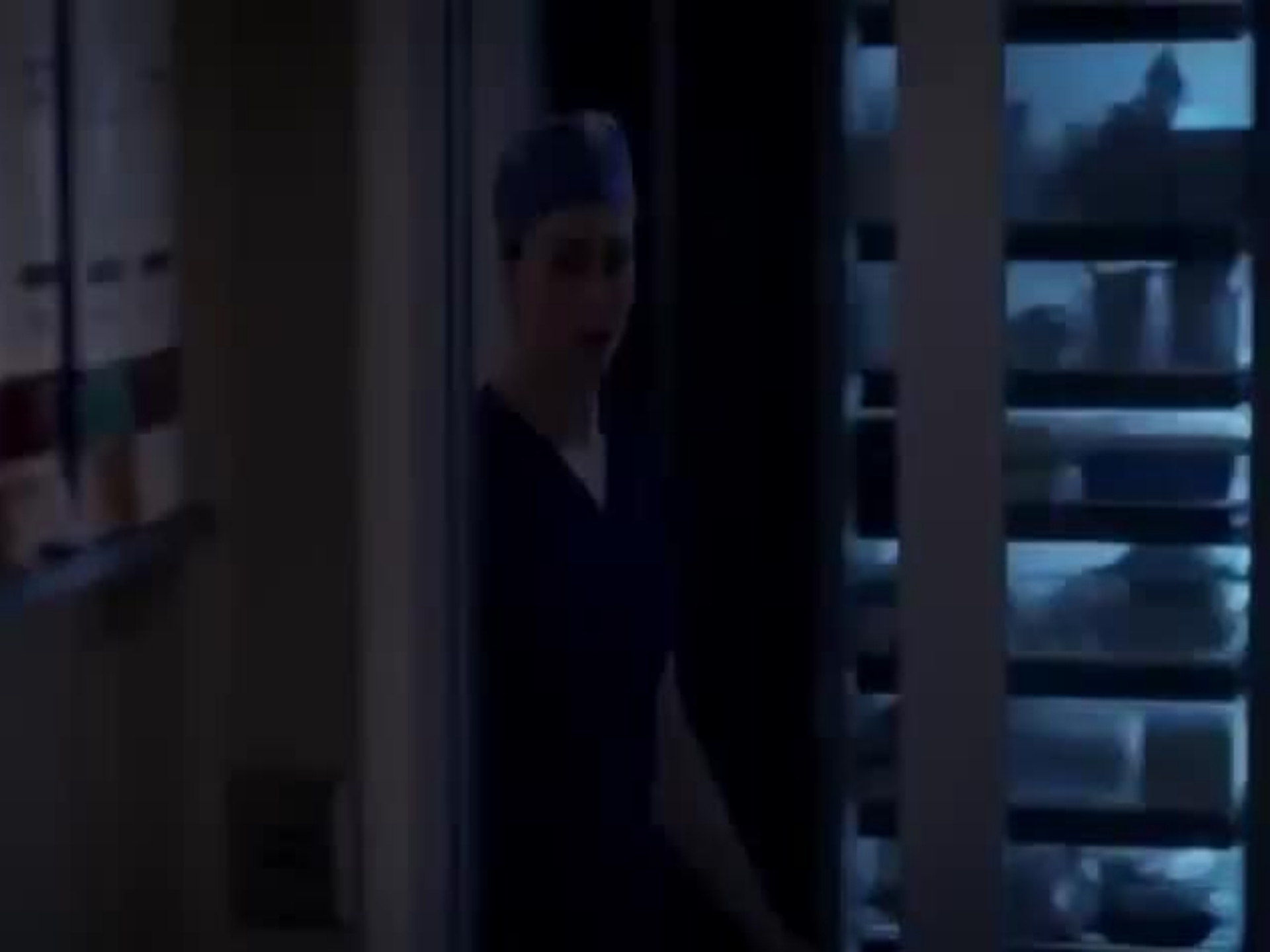
## 9 Stress Busters

### 1. Exercise

- Goal-focussed exercise raises dopamine levels
- 10 minute cardio exercise 3 times daily increases serotonin
- Pushing yourself past your limits releases endorphins
- Do a posture check – head and shoulders upright







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## 9 Stress Busters

### 2. A balanced nutritional diet

- Eat sufficient protein - increases dopamine and serotonin
- Limit high fat processed foods
- Vitamins B12 and D3 boost dopamine and serotonin
- Spicy foods (e.g. chillies!), dark chocolate release endorphins
- Stay well hydrated  
(5% dehydration = 25% less energy)



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## 9 Stress Busters

### 3. Sleep

- Between 7 and 8 hours sleep nightly increases serotonin
- Chill before bed
- Avoid caffeine after 2pm!
- Don't use alcohol to "get you over"



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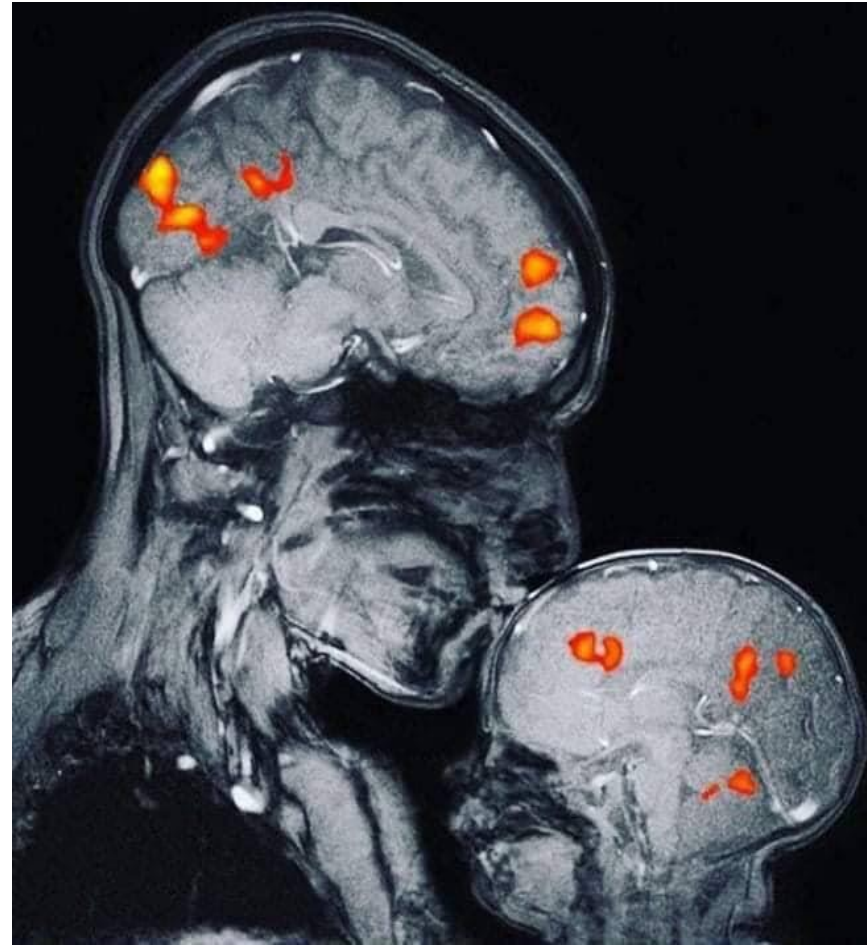
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## 9 Stress Busters

### 4. Relationships

- Have friends you can be yourself with (and rant to if need be!)
- Having friends who show you how much they value you increases serotonin
- Hugging (and other physical expressions of love!) produces oxytocin



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## 9 Stress Busters

### 5. Me time!

- Take time out every day for quiet contemplation
- Make time for what you enjoy
- Take a day off, resting what you normally put pressure on
- Always have something rewarding to look forward to



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## 9 Stress Busters

### 6. Be thankful

- Have a happy memory box and keep referring to it!
- Speak of or write out 3 things to be thankful for, every day for 30 days
- Develop an attitude of gratitude – always try to see the positives



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## 9 Stress Busters

### 7. Music

- Listening to music that you find inspiring, motivating and uplifting raises dopamine levels
- Dancing (especially learning new moves!) raises dopamine levels
- Singing together with others produces oxytocin



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## 9 Stress Busters

### 8. Laughter

- Laughter relaxes the whole body, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after, boosts the immune system and even burns calories!
- Laughter triggers the release of endorphins
- Laughing together with others produces oxytocin





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## 9 Stress Busters

### 9. Control the controllables

- Don't focus on things outwith your control
- Achieve short term achievable goals – raises dopamine levels
- Make a daily “to do” list and tick ‘em off
- Plan well – but leave space for the unplanned



KEEP  
CALM

AND

CONTROL THE  
CONTROLLABLES

~~Problems~~

Solutions



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Analyse your current situation in terms of your:

work

finances

physical health

mental health

family life

social life

spiritual life

down time/recreation

time management

what/when you eat/drink

sleep

Place each relevant aspect of each element into one of these three categories

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