

UNDERSTANDING YOUR “FEEL-GOOD” CHEMICALS (D.O.S.E.)

How Your Brain Supports Mood, Motivation, and Connection

Your brain naturally produces chemicals that influence how you feel, connect, and respond to stress. These include dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins—often referred to as your “feel-good” or regulation chemicals.

What Are These Chemicals?

Dopamine – Motivation & Reward

Supports goal-setting, motivation, and a sense of accomplishment. Helps you feel driven and focused.

Oxytocin – Connection & Trust

Associated with bonding, closeness, and emotional safety in relationships.

Serotonin – Mood & Stability

Supports emotional balance, self-worth, and a sense of calm and well-being.

Endorphins – Relief & Release

Help reduce physical discomfort and support emotional relief, especially during stress.

When Levels Feel Off

When these systems are out of balance, you may notice:

Low Dopamine

- Difficulty starting or completing tasks
- Low motivation or energy
- Trouble focusing
- Feeling stuck or unproductive

Low Oxytocin

- Feeling disconnected or lonely
- Increased stress or emotional distance
- Difficulty trusting or opening up

Low Serotonin

- Low mood or self-esteem
- Increased anxiety or sensitivity
- Mood fluctuations
- Feeling overwhelmed

Low Endorphins

- Increased stress or tension
- Physical discomfort
- Low mood or irritability
- Difficulty coping with pressure

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Supporting Your Brain Naturally

Small, consistent actions can help support these systems:

To Support Motivation (Dopamine):

- Break tasks into manageable steps
- Set and complete small goals
- Engage in creative activities
- Move your body regularly

To Support Connection (Oxytocin):

- Spend time with safe, supportive people
- Engage in physical closeness (e.g., hugs, holding hands)
- Practice meaningful conversations
- Listen to music or engage in shared activities

To Support Mood (Serotonin):

- Get regular sunlight exposure
- Maintain a consistent routine
- Practice mindfulness or grounding
- Engage in movement or exercise

To Support Stress Relief (Endorphins):

- Laugh, cry, or emotionally release
- Exercise or stretch your body
- Engage in creative outlets (music, art)
- Practice relaxation techniques

Reflection Prompt

- Which area feels most out of balance for you right now?

- What is one small step you can take today to support it?