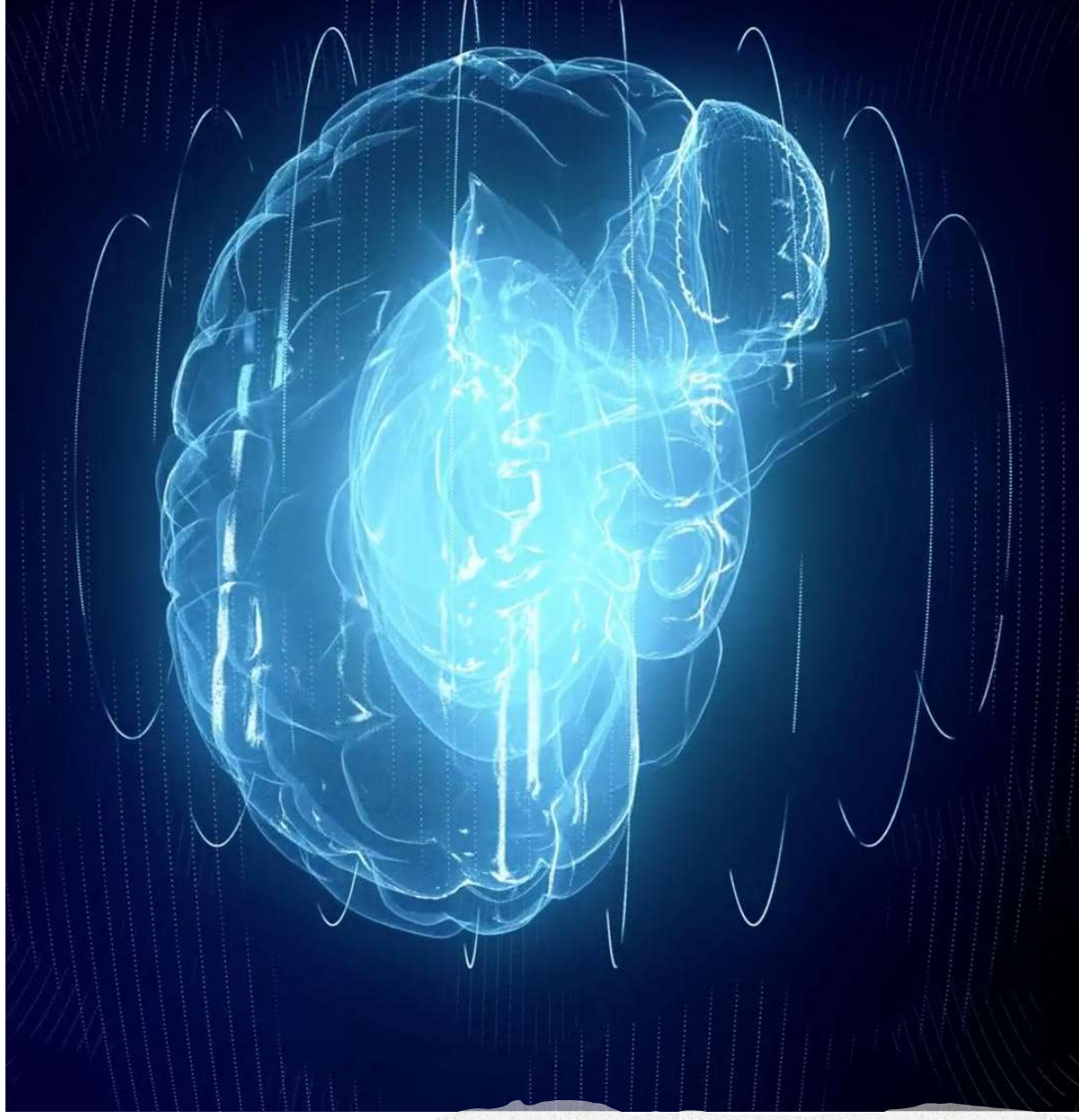


WELCOME TO

# GET A GRIP

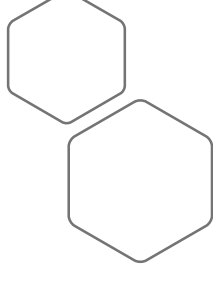
Taming the emotional chaos in a disrupted world

An eye-opening  
journey (at least  
for me) into the  
mind, how it  
functions, and  
the incredible  
power we have  
over almost  
everything we  
feel





# 50/40/30



40 years in cybersecurity

50 years struggling with a  
trifecta of mental illnesses

30 years of chronic stress –  
blame 50 and 40!



## STRESS MANAGEMENT CENTER

Stress is nothing to be ashamed of. Or ignored.  
It's a natural brain reaction and more than 80% of American workers say they deal with it often or constantly.  
But you should never ignore it and you *can* manage and master it.

(Roll over images to explore)



"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort." Franklin D. Roosevelt



**NIST Global City Teams Challenge**,  
to create a blueprint for how future smart  
cities can incorporate the mental wellness  
of their residents

**The Mynde Project**, a free mental wellness  
education portal for cities and counties

A **university-led project** to make our  
communities more emotionally resilient

But first, a caveat...

*“This [the Irish] is one race  
of people for whom  
psychoanalysis is of no use  
whatsoever”*

Sigmund Freud (allegedly)



# A World Of Mental Pain

**1 in 5 struggle** with some type of mental health issue or illness

The World Health Organization has classified depression as **the #1 health threat for humans**

Mental health issues have **nearly doubled because of Covid**

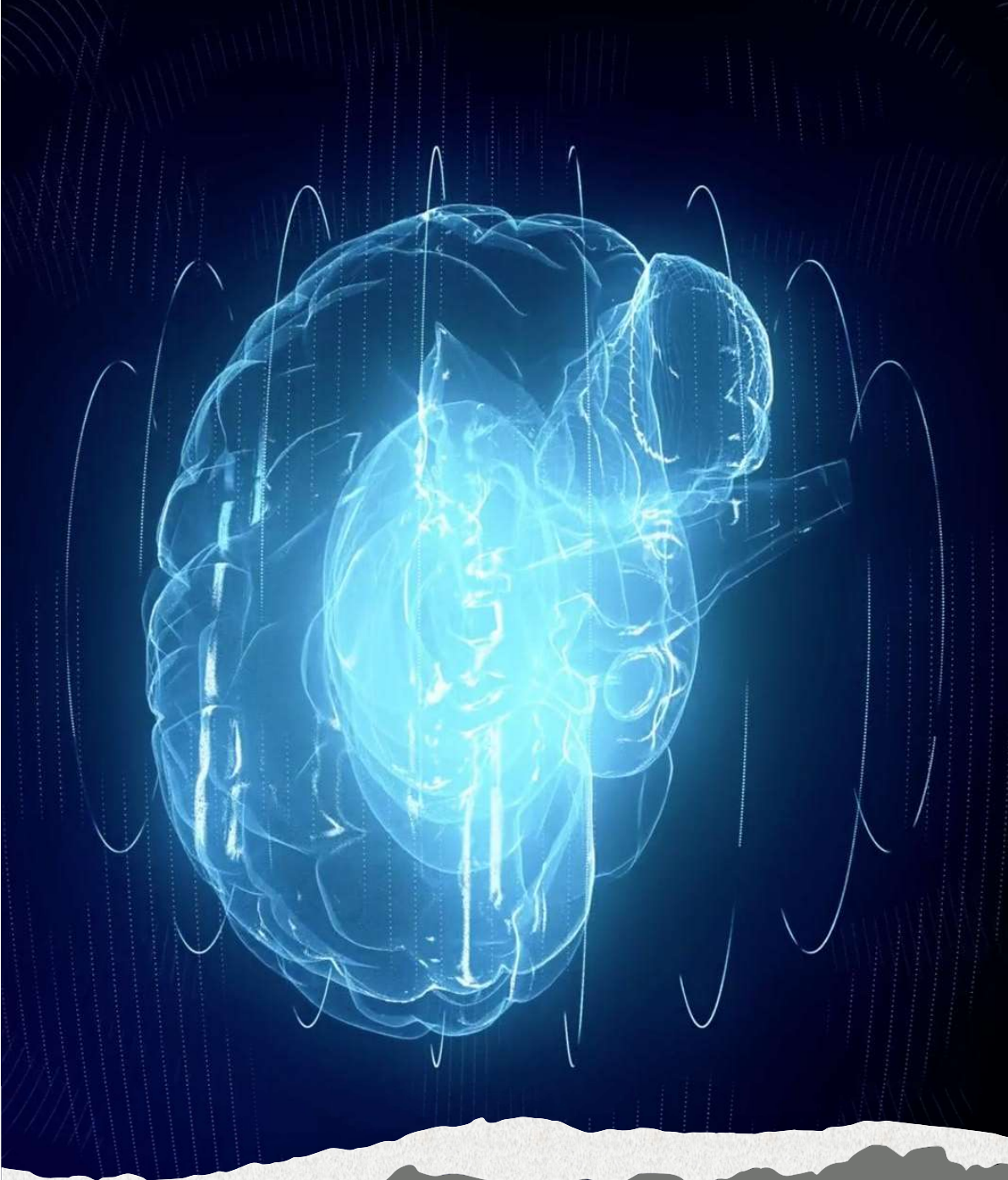
Failure to “Get A Grip” can hurt work, relationships, judgement, memory, engagement, motivation, happiness, fulfillment



Get A Grip!

# BRAIN CHEMISTRY 101

A handful of chemicals control the way that you feel, and you have enormous control over those chemicals



DOPAMINE

SEROTONIN

ENDORPHINS

OXYTOCIN

CORTISOL

# DOPAMINE

THE "FEEL GOOD" HORMONE

## THE GOOD

Associated with pleasurable sensations including food, sex, and shopping, along with learning, memory, motor system function, and more

It feels good so you want more and the cycle continues

Central to thinking and planning, focus, interest, learning, motivation

## THE BAD

A lack can impair judgement, engagement, alertness, mood, happiness. Central to the role of addiction

Connected to schizophrenia, Parkinsons, ADHD

## CAN YOU CONTROL IT?

Diet and foods, exercise, music, nature, sunlight, meditation, sleep.



MEET YOUR BRAIN'S

# REWARD SYSTEM

# SEROTONIN

## YOUR HAPPY PLACE

### THE GOOD

Helps regulate your mood, makes you happy, calmer, less anxious

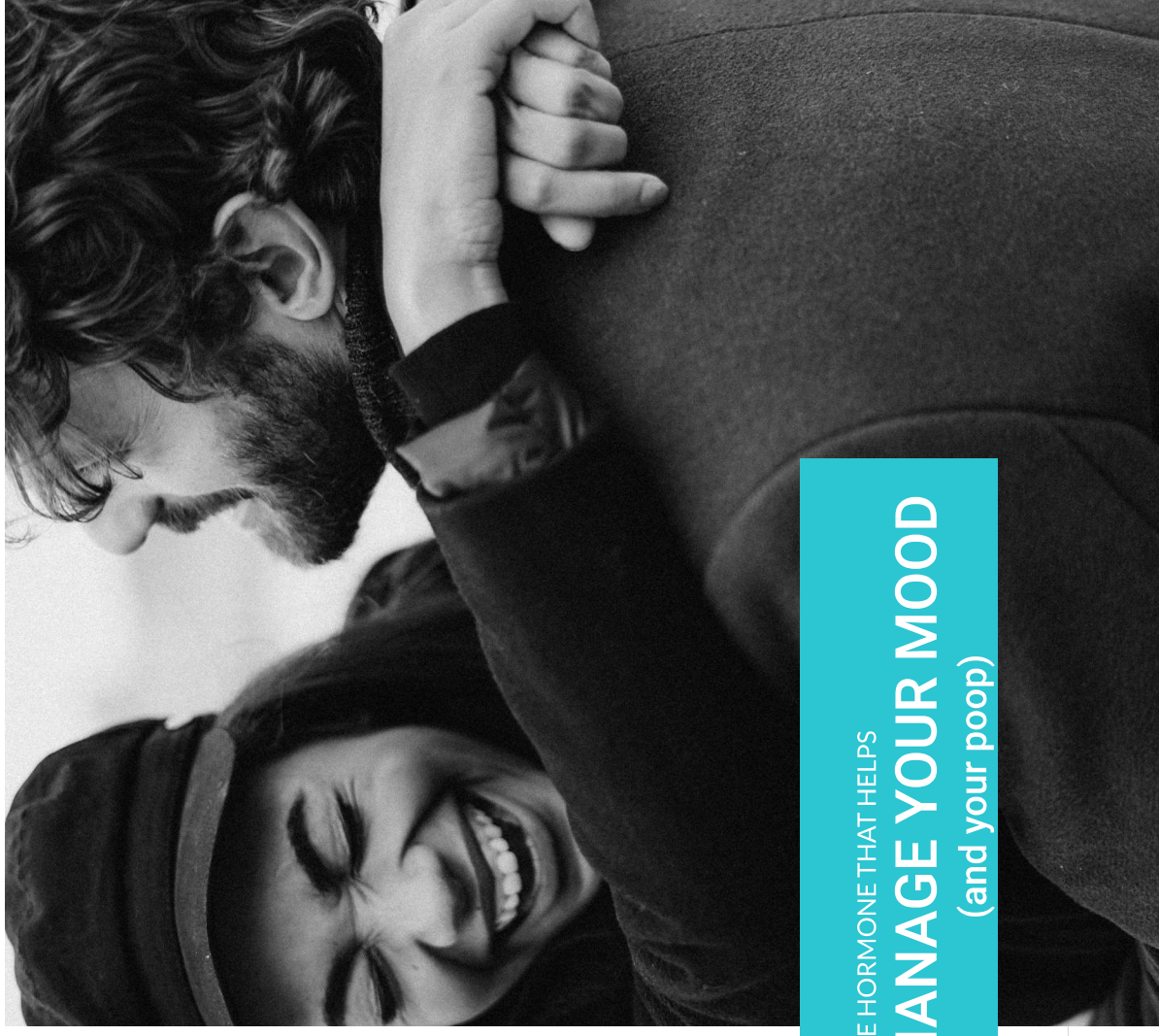
Also helps with sleep, appetite, digestion, learning ability, memory, wound healing, and bone health

### THE BAD

A deficit strongly linked to depression, anxiety, insomnia

### CAN YOU CONTROL IT?

Sunlight, exercise, diet, meditation, medication



THE HORMONE THAT HELPS

**MANAGE YOUR MOOD**  
(and your poop)

# ENDORPHINS

## THE NATURAL PAIN RELIEVER

One of the most complex and least understood, helps to relieve pain and discomfort and create a sense of well-being

Help alleviate depression, reduce stress and anxiety, build self-esteem, even help with weight reduction

The main reason you get a rush after intense exercise – the runner’s high, or sex, and connected to the reward circuit – you want to do it again

### CAN YOU CONTROL IT?

Exercise, sex, hanging out with friends, listening to music, looking at art, dancing, laughing, meditating and practicing mindfulness.

ENDORPHINS COULD BE  
CENTRAL TO KEY MENTAL  
HEALTH BENEFIT –

## SELF ESTEEM

OUR BODY'S  
NATURAL HIGH



# OXYTOCIN

## THE SOCIAL GLUE

The “love hormone,” essential for childbirth, breastfeeding, and strong parent-child bonding

Promotes trust, empathy, and bonding in relationships, levels generally increase with physical affection like kissing, cuddling, and sex

Foundational to the development of human communities, going back to the Stone Ages. Helped us build relationships, groups, which led to tribes, to villages, and today, to communities and social networks

### CAN YOU CONTROL IT?

Sunlight, exercise, diet, meditation



THE HORMONE THAT

**BUILT THE WORLD**

# “KOE KNUFFELEN”

Started by the  
Dutch more  
than a decade  
ago, cow  
hugging is the  
new wellness  
trend

Blame it all  
on  
oxytocin



# CORTISOL

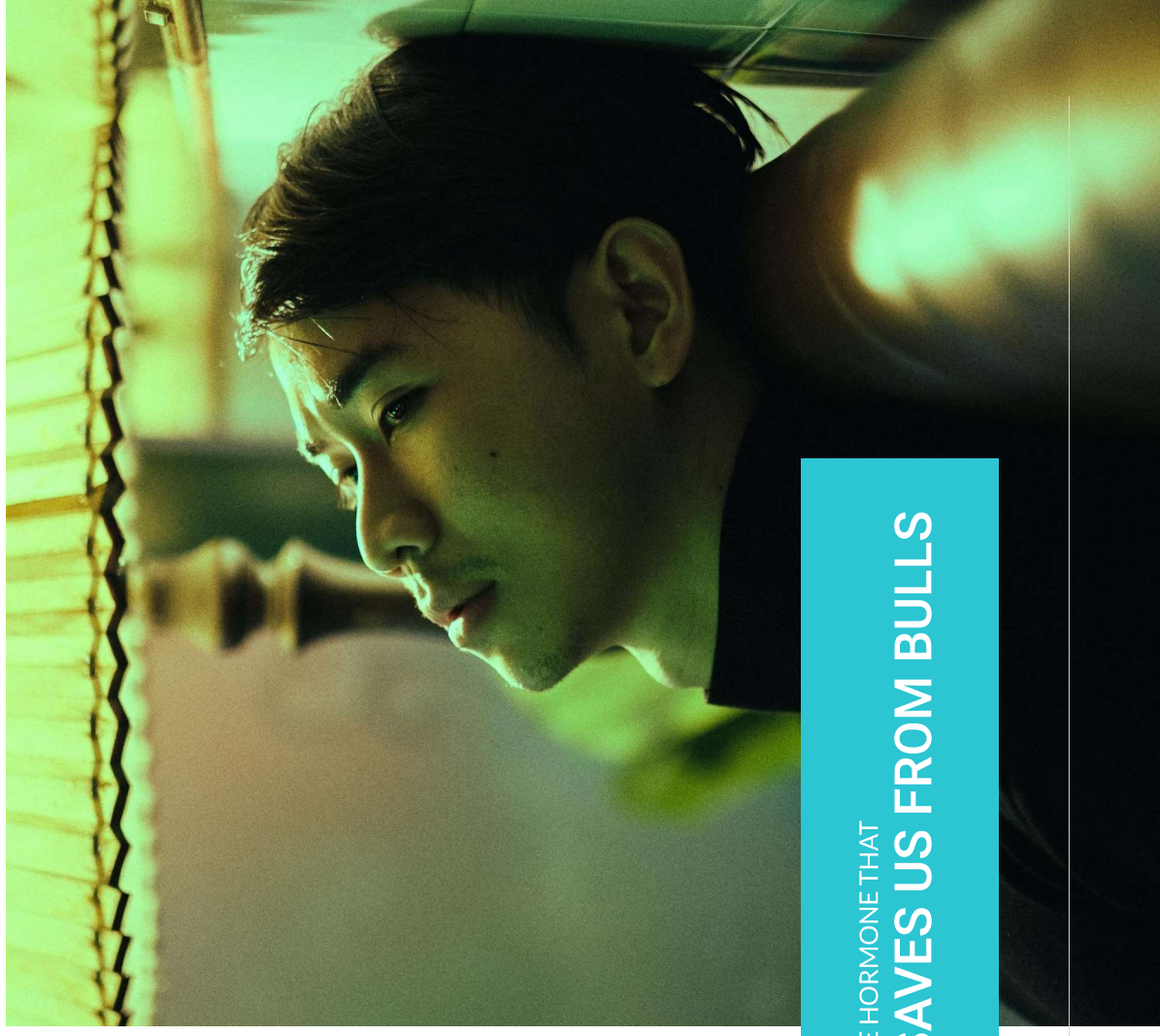
## FIGHT OR FLIGHT

The hormone most closely associated with adrenaline and survival.

BUT - can be highly toxic, destructive, and even deadly if it remains elevated

Most closely connected to stress and burnout, but can also kill brain cells, compromise the immune system, hurt the digestive system, increase heart disease

**CAN YOU CONTROL IT?**  
Absolutely, and you must



THE HORMONE THAT

**SAVES US FROM BULLS**

# EMOTIONAL

Brain cell death

Depression

Anxiety

Memory

Attention

Decision making

Engagement

Judgement

Alzheimer's

Dementia

# PHYSICAL

Weight

Sleep

Immune system

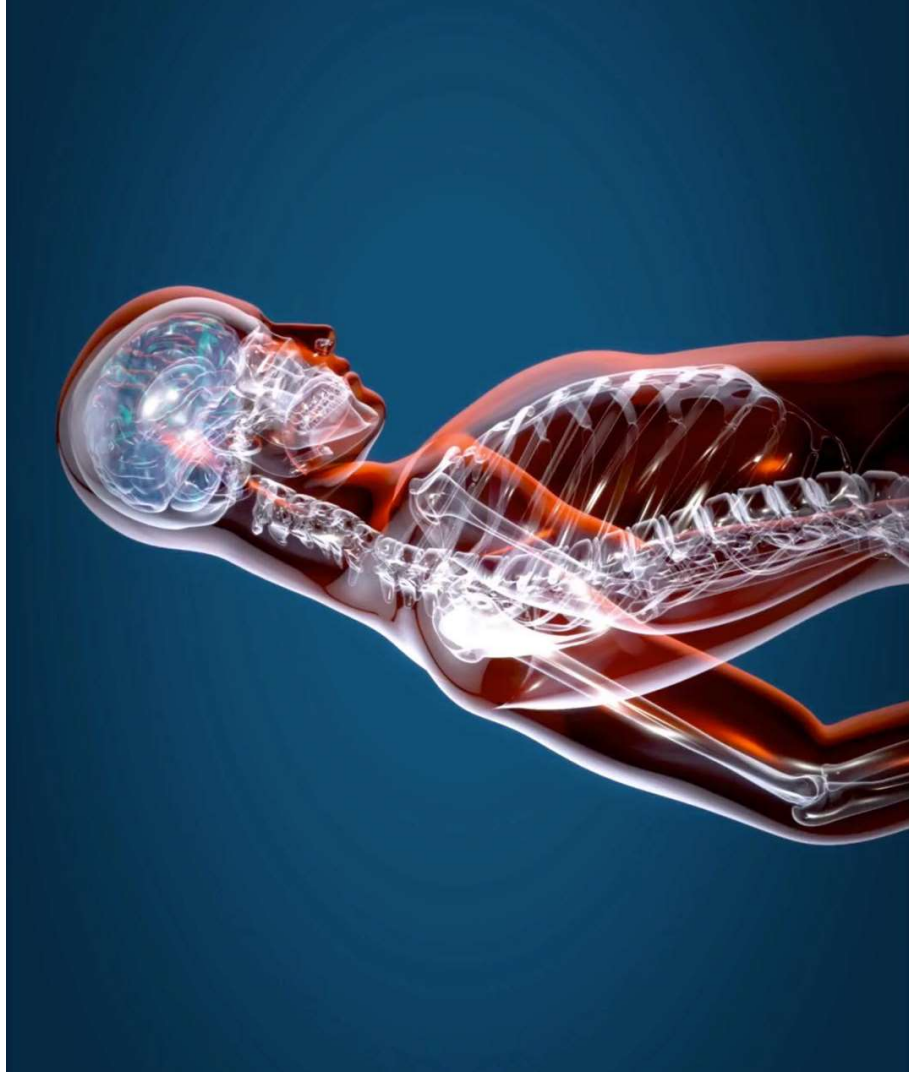
Heart

Endocrine

Reproductive

Fatigue

Respiratory



Get A Grip! On

# STRESS

One of the greatest human afflictions, connected to six of the leading causes of death, and the cause of cortisol

# Let's Talk About Stress

BC, Before Covid, stress was at dangerously high levels across the world

Post Covid, and stress has become an additional pandemic that will last for years

Chronic stress (long term and untreated) leads to burnout

Stress is the condition that triggers (and keeps triggering) cortisol

Stress kills – linked to the six leading causes of death

**75% of physician visits are stress related**

American Psychological Association



# It's All About Stressors, Not About Stress

Stressors are the very real things around us that have the capacity to cause us stress

- Work, job, career, co-workers
- Financial, income, savings, spending, costs, retirement
- Home and family, relationships, love
- Social and political unrest, discord, anxiety, fear
- Health and healthcare
- Self imposed



Self esteem, self worth, self image, purpose, meaning

# But Stressors Are Not Stress

**Stressors** have the capacity to cause us to be stressed, but we have the power to stop them

**Stress** is what happens when we don't take control of **external stressors**

If we understand the difference, and how to manage stressors, a **stress-free life is a very real possibility**



**I created my own  
DAM system for  
managing stress.**

**Lessons from cyber risk**



Self  
Imposed  
Stressors



Work  
Stressors



Personal  
Stressors

Purpose  
Future  
Chaos

Self image

Financial  
worries

Health issues  
**Relationships**  
Family drama



Schedule/Hours  
Work overload  
Resources  
Exhaustion

Your boss  
Your  
Co-worker

Training  
Certifications  
Compliance

Fear of failure  
Fear of being fired  
Disillusionment  
and cynicism



“I will not  
be the  
weak link”

High standards  
Intolerant  
Perfectionist

Competitive  
Impatient

Taking it too  
personally  
Taking it home



# DAM

Dismiss – Not real or really worth worrying about.

Accept – Real but you can deal with them or just ignore them.

Manage – Real, potentially harmful, and need to be managed.



# If our minds are hurting us, how do we fight back?

• Meta Cognition

• Breathing

• Self-awareness and self-evaluation

• Happiness

• Purpose

• Exercise

Sleep

Diet

Friends/social connections

Honesty/perspective

Mindfulness, meditation, yoga



## The connection? Chemicals

Get A Grip!

# STOP, THINK, BREATHE

The incredible healing power of  
mindfulness and breathing

# Mindfulness

Quite possibly the most powerful way to mind your mind, calm the chaos, and keep your brain and body in maximum health.

**It might even save your life**

# So what is it?

Thousands of years old, originated with Buddhism and yoga

Hundreds of validated studies since the 1950s

Being in the present, now, you, here

Being aware of your surroundings

Often includes a focus on breathing, but not just or necessarily

PERATHHE

# A Definition

Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley

Maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.

Acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment.

Our thoughts tune into what we’re sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.



**New Job: GGSC Director of Marketing & Partnerships**  
WE'RE SEEKING A COLLABORATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL NEW MEMBER OF OUR TEAM!

[Learn More](#) ▶



**Online Education**  
CONCRETE BOOSTIN CLASSRS

[Learn More](#)

Who W



# I Did It My Way

---

10-20 minutes alone and quiet

Eyes closed, focused on my breathing

Sometimes music, sometimes not

Ignore intrusive thoughts, accept worries and rumination

Thinking about being happy



# Did It Work?

---

A most incredible experience - in spite of ADD

Helped me take almost complete control of my stress

I started to become happier and calmer, less judgmental, less cynical

Helped with my depression and anxiety

Lowered my blood pressure



# Most Of All

It taught me to remember to breathe

Encouraged me to explore and understand the many breathing options

Now I practice regular “reset breaths” throughout the day

Remember what you're dealing with!!!



# Breathe Yourself Better

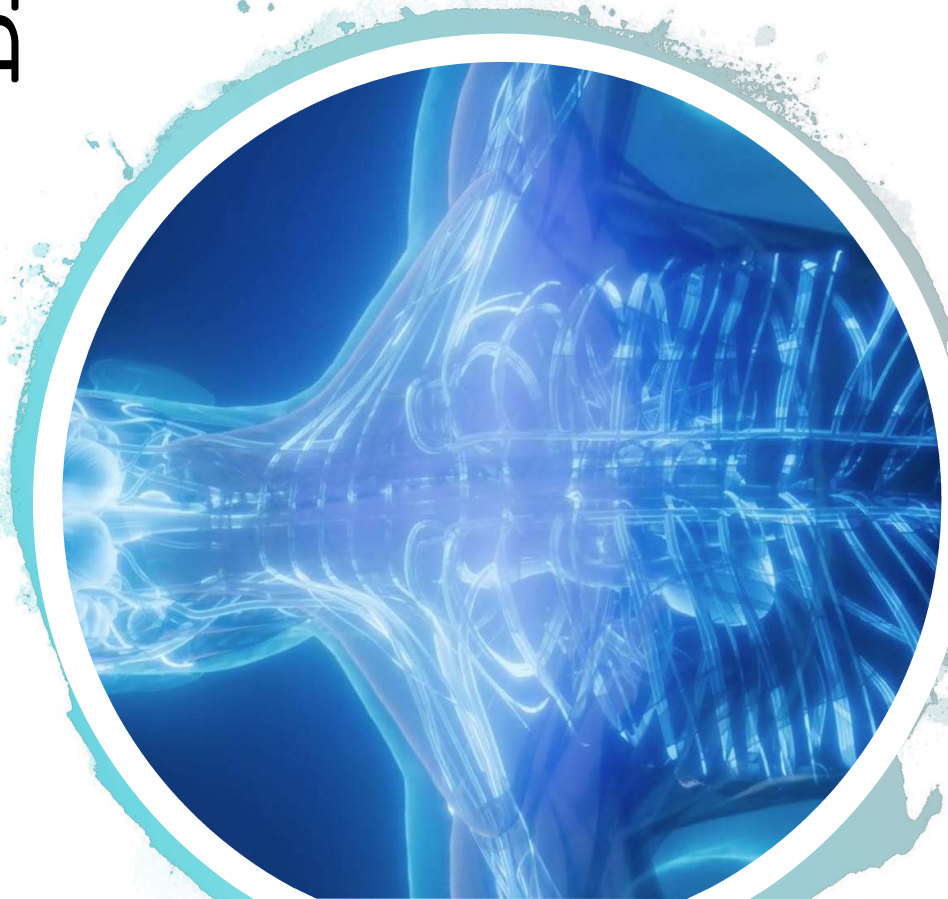
It's all about exciting your vagus nerve

Breathing in excites the sympathetic nervous system, get ready for **fight or flight**.

Breathing out excites the parasympathetic nervous system, **everything's OK, calm down**

Breathing right regularly reassures your brain that you've got this

Reduces heart rate, blood pressure, the creation of cortisol



## **SUCH INCREDIBLE POWER**

**Anxiety and panic attacks**  
**Asthma**  
**Cancer**  
**Chronic illness**  
**Depression**  
**Eating disorders**  
**Fatigue**  
**Fibromyalgia**  
**Gastrointestinal distress**  
**Grief**  
**Headache**  
**Heart disease**  
**High blood pressure**  
**Pain**  
**Post-traumatic stress disorder**  
**Skin disorders**  
**Sleep problems**  
**Work, family, and financial stress**





# So What Next?

Scientists and psychotherapists have identified **more than 30 science-supported techniques** that will help you get a permanent grip on your mood, mental health, outlook, and outcomes

# Think About Thinking

Sometimes called **metacognition**, it involves thinking more about the way you think, process thoughts and ideas

Monitor feelings, emotions, ideas, urges

Gives you a better understanding of who and why you are



# Know Thyself

Take an honest look at who and what you are, does it match with who you think you are, pretend to be, trying to be

Constantly question your thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions, fears

**Knowing who you really are is a powerful path to accepting who you really are**

Known to help contribute to calmness, purpose, and focus

Can greatly improve emotional intelligence

**You are not your thoughts!**



# Designer Happiness

It doesn't come naturally to us - humans were programmed to focus on two main challenges

It's not about happiness, *it's about happiness*

Happiness is the purposeful identification and elimination of the things that make you unhappy

Gratitude, openness, friends and social connections, giving and helping, diet and exercise, thinking about thinking, banishing rumination

No big thing, just lots of good little things daily

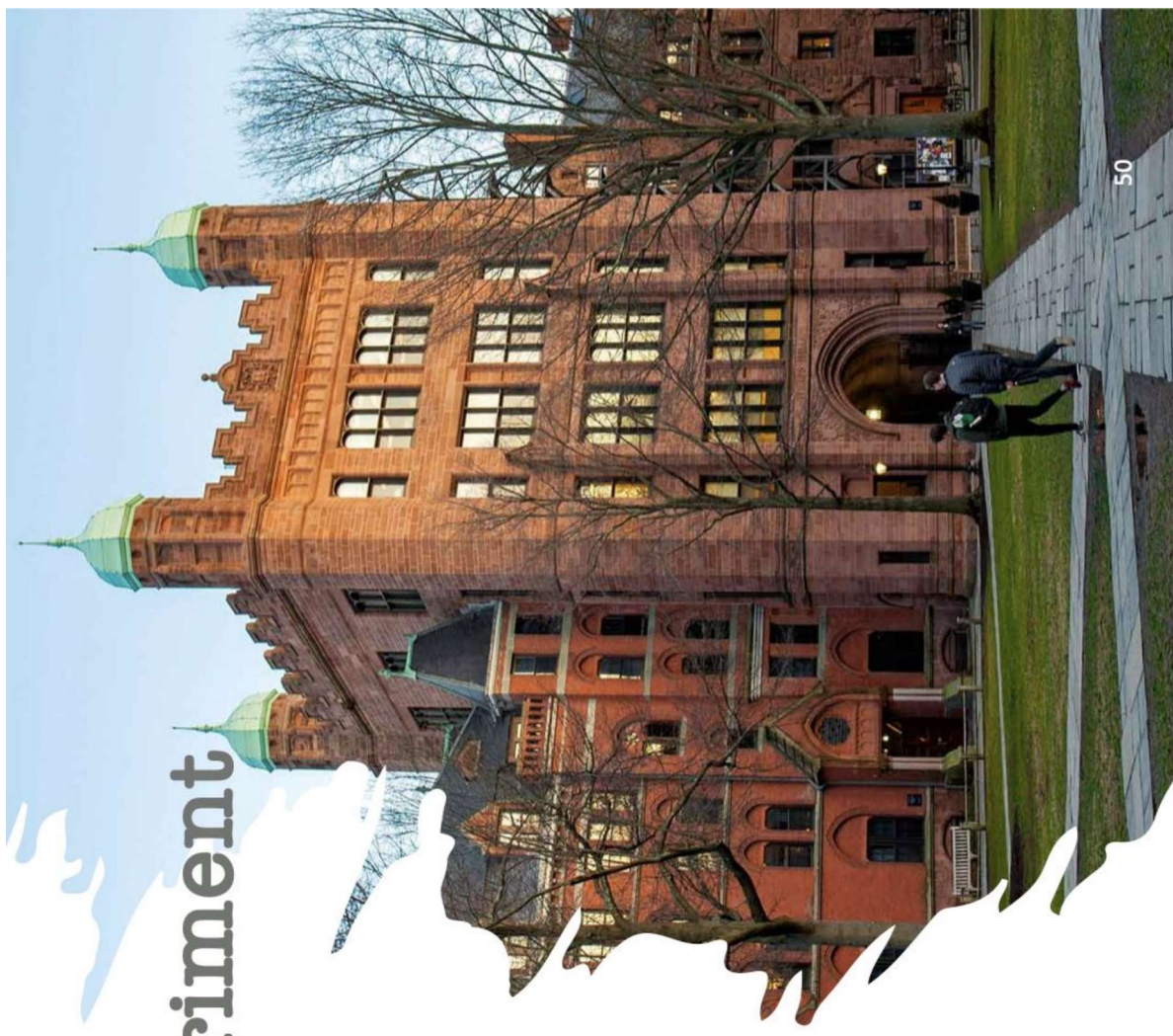


# The Great Yale Experiment

A course on happiness, called **The Science of Well-Being**, is the most popular course in Yale's 317-year history

Launched in 2018 in a Professor's living room, more than 2.2 million students have participated

A quarter of Yale's undergraduate student body now enrolled



# Mindful Breathing

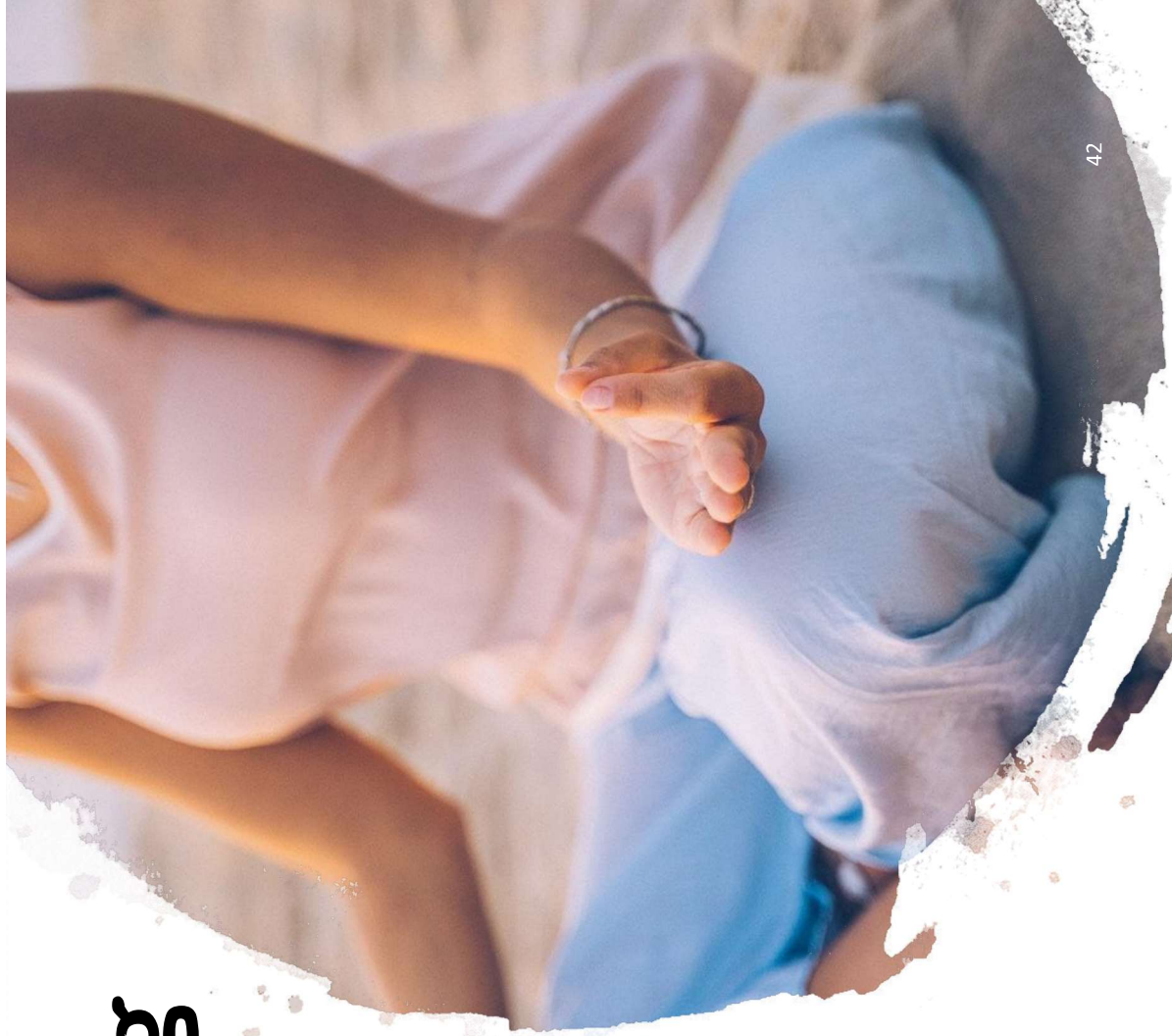
Learn, learn, learn

**Practice, practice, practice**

Don't forget about those "reset breaths"

Lots of different types to experiment with - Lion's breath, ocean, alternate nostril, Wim Hof, skull shining

Just learning to breathe properly can change your life



# Be More Grateful

*“Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.” - Proverb*

Helps with stress, anxiety, grief, focus, sleep, pain, depression

Triggers dopamine and serotonin, nature’s antidepressant, strengthens neural pathways

Write them down



# Exercise & Food

Exercise naturally creates **dopamine and endorphins**, reduces stress

Outside, green spaces, fresh air, **more oxygen less carbon dioxide**, more social connections

Certain foods are **high in antioxidants** that protect brain cells (including wine and cheese!!!)

Mood-based eating is the brain looking for **happiness in all the wrong places**

Eating the right foods with the right people is a feast for the brain



# Giving & Purpose

The Helper's High, the Happy triecta releases dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin

Takes our minds off our stresses and situation, triggers gratitude

It gets you out, gives you perspective, increases social connections, creates a common cause

Studies have shown that most people get **a bigger high giving than receiving**

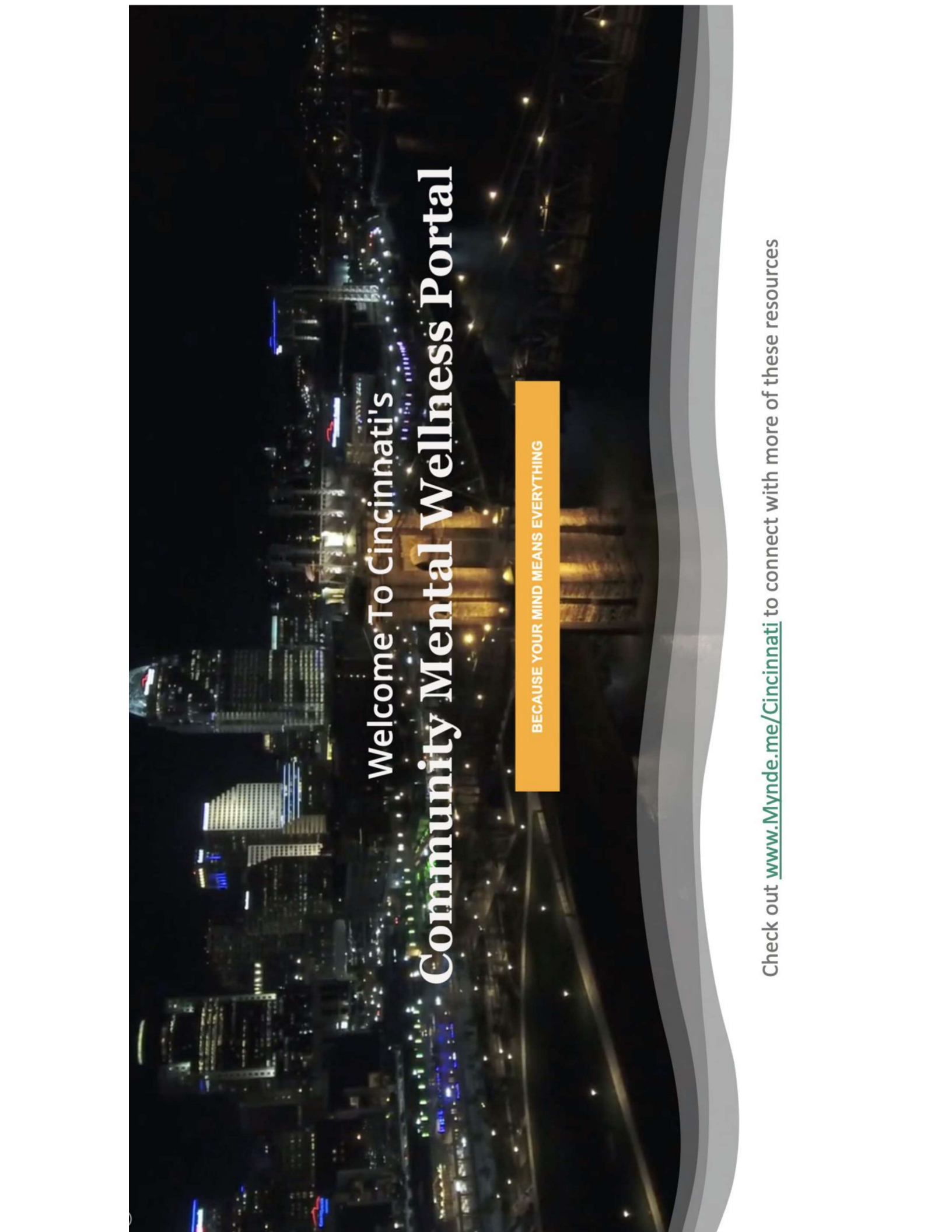


# Build Emotional Resilience

*“Emotional resilience refers to one’s ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises. More resilient people are able to “roll with the punches” and adapt to adversity without lasting difficulties; less resilient people have a harder time with stress and life changes, both major and minor”* VeryWellMind

- Be more optimistic
- Face your fears
- Have a moral compass
- Find resilient role models
- Keep mind and body strong
- Be cognitively flexible
- Find meaning



A nighttime photograph of the Cincinnati skyline, featuring illuminated skyscrapers and a bridge. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Welcome To Cincinnati's Community Mental Wellness Portal

BECAUSE YOUR MIND MEANS EVERYTHING

Check out [www.Mynde.me/Cincinnati](http://www.Mynde.me/Cincinnati) to connect with more of these resources