



## HAPPY HORMONES

To appreciate the importance of self-care, it can help to understand a little of the science behind how our brains work. There are four 'happy hormones' \* in the brain that are essential to our mental health and wellbeing: dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins.

These 'happy hormones' promote happiness and pleasure, while reducing depression and anxiety, and help to regulate our mood.

### Dopamine

Known as the 'feel-good' hormone, dopamine plays a role in how we feel pleasure. It's a big part of our unique human ability to think and plan. It helps us strive, focus, and find things interesting.

### Serotonin

Serotonin helps regulate our mood as well as our sleep, appetite, digestion, learning ability, and memory.

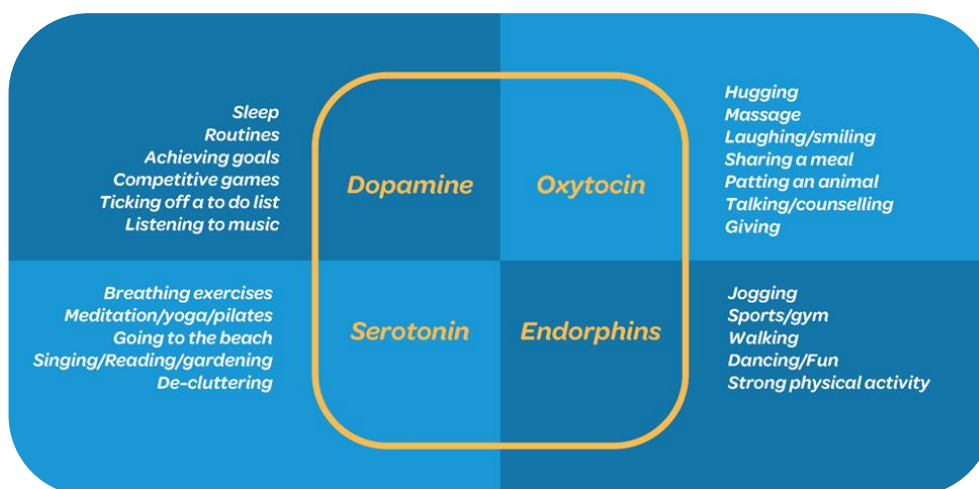
### Oxytocin

Often called the 'love hormone', oxytocin is essential for childbirth, breastfeeding, and strong parent-child bonding. It can also help promote trust, empathy, and bonding in other relationships. Levels generally increase with physical affection.

### Endorphins

Endorphins are our body's natural pain reliever, and are produced in response to stress or discomfort.

Here are some examples of the types of activities that raise each of the hormone levels. When you know what they are, you can consciously include them in your day!



\*Hormones are chemicals produced by different glands across the body. They travel through the bloodstream, acting as messengers.