

# Healthy U Gatherings

*Understanding Depression*

*Gene Beckner*

# What we hope to learn today:

*To better understand the nature of depression*

*To become better equipped to be present with ourselves and others who are experiencing depression*

*To become more aware of warning signs of depression*

# Healthy U Gatherings

Understanding Depression

# Getting Your DOSE

- Dopamine—Enables motivation, learning and pleasure
- Oxytocin—Feelings of trust, motivates you to build/sustain relationships
- Serotonin—Experience of social power or confidence in accepting yourself
- Endorphins—A brief euphoria to mask physical pain

# Getting Your DOSE

Dopamine is similar to the, “*I got it*” feeling when you accomplish something. Once you achieve those goals, desires, or needs, dopamine gives a surge of reinforcing pleasure. Effects are fleeting. Habits follow (good and/or bad)

Oxytocin is commonly referred to as the “cuddle hormone” or “love hormone” because it plays a role in bonding; This hormone gives you the desire to stick together with those you “trust”, which creates a *feeling of safety or comfort*. Unlike dopamine, oxytocin gives you a lasting feeling of calm and safety.

# Getting Your DOSE

Serotonin rewards you with a good feeling when you feel significant or important. It is the *pleasure* you get when you experience *social power, loyalty, or status*; it is a calm form of confidence and accepting yourself within the people around you.

Endorphins release a *brief euphoria* that masks physical pain. It is a response to pain and stress which also helps alleviate anxiety and depression. Any kind of physical distress can trigger endorphins.

# Getting Your DOSE

## Dopamine Deficiency

- Procrastination
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of motivation or enthusiasm
- Low energy or fatigue
- Inability to focus
- Feeling hopeless

# Getting Your DOSE

## Oxytocin Deficiency

- Feeling lonely
- Stressed
- Lack of motivation or enthusiasm
- Low energy or fatigue
- A feeling of disconnect from your relationships
- Insomnia



# Getting Your DOSE

## Serotonin Deficiency

- Low self-esteem
- Being overly sensitive and emotional
- Mood swings
- Social phobia
- Obsessive-Compulsive disorders
- Insomnia

# Getting Your DOSE

## Endorphin Deficiency

- Mood swings
- Aches and pains
- Insomnia
- Impulsive behavior

# Getting Your DOSE

## How to Increase Dopamine Levels Naturally

- Meditate regularly
- Make a daily to-do list & long term goals
- Eat foods that are rich in L-Tyrosine (avocados, fish, eggs, cheese, banana, and pumpkin seeds)
- Exercise regularly
- Create something such as writing, music, art & crafts

# Getting Your DOSE

## How to Increase Oxytocin Levels Naturally

- Physical touch, cuddling, hugging, making eye contact, and even shaking hands
- Socializing
- Touching your pet
- Getting a massage
- Acupuncture
- Listening to music

# Getting Your DOSE

## How to Increase Serotonin Levels Naturally

- Exercise (increases serotonin and dopamine, but also helps balance them)
- Cold showers
- Sunshine (10-15 minutes of sunlight a day can increase serotonin and vitamin D)
- Eating foods such as banana, eggs, omega-3 fish, nuts and seeds, leafy greens, and probiotics
- Getting a massage (increases serotonin and decreases cortisol)

# Getting Your DOSE

## How to Increase Endorphin Levels Naturally

- Laughter and crying
- Creating music or art
- Eating dark chocolate and spicy foods
- Exercise or stretching
- High-intensity interval training
- Getting a massage
- Meditate

# Getting Your DOSE

- Thoughts precede feeling/emotions
- Both are equally important
- Self Quiz: What am I feeling? Why am I feeling that way?
- Admit what you are thinking/feeling
- Go to God for His truth
- Share with another for prayer and perspective
- Remain open for another view

# Getting Your DOSE

- And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **Fix your thoughts** on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. **Think** about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

*Philippians 4:8 (NLT)*

- A **joyful heart** is good medicine, but a **crushed spirit** dries up the bones.

*Proverbs 17:22 (ESV)*

- **Set your mind** on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

*Colossians 3:2 (NASB)*

- On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works, **I will meditate.**

*Psalms 145:5 (NASB)*



# Reflection Questions

1. What about depression resonated with you the most and why?
2. What's the most helpful thing you learned about depression today and why?

# Beyond Today

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