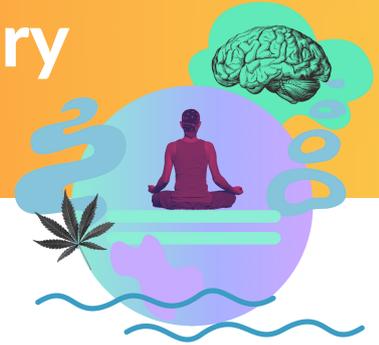




Our inner feel-good factory



Many of the things we do each day contribute to our sense of balance by releasing feel-good chemicals, or neurotransmitters, in our bodies.

<p>Serotonin is a mood stabilizer that's released when we're...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meditating • running • walking in nature • socializing • spending time in the sun 	<p>Dopamine, known as the reward chemical, is released when we're...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing a task • striving for a goal • eating delicious food • doing self-care activities
<p>Endorphins are painkillers that circulate through the body when we're...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dancing • exercising • laughing • using essential oils 	<p>Oxytocin is called the love drug. Love chemicals are released when we're...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • petting a cat or dog • playing with a baby • hugging someone • giving/receiving a compliment

Many cultural ceremonies and healing practices involve singing, drumming, dancing, and smudging. These sacred practices stimulate neurotransmitters that help with restoring balance in our hearts, minds, bodies and lives.

Some people don't realize that we have access to our own "inner feel-good factory." And for some of us, it's not enough. Sometimes we need or want something more to help us feel better, do better, reduce pain, or get back on track. For example, many of us consume psychoactive substances, which affect our central nervous system.

Stimulant drugs, such as tobacco, caffeine and cocaine, speed us up and make us feel more alert. Alcohol and opioids, such as morphine or oxycontin, are depressants. They slow us down and give us a 'cozy' feeling. Hallucinogens, such as LSD and psilocybin also known as magic mushrooms, make us see, hear and feel things differently than we normally would, and sometimes see things that aren't real.

Some drugs, such as cannabis, have a range of effects, depending on the person and the type and amount of the drug they're using.

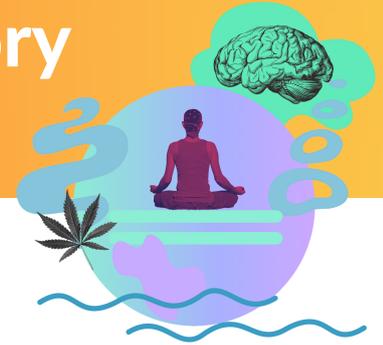
References

1. Psychology Today: [The neurochemicals of happiness.](#)
2. Here to Help: [Understanding Substance Use: A Health Promotion Perspective](#)



Reflect and discuss

Our inner feel-good factory



Activity steps

1. Watch the **Our inner feel-good factory** video.
2. Working in small groups or individually, explore and discuss the following questions.
3. Debrief together or in pairs.

Reflect and discuss

Checking in

How are you feeling right now?

1-----5-----10
don't ask meh okay, I guess pretty good couldn't be better

How often do you feel this way?

- Often
- Half the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely

Many of the things we do each day contribute to our sense of wellness by releasing feel-good chemicals, or neurotransmitters, in our bodies. Our “inner feel-good factory” can help us stay motivated to cope with our problems and create the lives we want.

Review the chart and check off the feel-good activities you do regularly.

- How do you feel about the number of feel-good activities you're already doing?
 - Would you like to do more?
 - Which ones would be easy to add to your routine?
- Use the back of this sheet to map out a plan for doing more feel-activities in the coming following week. Share your plan with a partner.
- Reflect on how you felt after adding more feel-good activities to your week. Share your findings with your partner.