

**The "Life is Good" Neurotransmitters**



- Simon Sinek – cultural anthropologist, professional speaker, author, and leadership trainer
  - *Start With Why*
  - *Leaders Eat Last*
- EDSO
  - **Endorphins** – activated when we exercise
  - **Dopamine** – activated when we set goals and achieve them
  - **Serotonin** – activated when we feel pride...it's associated with pro-social behavior.
  - **Oxytocin** - activated when we experience friendship, trust, physical touch



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**Endorphins... pain blocker**



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**Exercise and the Brain**

- Results in increased levels of a crucial protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which is essential for maintaining healthy neurons and creating new ones.
- Modulation of appetite
- Enhancement of the immune response
- Does exercise prevent cognitive decline?



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**Endorphin-Based Competencies?**

- How often / concretely is physical exercise addressed during sessions?
- Are you using creativity in accessing modalities for physical exercise (recumbent bike? activity trackers? wellness centers? color runs?)
- Are you giving feedback regarding current and ideal physical activity levels?
- Do you and the survivor laugh when you're together?



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**Dopamine... goal reacher**



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**Dopamine-Based Competencies?**

- Are we creating **VISIBLE** goals with the survivor?
- Are we providing constant feedback regarding progress toward those goals?
- Are we constantly relating the task at hand back to the survivor's goals?
- Are we ensuring that the survivor leaves the task feeling as though they have succeeded?



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## Serotonin...self confidence



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## Serotonin-Based Competencies?



- Are we helping the survivor and family understand the importance of celebrating the small steps in the healing process?
- Are we giving public recognition to the survivor?
- Does the interactional style build the survivor up through both word and deed?
- Are we helping the survivor understand that they have something to offer those around them...that their circumstance gives them a perspective that is valuable to others?

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## Oxytocin...love and relationships



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 **Oxytocin-Based Competencies?**

- Does our therapeutic approach instill within the survivor a belief that, without a doubt, we will help them get better?
- Are we providing the survivor with opportunities to be a "giver of help" rather than merely a "receiver of help?"
- Are we helping survivors and families develop relationships with others who understand what they are going through?
- Are we taking time to provide small acts of kindness for the people we serve and their families...are we leading by example?

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 **Last...a few thoughts on fostering engagement**

- Doug Dietz...a "technical person."
  - Fantastic Career
  - Tremendous Success



- Doug's moment of crisis:
  - Children's Hospital
  - 80% of kiddos who underwent MRI required sedation

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 **A different mindset**

- It's not enough to be a "technical person"

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 **Questions?**

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