

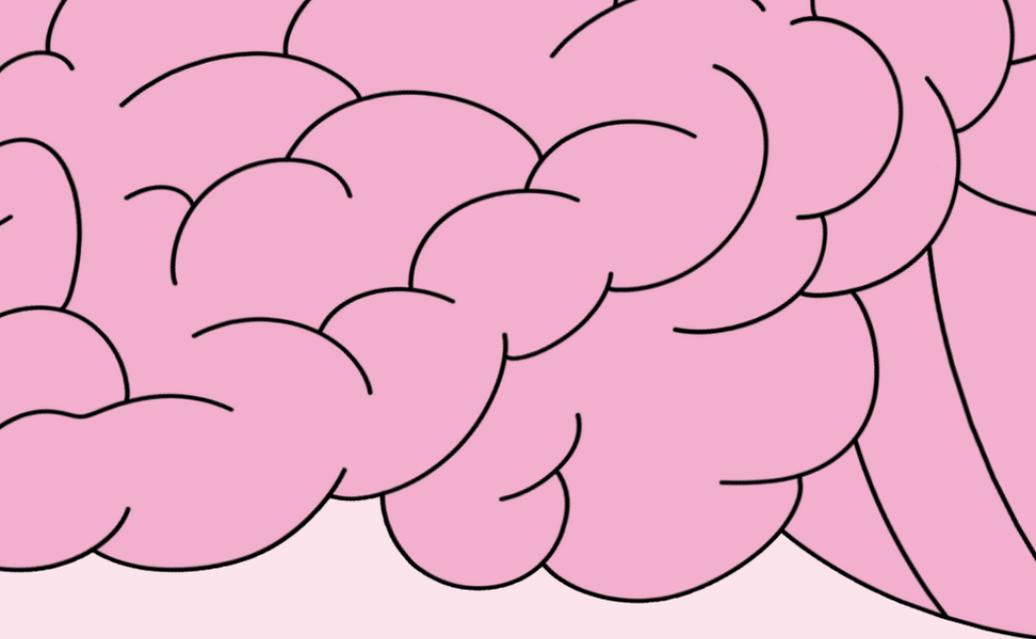
# neuroplasticity

Pathways in the brain are always changing in response to experience. This is called neuroplasticity and it gives us the power to influence the wiring and circuits in the brain.

By taking time to turn events into positive memories and experiences, you can teach your brain to look for the good in the world! It's as simple as pausing, paying attention to how that experience felt in your mind and body, and allowing the moment to sink in.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What's one positive thing that's happened today? It can be small, like someone holding a door for you, or big, like receiving good news!
- 2 Whenever we learn something new, we have to practice to get better at it. How do you think practicing "looking for the good" can help develop new neural connections?



## TAKE ACTION

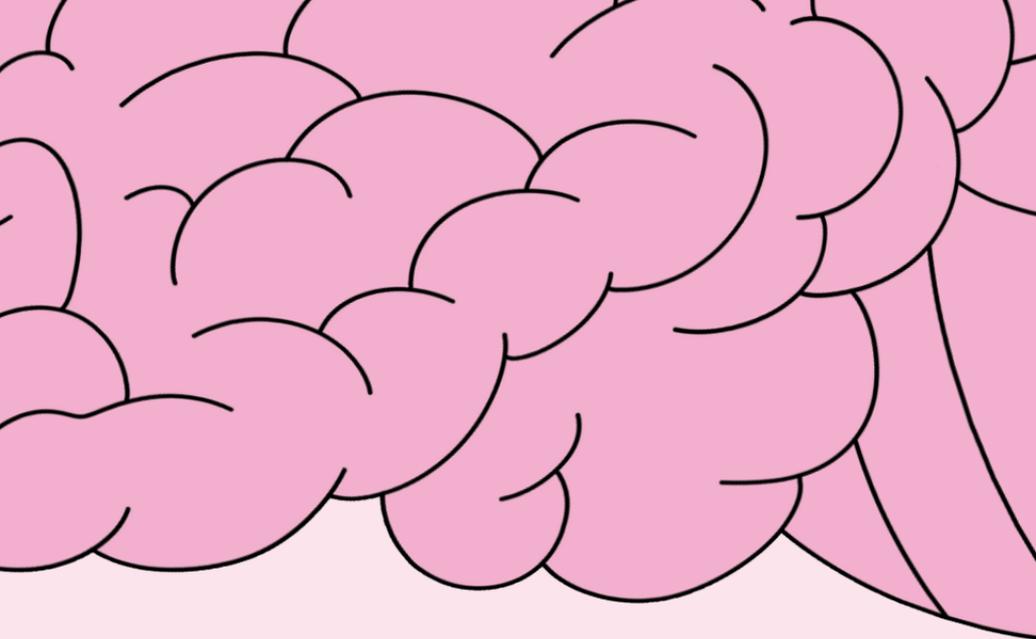
- Spend a week writing down one positive moment from each day. (It can be big or small!)
- After a week, reflect. How did it feel to write this down? How does it feel to look back on the positive memory?
- How can you remind yourself to “take in the good” in the future?

# serotonin + nutrition

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter in the brain that helps regulate sleep, mood, appetite and digestion. Studies show that eating nutritious meals helps to maintain serotonin production. What's good for your gut is good for your brain—they are connected by millions of nerve cells!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some nutritious foods that are good for your brain? Research and share your findings! (Here's a hint: fats, like those found in avocados, are essential for brain and hormonal health.)
- 2 What times of day do you think are the most important to have a nutritious snack?
- 3 Why is global access to nutritious food so important?



## TAKE ACTION

- In small groups or independently, create a menu using ingredients that are nutritious and good for the brain.
- In pairs or groups, do some research about communities, in and outside of your country, that are experiencing food insecurity. What are ways that people are taking action in these communities to provide access to nutritious food?

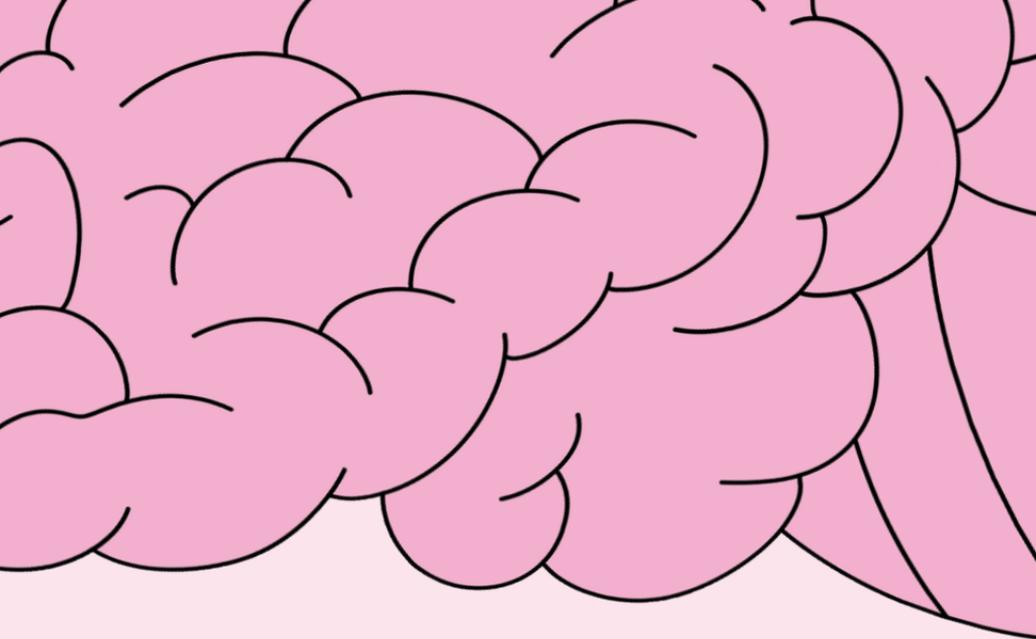
# amygdala + stress response

The amygdala is a collection of neurons in the brain that respond to threats, including stress. The tricky thing is that same system gets turned on no matter how big or small the problem. Just thinking about a threat can activate a stress response.

The brain uses impulses to send signals to other parts of the body. Stress can cause the heart to beat faster, breath to speed up and muscles to get tight and tense. Laughter releases dopamine, which can lift a mood and reduce stress.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Can you think of a time recently when you've been nervous or stressed? (Examples: before taking a quiz, before trying out for a team or play, etc.)
- 2 What changes did you notice in your body? How did you respond?



## TAKE ACTION

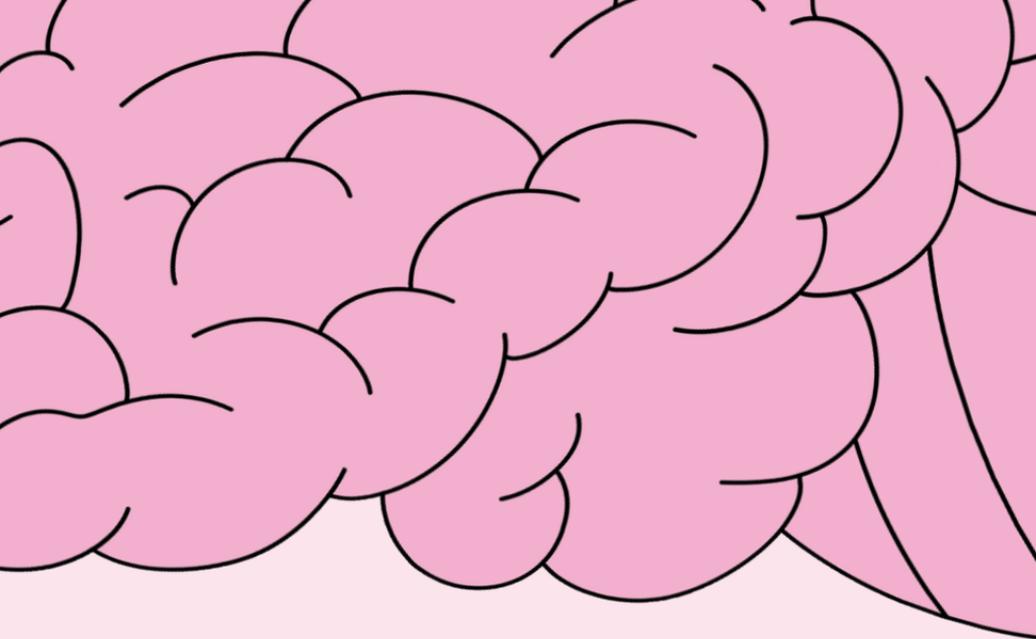
- Take a few deep breaths! Deep breathing helps calm the amygdala so you can think clearly.
- Make time for the things that make you laugh! It could be your favorite movie, cute animals photos or anything else you like.
- We get by with a little help from our friends! Call a friend or have a conversation with a family member.
- What is one thing you can try doing the next time you're feeling nervous or stressed? How can you remind yourself to do this?

# the brain and hydration

About 75 percent of your brain is water. Dehydrated, it struggles to focus, solve problems and co-ordinate motor skills. Drinking water improves sleep quality, thinking and mood. It also regulates body temperature and delivers nutrients to cells!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What times of day do you think are the most important to drink water?
- 2 How can you make drinking water a daily habit?
- 3 Why is access to clean water so important all around the world?



## TAKE ACTION

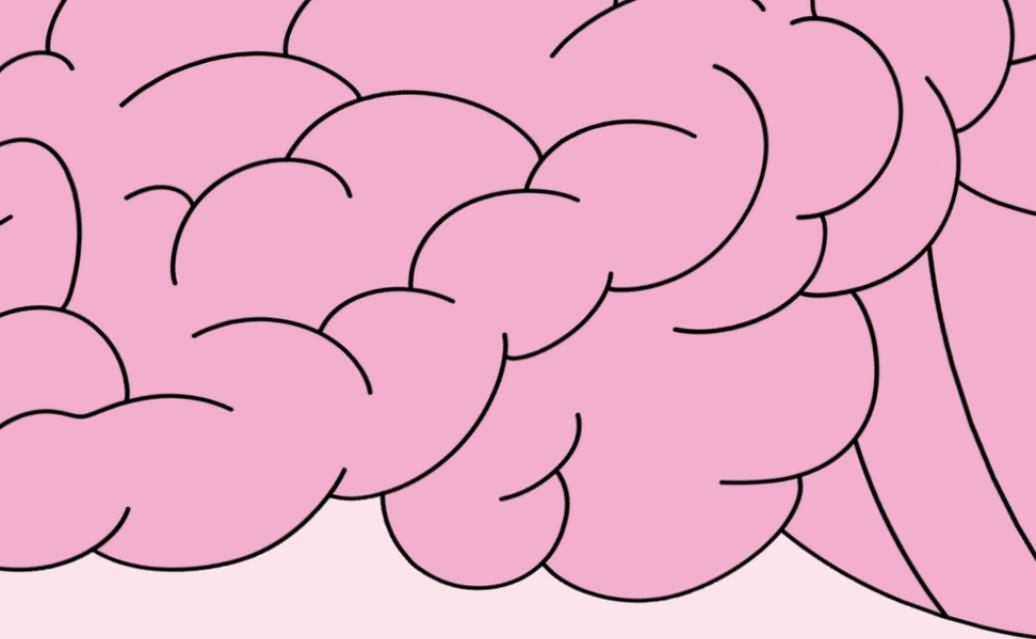
- What is one small step you can take to make sure you're drinking more water throughout the day? Write it down and see if you can stick to it for a week.
- In pairs or groups, do some research about communities, in and outside of your country, that are experiencing water scarcity. What are ways that people are taking action in these communities to provide access to clean drinking water?

# oxytocin + connections

A friendly hug, a high-five or a gesture of kindness releases oxytocin, the hormone that helps us build healthy relationships. When we connect with others, oxytocin reduces cortisol, the stress hormone.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is it important to have in-person connection with others?
- 2 How do you like to be shown kindness?  
How can you show kindness to others?  
How can you show kindness to yourself?
- 3 Why is it important to show kindness toward ourselves?



## TAKE ACTION

What is one way you can commit to showing kindness to someone else in your day-to-day life? Here are some examples to get you started:

- Open a door for someone. Research shows that good deeds inspire more good deeds.
- Say hi to someone new.
- Offer to help someone when they need a hand.
- Say thanks to those who make a difference.