

# Enhancing Wellbeing During Residency!



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Why Am I

Here?

“Self-care is a priority and a necessity, not a luxury, in the work we do!”



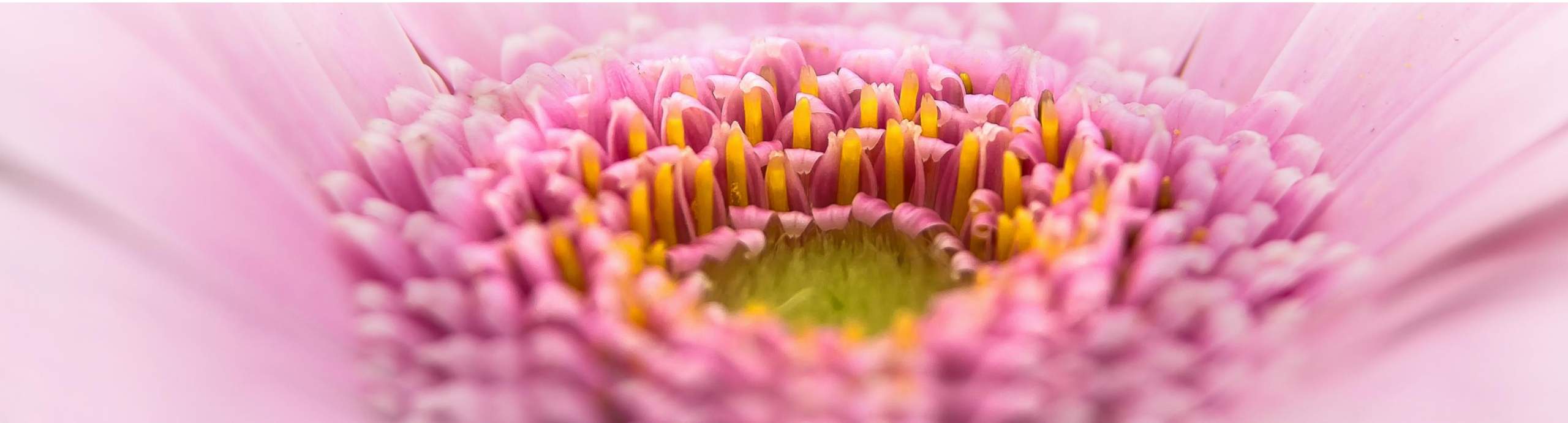
# Facts and Myths



- 1. Physicians know about wellbeing**
- 2. Only external factors such as our work environment (hours, autonomy) need to be addressed first**
- 3. Wellbeing and happiness are vague concepts and thereby difficult to measure or change**

# Wellbeing is Not:

- Absence of depression and suicide!
- Absence of burnout in residents!!

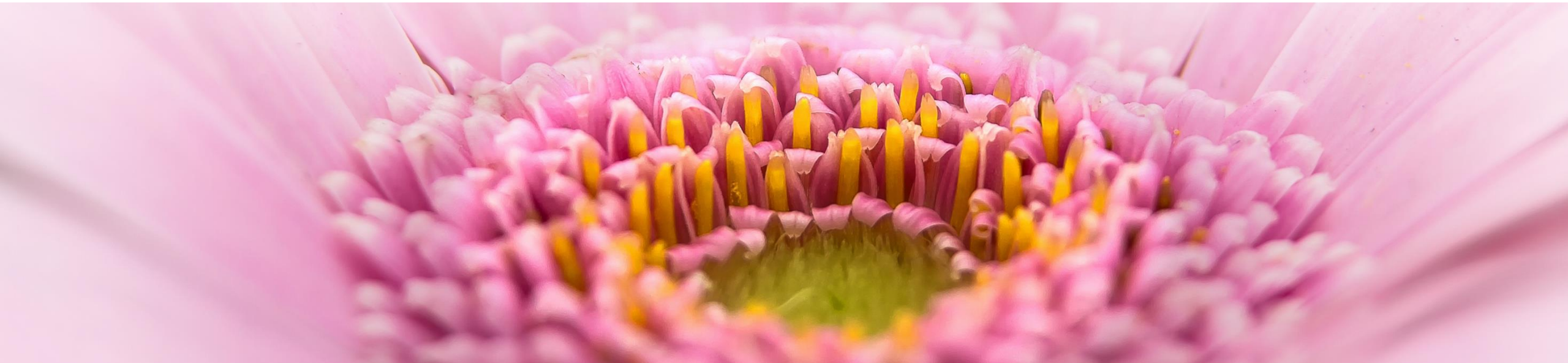


# What is Wellbeing?

- Subjective Wellbeing
  - Frequent positive affect
  - High life satisfaction
  - Infrequent negative affect
- Aka Happiness
  - Happiness is a mental or emotional state of wellbeing defined by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy

# What is Wellbeing?

- Formally, Wellness is a dynamic and ongoing process involving self-awareness and healthy choices resulting in a successful, balanced lifestyle
  - Incorporates balance between the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual realms
  - Results in a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction, and belonging
  - Provides protection from the unique demands of medical training and beyond ([resilience](#))



# Standard Recipe to Enhance Wellbeing

- Every day, do:
  - Eat healthy
  - Sleep for 8 hours
  - Have hobbies
  - 30 min of meditation
  - 45 min of exercise
  - Take care of your patients
    - Be skilled
    - Be empathic
  - Foster social relationships
  - Align values with purpose







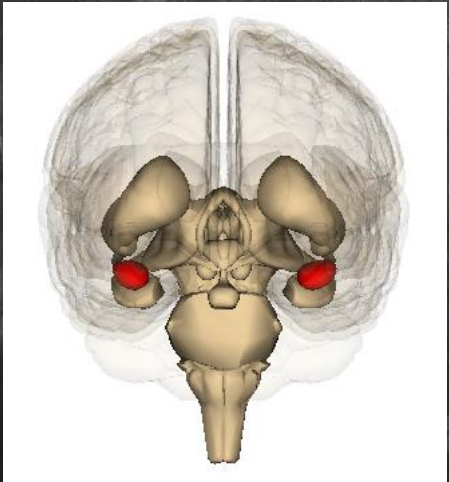
**Not Happening! Delusional Thinking!!!**

So... Does a  
Practical  
Recipe  
Exist?



# Back to the Basics: What Do We Know?

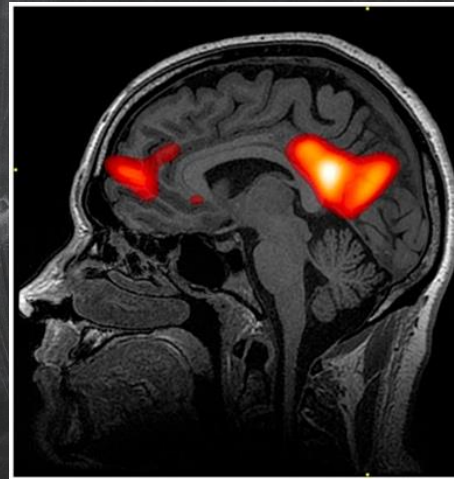
Emotion Regulation



Stress Response

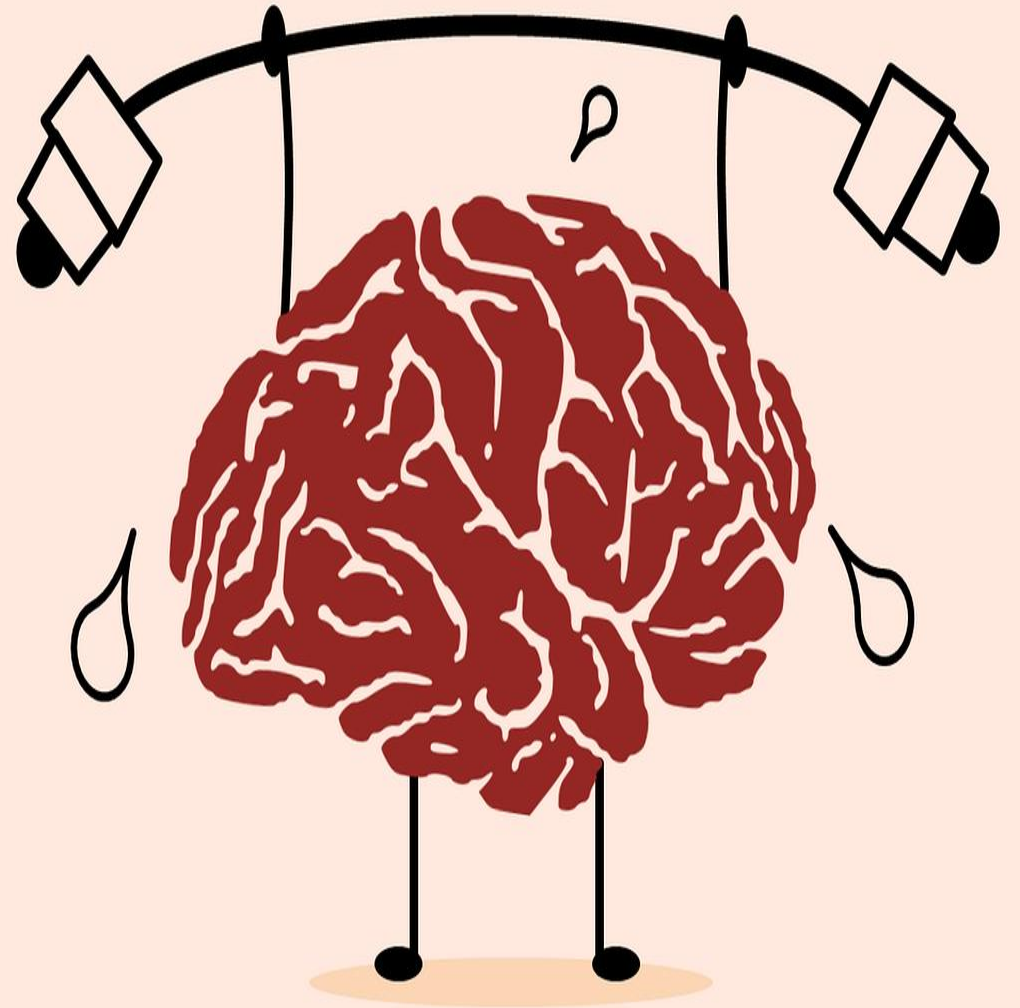


Resting Brain  
(Default Mode Network)



Therefore

- Retrain the Brain
- Impact
  - Emotion Regulation
  - Stress Response
  - Resting Brain Activity



Positive Emotions  
Social Connections  
Gratitude  
Optimism

Breathing Techniques  
Diaphragmatic  
Slow Deep

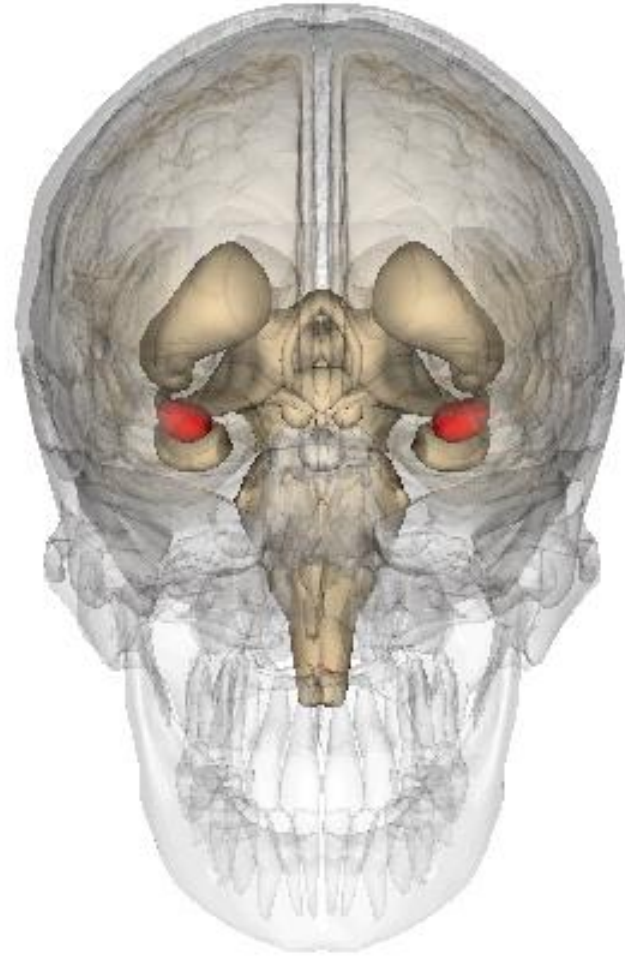
Emotion  
Regulation  
(Amygdala/  
Insula)

Resting  
Brain  
(DMN)

Stress  
Response  
System



# Emotion Regulation System



# Emotion Regulation System

- Areas of our brain that process or generate emotions: amygdala and insula
- They communicate with other areas (dmPFC, lateral PFC and the ACC and vmPFC) to regulate these emotions
- This communication helps: register emotion, perceive it, and modulate it

# Happier People



- Greater amygdala activation to positive stimuli
- Do not ignore negative stimuli
- Activate less to neutral stimuli
- Higher degree of affective flexibility
- Respond adaptively to environmental challenges and opportunities



Positive Emotions  
Social Connections  
Gratitude  
Optimism

Breathing  
Techniques

Emotion  
Regulation  
(Amygdala/  
Insula)

Resting  
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Stress  
Response  
System





# Let's Practice: Gratitude Good Things in Life

Positive Emotions  
Social Connections  
Gratitude  
Optimism

Breathing Techniques  
Diaphragmatic  
Slow Deep

Emotion  
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(Amygdala/  
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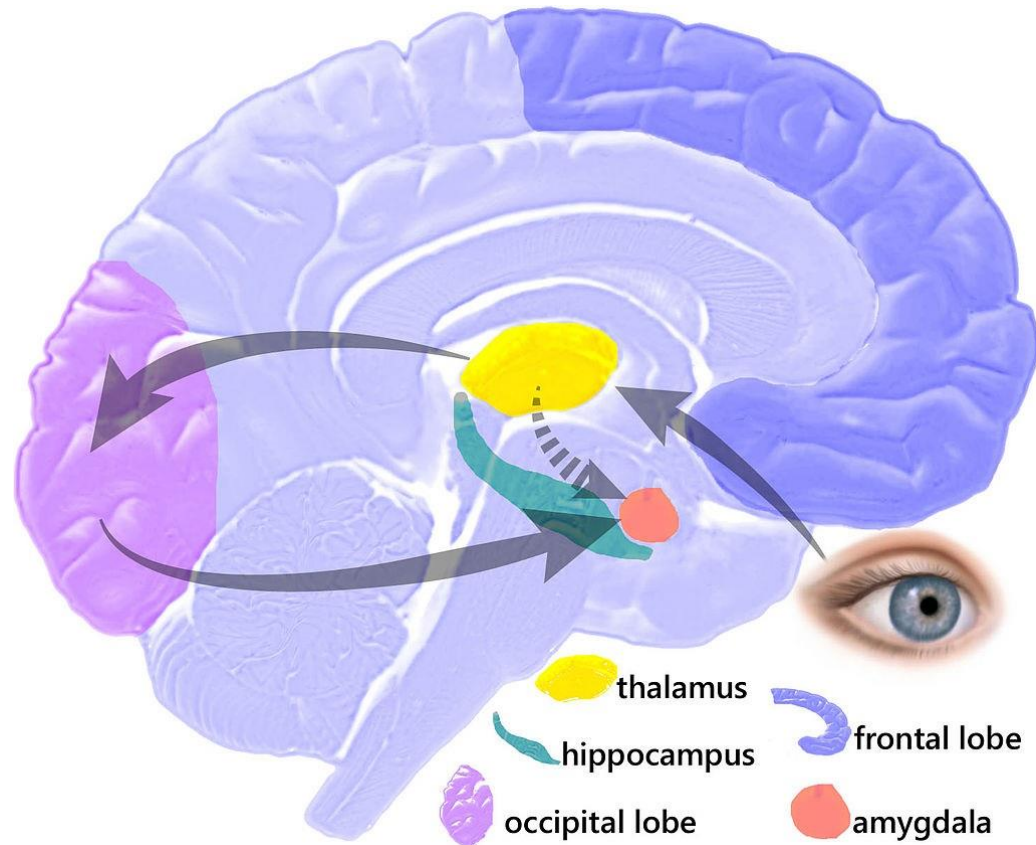


Let's Practice: Social Connectedness  
Things in Common

# Stress Response System

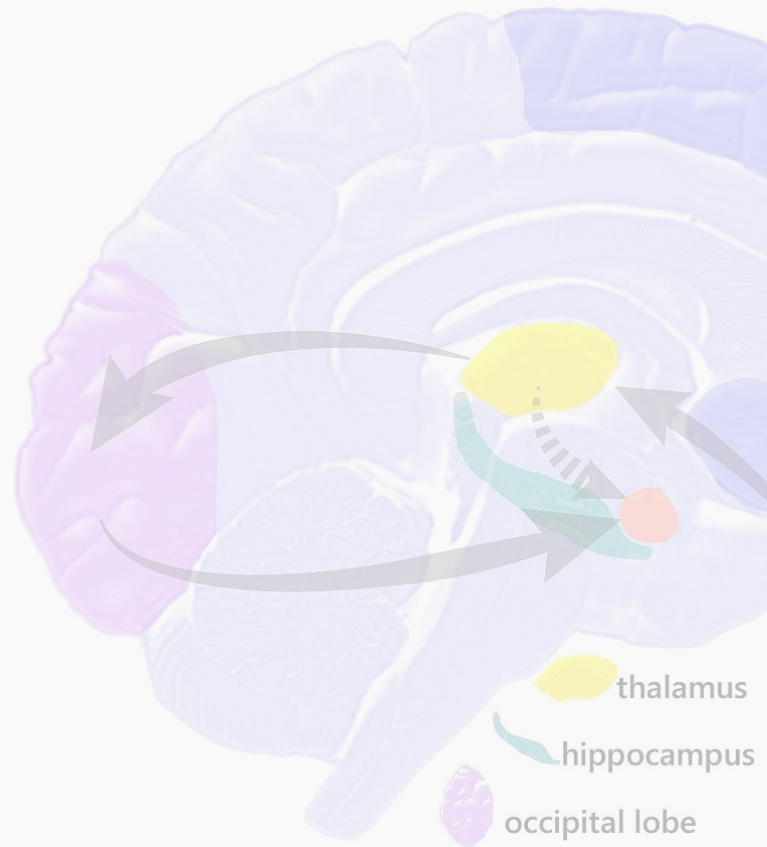


# Freeze or Flight Response



(1) Sensory data fed to thalamus, (2) Data sent to amygdala, (3) Data sent to cortex, (4) Amygdala does rapid threat assessment, (5) Amygdala blocks slow neocortical response, (6) “Unthinking” response issued, activating sympathetic nervous system (7) Chronic stress leads to HPA axis activation

# Freeze or Flight Response



**BRAIN FACT:**  
***The freeze or flight (unthinking) response triggered by the amygdala occurs in 30 milliseconds and can hijack the “thinking” response which can take 250 milliseconds***



(1) Sensory data fed to thalamus, (2) Amygdala does rapid threat assessment, (3) “Unthinking” response issued, activating HPA axis

(3) Data sent to cortex, (4) slow neocortical response, (5) HPA axis system (6) Chronic stress leads to HPA axis activation

# Stress Response System

## Sympathetic Nervous System

- Dilates pupils
- Accelerates heart
- Dilates bronchi
- Inhibits stomach and intestinal motility
- Adrenaline surges
- Relaxes bladder

## Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Constrict pupils
- Inhibits heart rate
- Constricts bronchi
- Stimulates stomach and intestinal motility
- Contracts bladder



# Stress Response System



## Useful

- True life emergencies
  - Accidents
  - Life threatening situations like a fire
  - Mountain lion on a hike

## Detrimental

- Daily stresses of life
  - Electronic medical records
  - Delinquent duty hour logs
  - Delinquent HIPAA training
  - Delinquent PPDs

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Gratitude  
Optimism

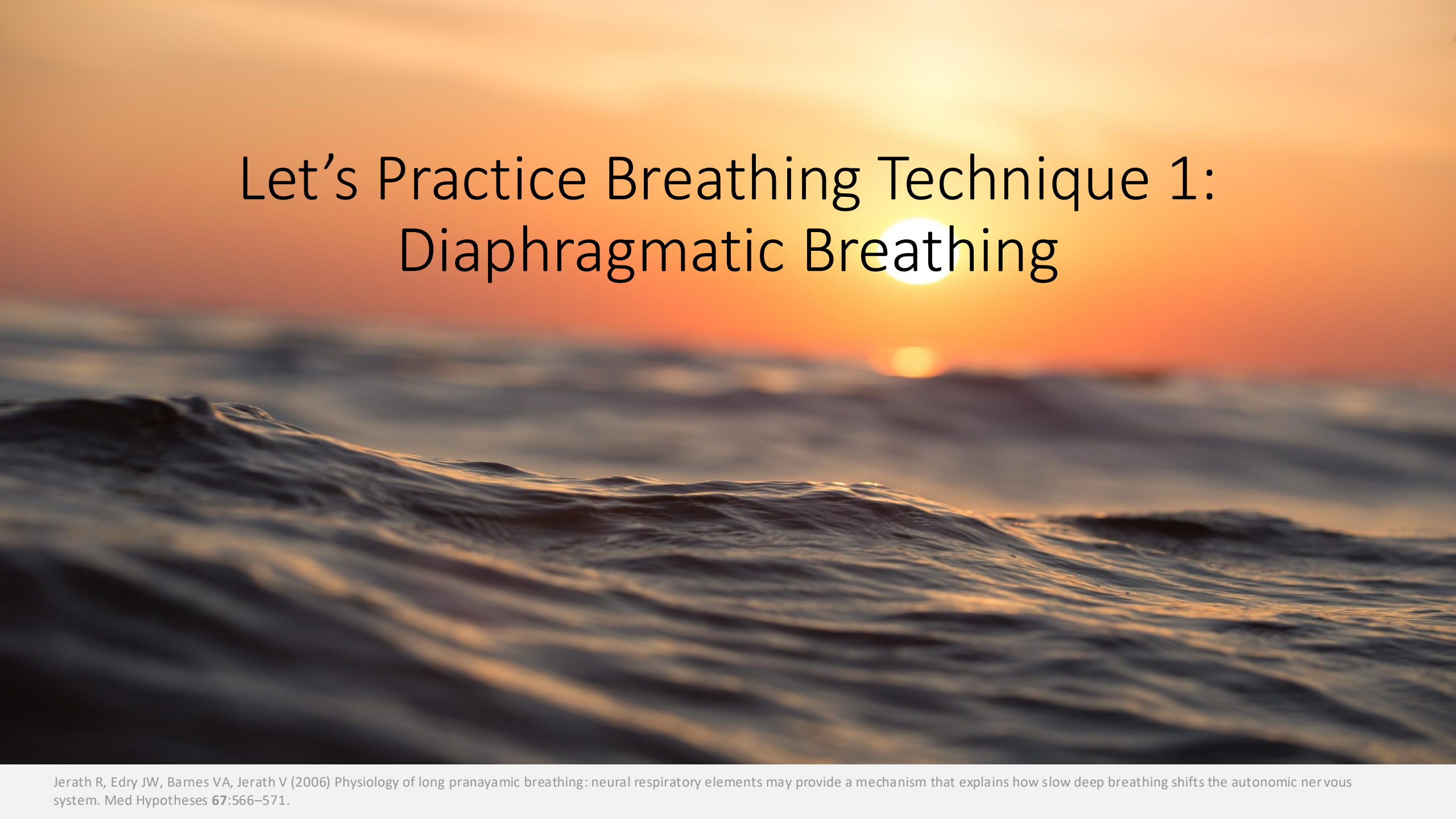
Breathing Techniques  
Diaphragmatic  
Slow Deep

Emotion  
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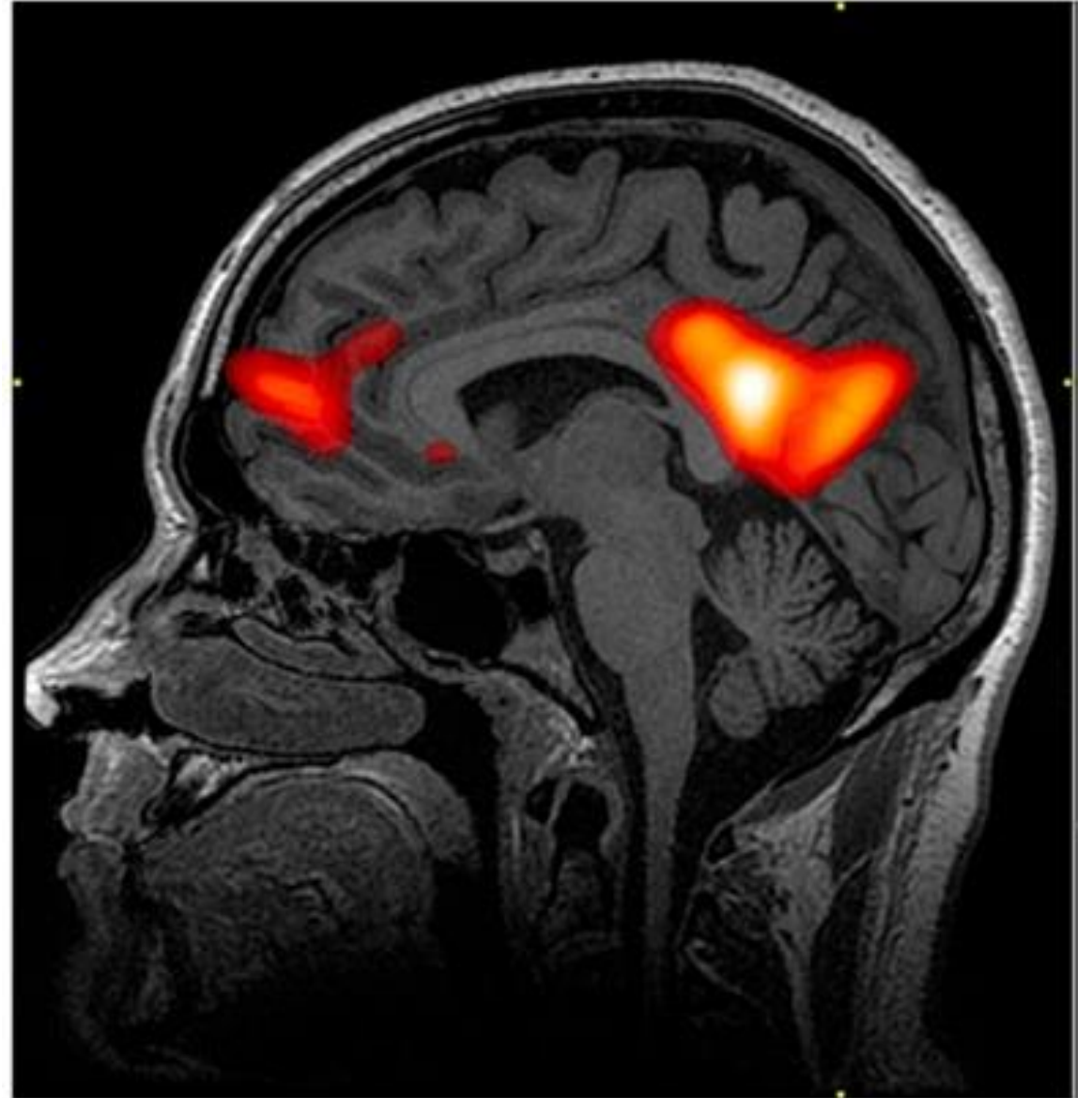


# Let's Practice Breathing Technique 1: Diaphragmatic Breathing



# Let's Practice Breathing Technique 2: Slow Deep Breathing

Resting Brain  
(Default Mode Network)



I hope that I did not  
forget to order that  
lab....I am so stupid...I  
need a vacation  
...Hawaii??



Why did I give that  
answer....I should  
have said xyz...I am  
such an idiot.....



# Default Mode Network (DMN)



## The Good

- Plays a role in creativity solutions
- Formulating a sense of self
- Consolidating memories

## The Bad

- Mind wandering associated with unhappiness
- Unhappy people have increased functional connectivity and increased rumination

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A vibrant field of pink tulips in full bloom, with some buds still visible. The flowers are set against a background of green foliage and other colorful flowers in the distance. A semi-transparent green banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image, containing white text.

Let's Practice: Cultivating Optimism  
Reframing





Let's Practice: Cultivating Optimism  
Visualization of Best Possible Self

Positive Emotions  
Social Connections  
Gratitude  
Optimism

Breathing Techniques  
Diaphragmatic  
Slow Deep

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A photograph of a beach with clear, vibrant turquoise water. The water transitions from a deep blue in the distance to a lighter, greenish-blue near the shore. White foam from gentle waves is washing onto a sandy beach in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the lower portion of the image.

Let's Combine:  
Breathing Technique and Positive Emotion Exercise

# Takeaways: Burnout is Real

- If you can only do 1 thing, do:
  - Ask for help if and when needed before you get burnt out
- If you can do more, also
  - Participate in the weekly sessions
- If you can do more, also
  - Pick one or two strategies to enhance your happiness
  - Get the handbook with a description of the exercises
  - Practice these

