

# **Non-Violent Crisis Intervention and How It Has Been Impacted by the Pandemic**

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# Pandemics are Irritating

- Lockdowns
- Home School
- No Travel
- No Eat In Restaurants
- Increased Prices
- Social Distancing
- PPE
- Missing Family and Friends
- Unemployment
- Ruined Holidays
- No hugs
- No handshakes
- And more!



# What?!? No Hugs?!?!

- Instantly boost oxytocin levels which decrease stress hormones and heal feelings of loneliness, anger and isolation.
- Build trust and a sense of safety.
- Lift one's serotonin levels, elevating mood and creating happiness.
- Strengthen the immune system by stimulating the thymus gland balancing the body's production of white blood cells.
- Boost self-esteem – they provide a tactile sensation that show us we are loved and special increasing feelings of self-worth.
- Relax muscles, release tension in the body and take away pain because they increase circulation into the soft tissues.
- Teach us how to give and receive.
- Encourage empathy and understanding.

Masks = No Smiles

# Smiles

- Reassure others
- Are polite.
- Communicate trustworthiness, belonging and good intentions.
- Function as social connectors.
- A gentle smile is often perceived as a sign of compassion.

# Smiles

Brain releases tiny molecules called neuropeptides to help fight off stress.

Endorphins come into play and act as a mild pain reliever.

Serotonin is an antidepressant.

# Pandemics are Stressful

- The COVID-19 pandemic is stressful for all people.
- Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.
- Public health actions, such as social distancing and wearing masks, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety, even though these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

# Stress During a Pandemic Can Cause:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances



## During late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use\*

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS



STARTED OR INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE



TRAUMA/STRESSOR-RELATED DISORDER SYMPTOMS



SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE†



\*Based on a survey of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years during June 24-30, 2020

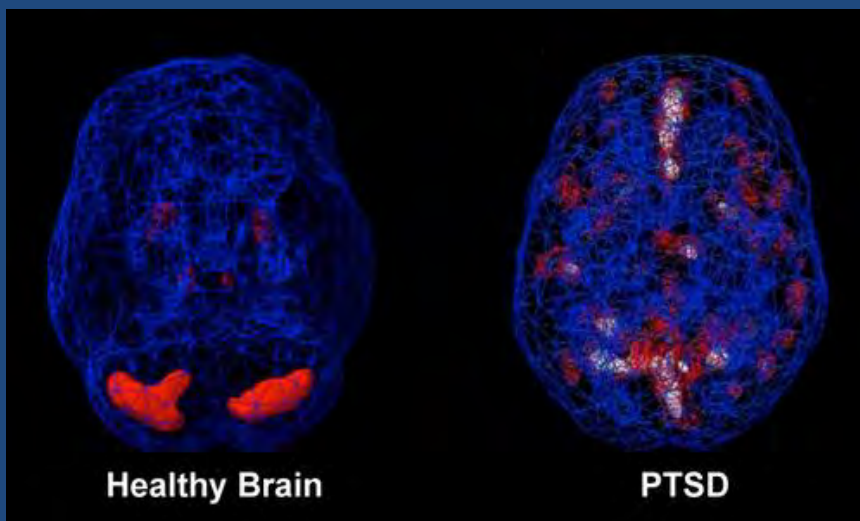
†In the 30 days prior to survey

For stress and coping strategies: [bit.ly/dailylifecoping](https://bit.ly/dailylifecoping)

People with mental illness or substance use disorders are particularly vulnerable.

Mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia affect a person's thinking, feelings, mood or behavior in a way that influences their ability to relate to others and function each day. Additional stress, fear, anxiety, social isolation and loneliness increase symptoms and put people at risk.

# The Pandemic Can Cause Neurological Changes in the Brain

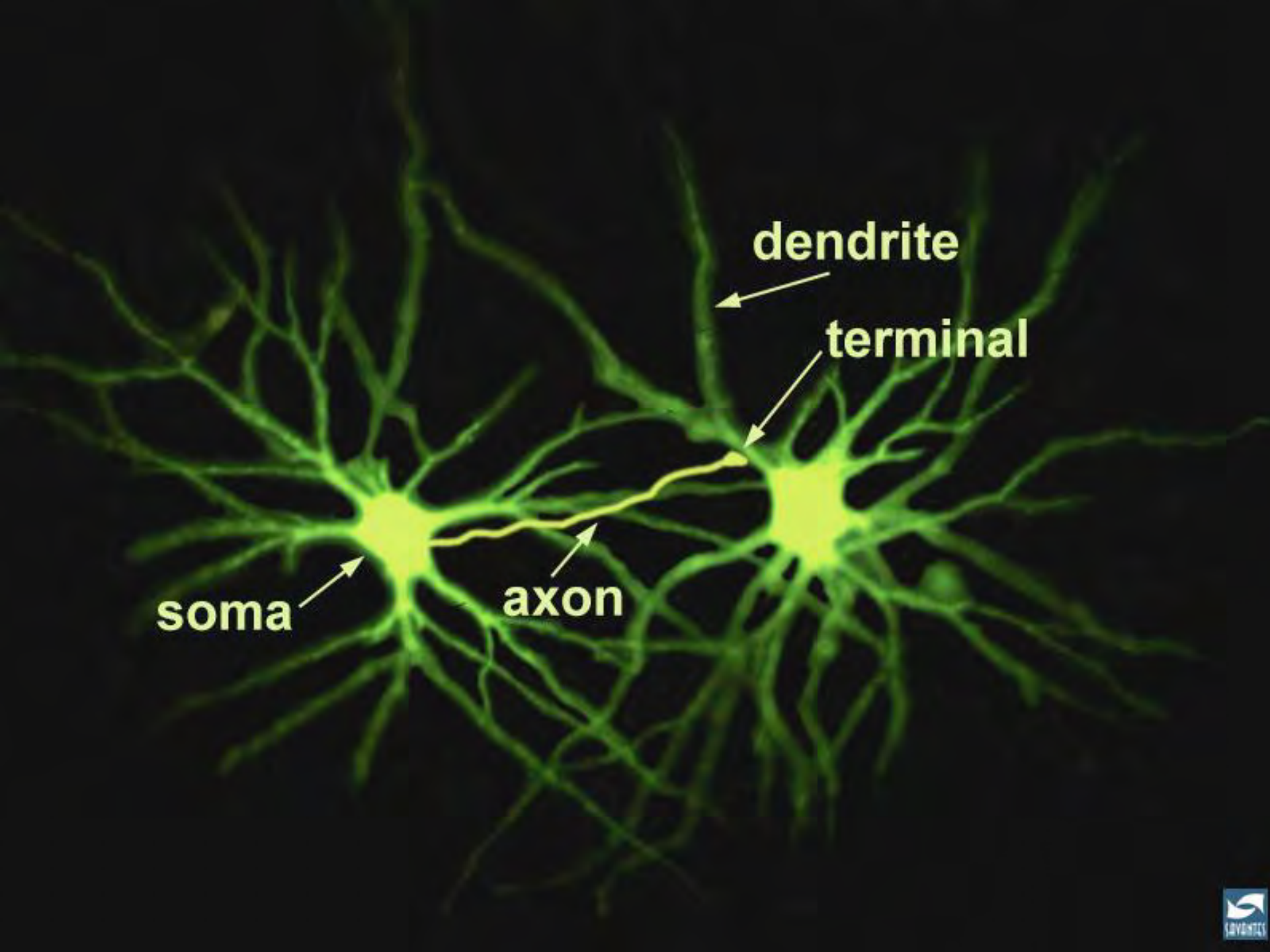


# The Brain



# The Players of the Brain

- Neurons - the cells of the brain
  - 100 billion
  - Dendrites, Axons, Cell body with Nucleus
- Neurotransmitters - chemicals that communicate information throughout our brain and body
  - 50+
- Synapse
  - The space between the axon terminal and the receptor dendrite where neurotransmitters flow...
  - 10,000 per neuron

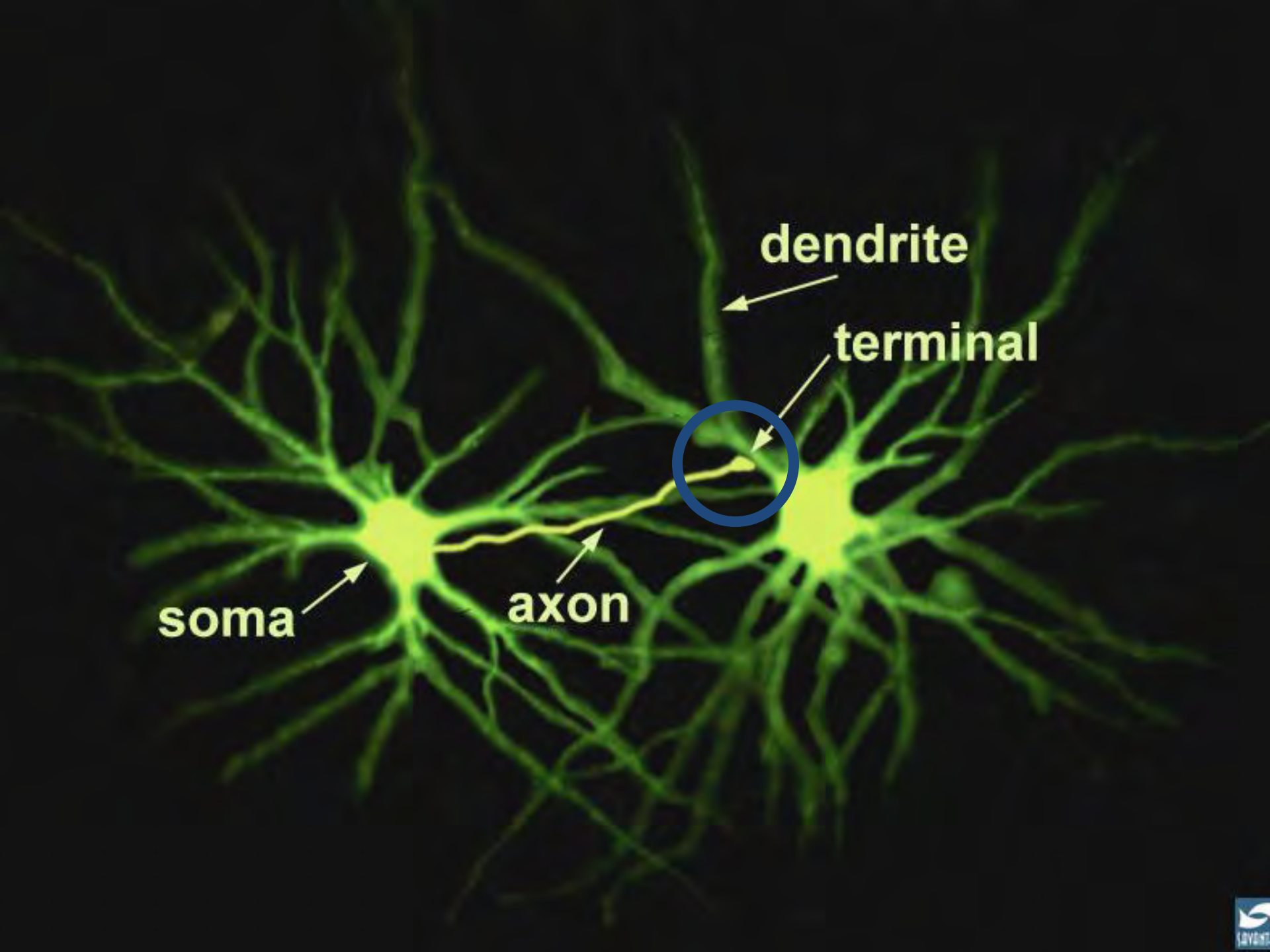


**soma**

**axon**

**dendrite**

**terminal**

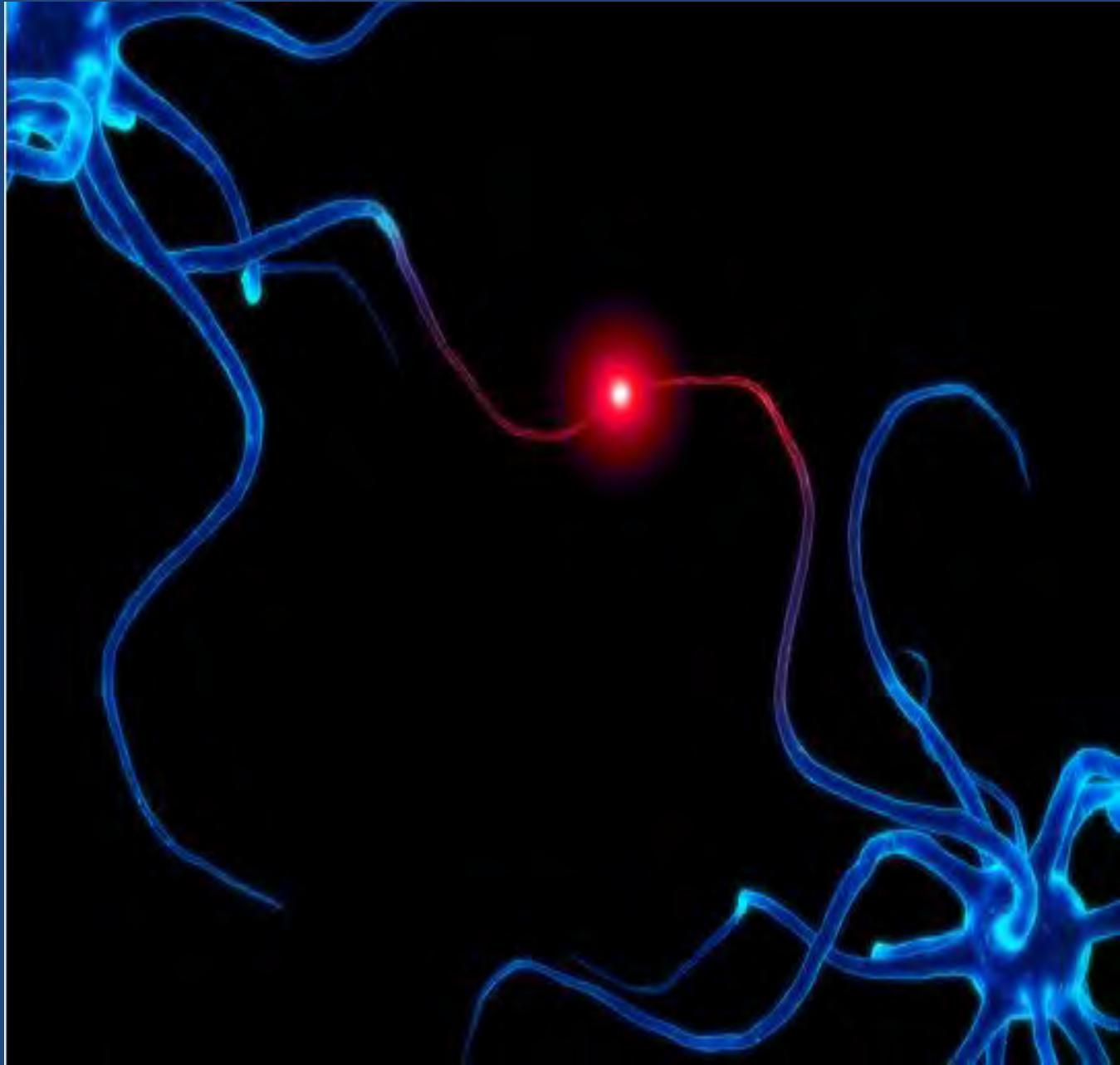


**soma**

**axon**

**dendrite**

**terminal**





# Neurotransmitters

## NEUROHORMONES

Glycine

ATP

**GABA**

**Serotonin**

**Dopamine**

TRH

**Glutamate**

GTP

**Histamine**

**Norepinephrine**

Substance P

**Acetylcholine**

# Dopamine regulates

- Attention
- Motivation/Drive
- Pleasure
- Reward
- Mood



# Norepinephrine regulates

- Alertness
- Concentration
- Energy
- Anxiety
- Mood



# Serotonin regulates

- Obsessions
- Compulsions
- Anxiety
- Memory
- Mood



# Behavior is related to...

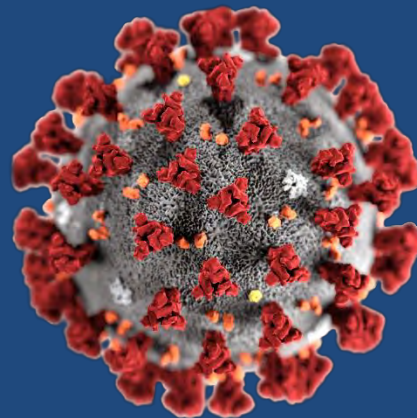
- Characteristics of brain regions
- The functions of neurons, including their connectivity into pathways or circuits
- The neurochemistry that exists between neurons that allows them to interact
- External stimuli

# Key Parts of the Brain

- Pre-frontal Cortex
  - Voluntary control of skeletal muscle
  - Personality
  - Higher intellectual processes (prefrontal cortex takes up the majority of the frontal lobe – executive suite)
    - Concentration, planning, decision making
  - “On second thought...”
  - Matures last (ages 25-26 for full maturity)
  - Modulated by Dopamine...

# Pandemics

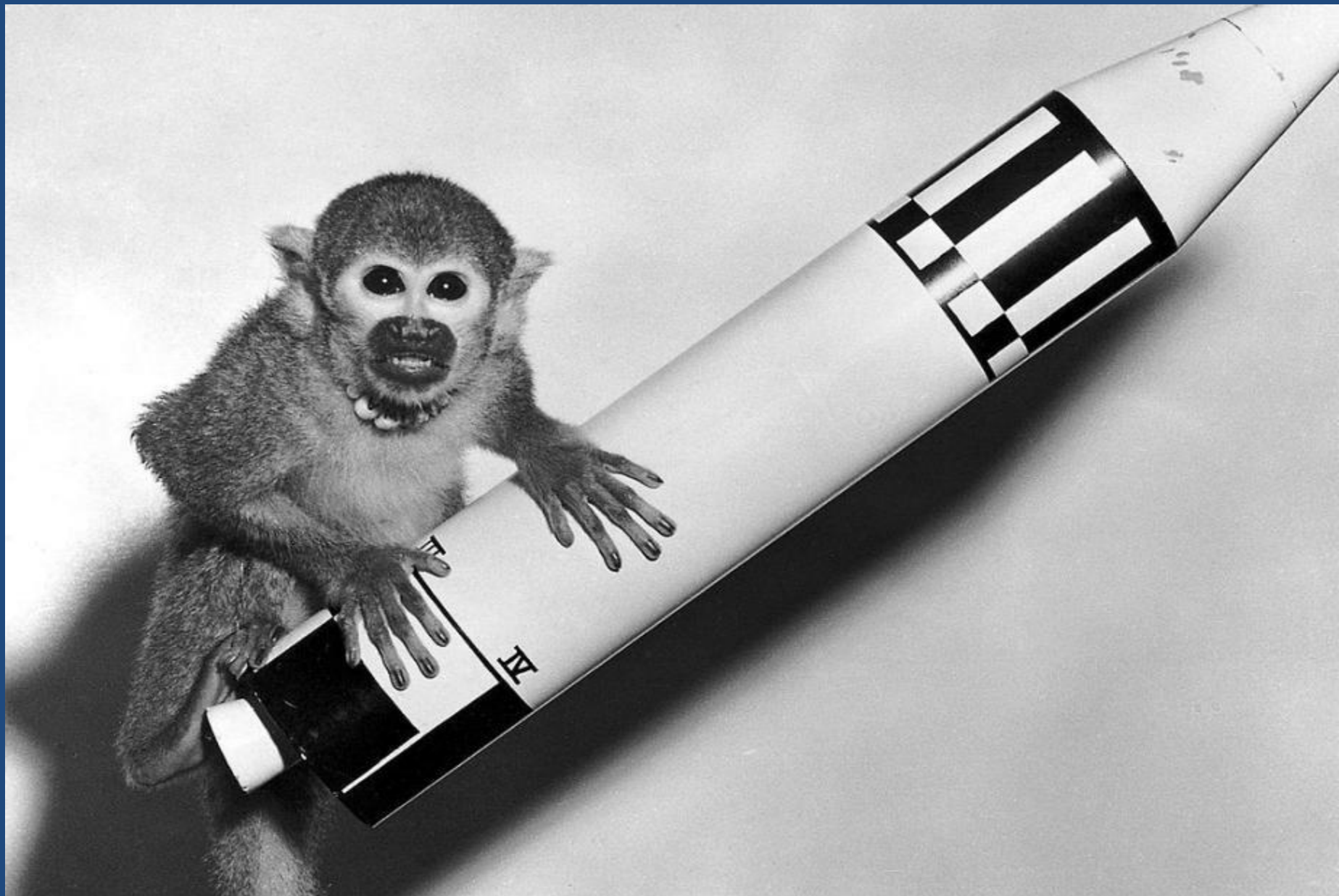
- Cause physical isolation and distancing
- Isolation causes decreases in dopamine
- People tend to become more subordinate and lose feelings of control and empowerment
- People lose ability to plan



# Rhesus Monkeys

- Have an important history with humans and have aided a great deal to medical and scientific research.
- Rhesus antigens found in their blood enabled doctors to identify the different **human** blood groups.
- They are second only to chimps with comparable human DNA
- They also preceded **humans** into space starting in 1949.





# Rhesus Monkey Experiment

- Isolated
  - Low dopamine
  - Stressed
  - Subordinate
  - Preferred cocaine
- Grouped
  - High dopamine
  - Non-Stressed
  - Did not prefer cocaine



# What can pandemics cause in humans?

PTSD

Anxiety Disorders

Depression

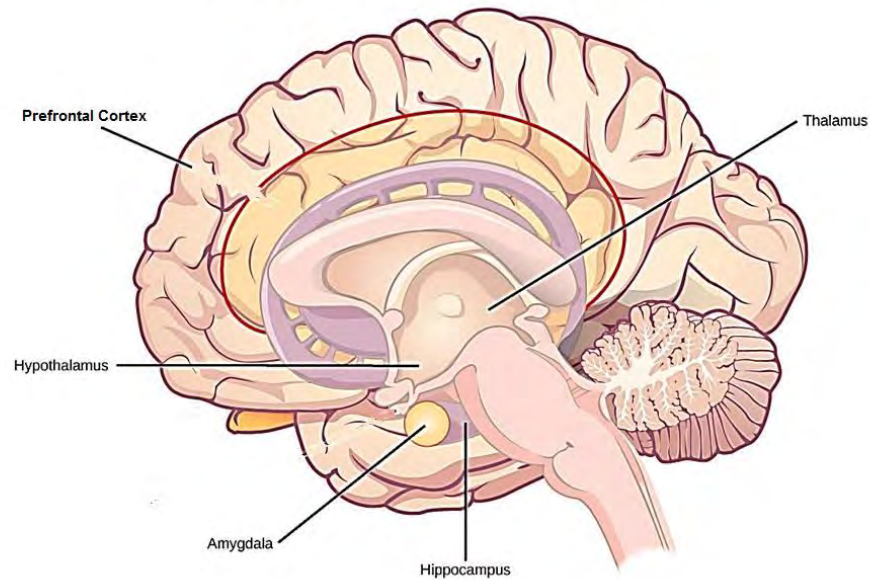
Substance Use Disorder

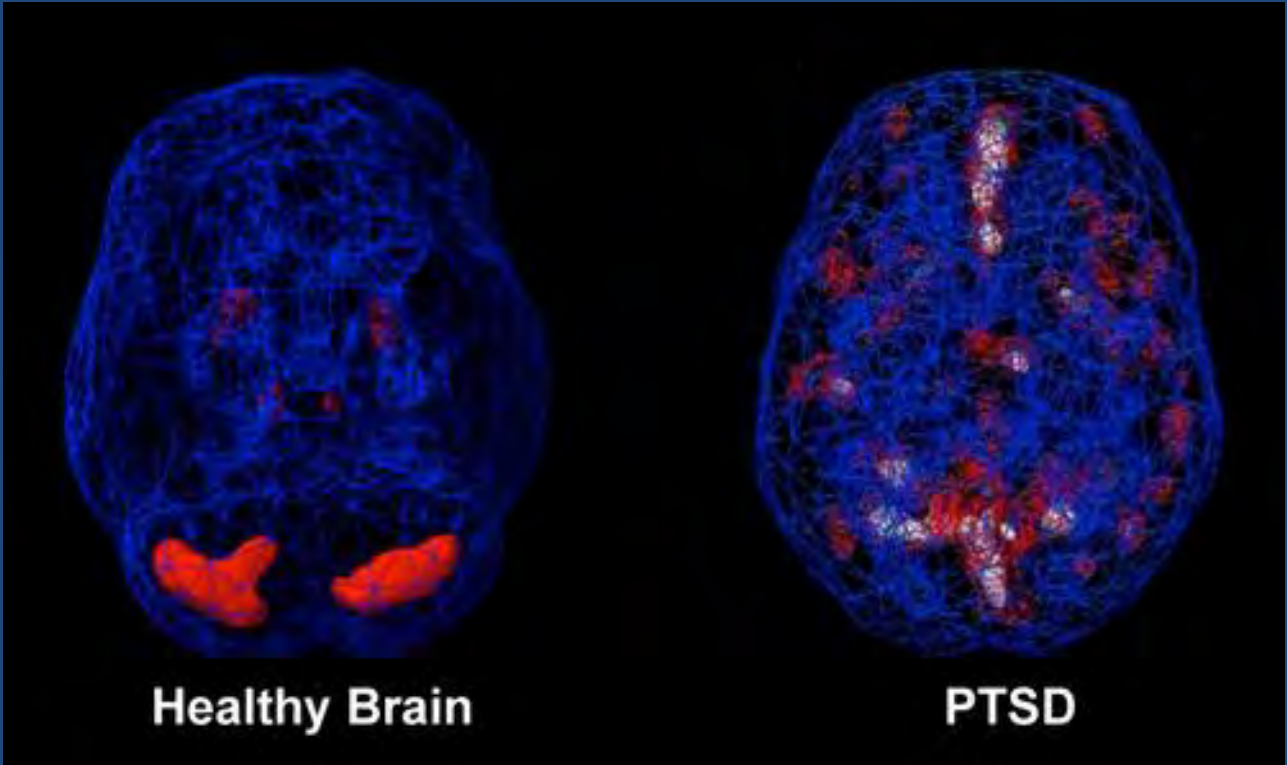
# Biological Basis of PTSD

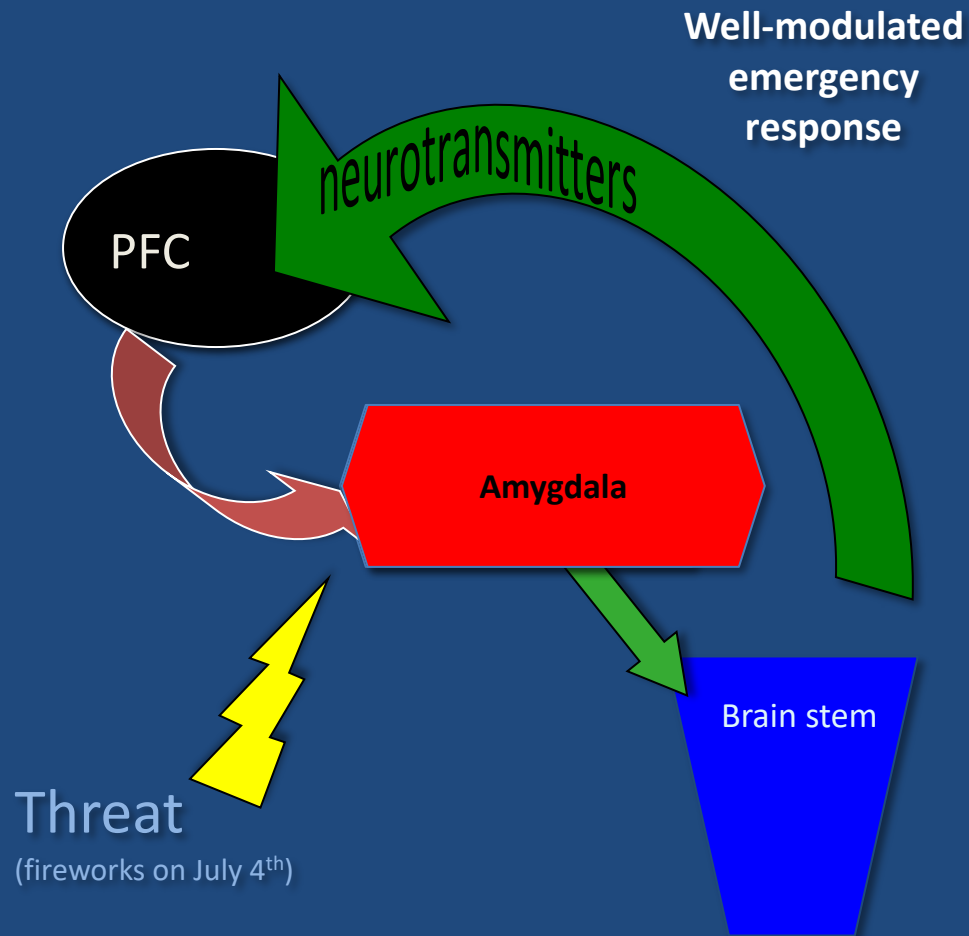
- Hormonal Differences
  - Higher levels of stress hormones
    - Cortisol, epinephrine, norepinephrine
  - Autonomic nervous system is more reactive
  - Concept of Threat
- Summary of Key Brain Differences
  - Smaller hippocampus (processing memories)
  - Over-reactive amygdala (fear reaction)
  - Under-reactive pre-frontal cortex (controls amygdala)

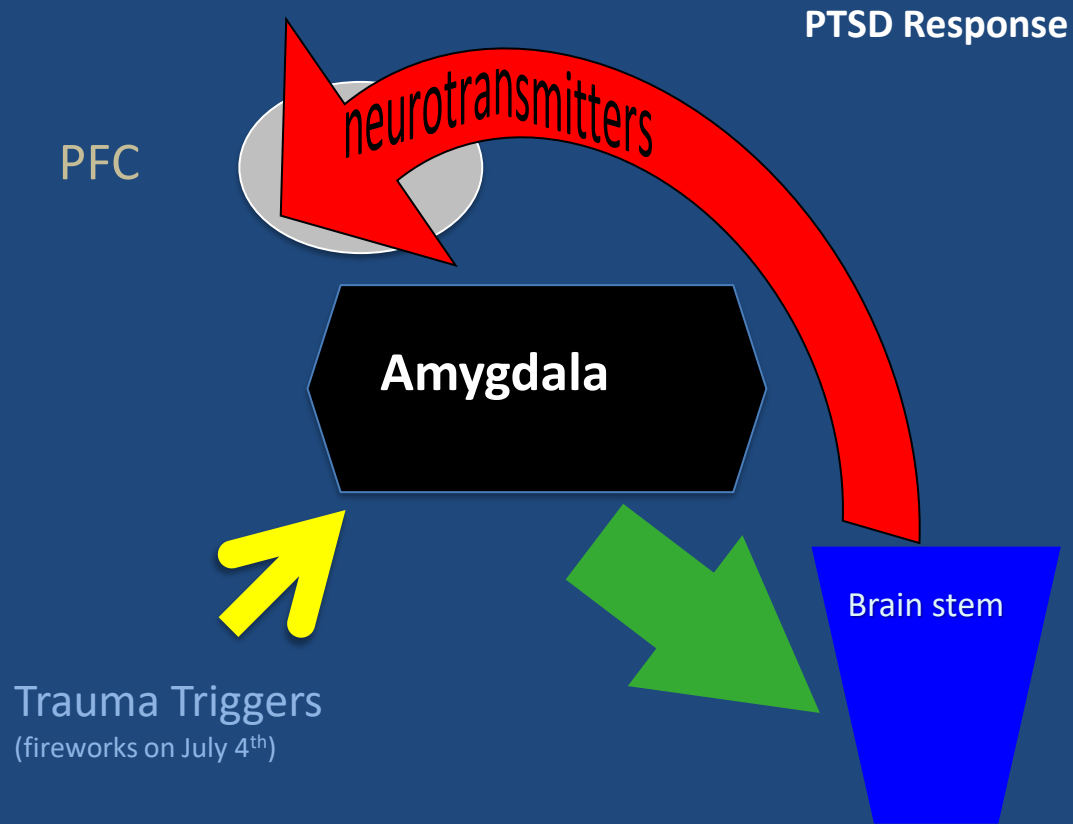
## Biological Basis of PTSD:

### PTSD and the Brain









Resick and Rasmusson, 2010



# Cortisol - Needed for fight or flight decisions

Increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream and causes

- Weight gain
- Acne
- Heart attacks
- Strokes

# Adrenaline - hormone secreted by the adrenal glands

- Released on conditions of stress
- Increases rates of blood circulation
- Increases breathing
- Prepares for fight or flight

Trauma rates are very high.

Hurt people hurt people.

Since the rates of trauma are so high, assume that the person has a trauma background.

Always use trauma-informed approaches.

# Trauma-Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Race, Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

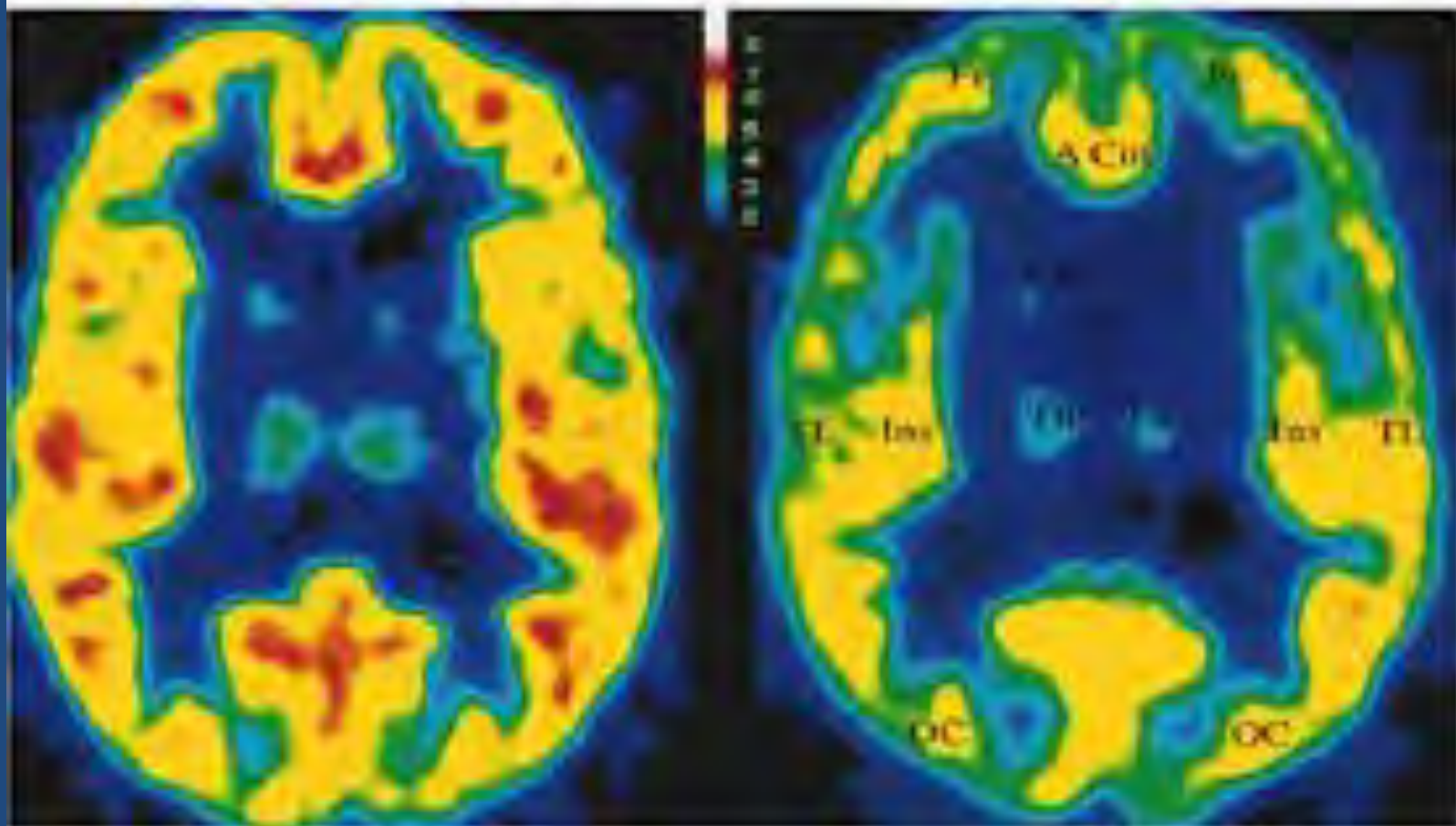
# Anxiety Disorders

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Phobias



Normal control

Panic disorder





# Depression

# Depression Symptoms

## Emotional Symptoms

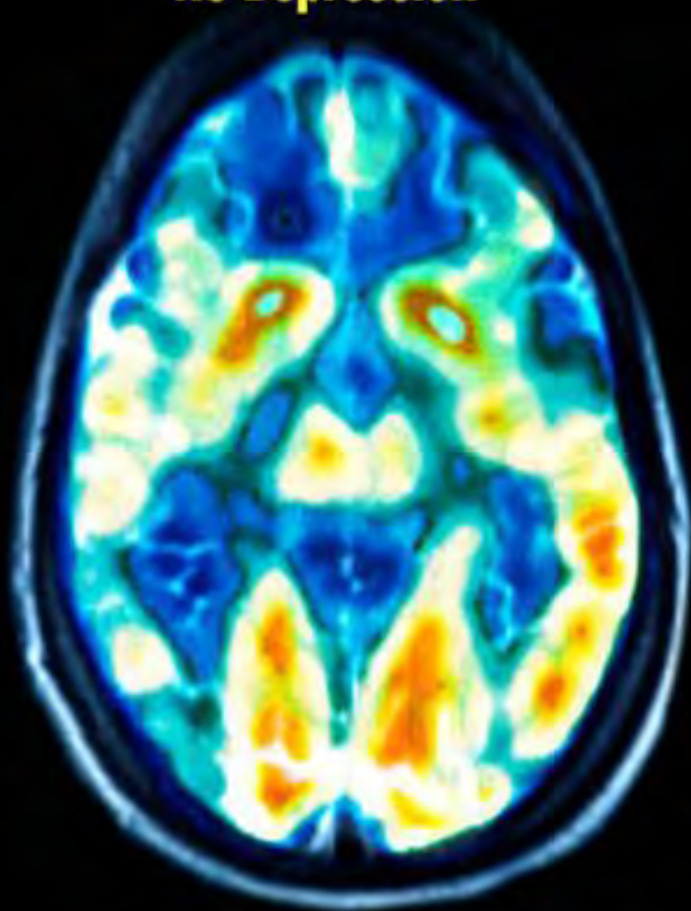
- Sadness
- Guilt
- Lack of interest
- Thoughts of suicide

## Physical Symptoms

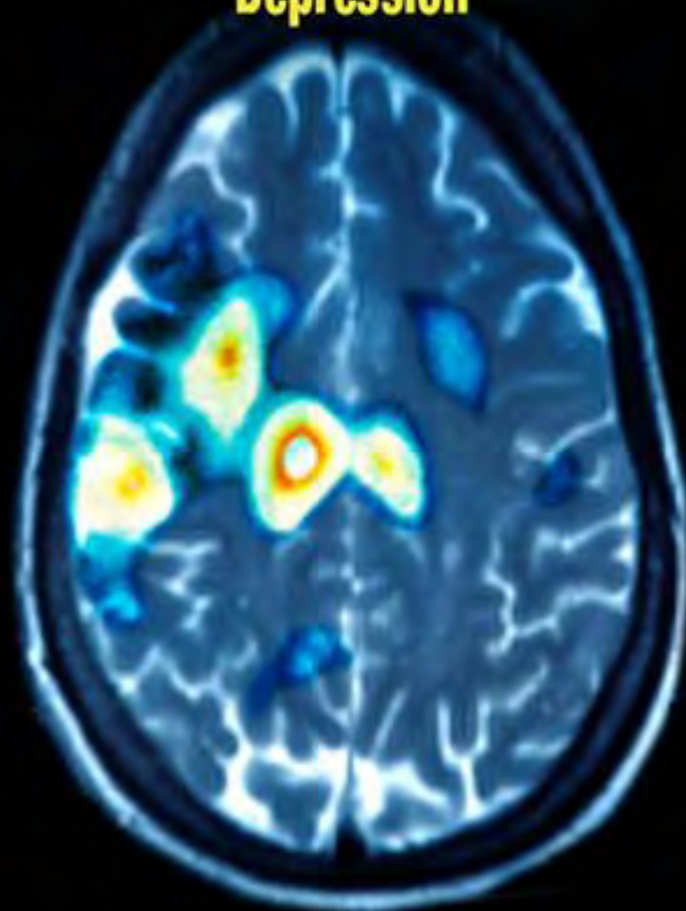
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep
- Lack of energy
- Sexual dysfunction



**No Depression**



**Depression**



# Substance Use Disorder

- Illness of the brain.
- Chronic condition that requires life-long management.
- Compared to:
  - Type 2 Diabetes, Chronic hypertensive disease, Asthma, Obesity
  - All have a complex of physiological and behavioral health components
- No one treatment episode will resolve illness.
- Course of dependency is multiple episodes of treatment, recovery activities, relapse periods.

During 2020 alcohol sales rose  
nationally 262%

81% of SUD do not receive  
treatment.

Overdose deaths in the US in 2020  
reached 93,000

166 overdose deaths in  
Winnebago County in 2020.

Up 28%

# Pandemics Cause

- More crises
- Less patience
- Less self control
- Need for more de-escalation



# Precipitating Factors of Crises

Internal and external causes of verbally and physically acting out behavior over which staff have no control.

# Precipitating Factors

- Loss of personal power
- Lack of sleep
- Problems at home
- Not being at home
- Court issues
- Chemical abuse
- Hormones
- Pregnancy
- Anniversaries
- Displaced anger
- Psychological cause/triggers
- Physiological cause
- Trauma



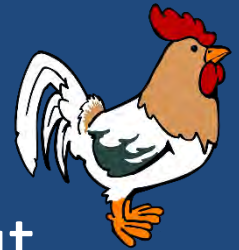
# Understanding Precipitating Factors Can Help Staff

- Prevent acting out behavior by being proactive
- Depersonalize crisis situations by recognizing that we are seldom the cause of the acting out behavior
- Avoid becoming a precipitating factor ourselves



# Signs of Conflict Escalation

- A person clenching his or her fists or tightening and untightening their jaw.
- A sudden change in body language or tone used during a conversation.
- The person starts pacing or fidgeting.
- A change in type of eye contact.
- The “Rooster Stance” – chest protruding out more and arms more away from the body.
- Disruptive behaviors – Such as yelling, bullying, actively defying or refusing to comply with rules.



# Calm Yourself Before Interacting

- If you're upset, it's only going to escalate the situation.
- BREATHE
- Calm down and then begin to look at the situation and how you can intervene safely.
- Use a low, dull tone of voice and don't get defensive even if the insults are directed at you.

# Paraverbal Communication

- Tone
- Volume
- Cadence
- Smooth and supportive
- Keep your voice at a moderate level
- Deliver your message at an even cadence or rhythm

# Become Aware of Your Situation

- Other people in the room
- Objects such as chairs, tables, items on a table
- The space around you, like exits or openings
- If you are blocking the person so that they feel trapped.

# Body Language

- Appear calm and self-assured even if you don't feel it.
- Maintain limited eye contact and be at the same eye level. Encourage the person to be seated (if you can)
- If he/she needs to stand, stand up also.
- Maintain a neutral facial expression.
- Place your hands in front of your body in an open and relaxed position.



# Supportive Stance



# Body Language

- Don't shrug your shoulders.
- Don't point your fingers at the person.
- Avoid excessive gesturing, pacing, fidgeting, or weight shifting.
- Maintain a public space distance.

# Personal Space - Proxemics

- Space around a person's body that is seen as an extension of self
- Includes space around personal belongings
- Averages 1 ½ - 3 feet
- Pandemic = 6 feet

**When you're tired of people standing too close to you**



# Personal Space Varies

- Gender
- Relationship
- Size
- State of mind
- Culture
- Noise
- History
- Environment
- Aura
- Appearance
- Smell
- Title/role
- Social Distancing

# Empathy

- Empathy needs to be shown during conflict situations.
- Even if you do not agree with the person's position, expressing an understanding why that person feels a particular way will help resolve the conflict.
- Be nonjudgemental.



# Active Listening

- Clarifying, paraphrasing and open-ended questions all help to ensure that the person is aware you have understood their frustrations completely.
- Ask to take notes.
- Ask for their ideas or solutions.
- Help them talk out angry feelings rather than act on them.

If de-escalation is not working, stop!

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If the situation feels unsafe, leave  
and call for help



# Contact Information

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# Questions

