

***“Laugh It Off, Lift Your Mood!”***

May is here!! It's time to turn up the good vibes! Between school, exams, and the daily hustle, things can get overwhelming. But guess what? Laughter is a secret superpower you already have. Whether it's a funny meme, an inside joke, or just giggling with your friends, humor lightens your load and brightens your mind. This month, let's laugh a little louder, stress a little less, and find joy in the simplest moments. Because feeling good starts with a smile.

***“Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face.”***

***— Victor Hugo***

Laughter is a universal expression with many physiological and psychological benefits. However, much beyond its use as a social function, laughter has been shown to impact mental health significantly positively, by reducing stress, increasing resilience and strengthening interpersonal relations. This discussion explores the therapeutic effects of laughter and its potential as a supportive tool in mental health care.



# Laughing for wellness – The Power of Humor in Mental Health

## May Newsletter



### ***Short-term benefits:***

***Activate and relieve your stress response:*** A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, and it can increase and then decrease your heart rate and blood pressure.

***Soothe tension:*** Laughter stimulates circulation and aids muscle relaxation, which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

***Serves as a distraction:*** Laughter can momentarily act as a distraction from pain.

### ***Long-term benefits:***

***Improve your immune system:*** Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by creating stress and decreasing your immunity. By contrast, the positive energy manifested due to smiling can combat that and help fight stress.

***Relieve pain:*** Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its natural painkillers and making it easier to cope with quandaries.

***Supports Heart Health:*** Laughter increases blood flow and improves vascular function, benefiting overall health.

### ***Strengthening Interpersonal Relations***

***Share a laugh:*** Spread the joy with those around you by telling a joke, or simply smiling at a stranger.

***Laugh and the world laughs with you:*** Try to laugh at your problems, when you do, stress starts to fade, and you'll feel more relaxed and able to enjoy life without worry.

To summarize, embracing laughter may seem like a small act; however, it can have indispensable effects on improving mental health and reducing stress and aggravation, elevating mood and strengthening social bonds, highlighting its value not only in daily life but also as a complementary approach in mental health support.

# Live Laugh Love



*Laughter, often known as the best solution to all your problems in life.*

And like all good things in this world are backed by science, so is laughter.

Did you know that a good laugh is like a mini workout for your brain? Science shows that humor triggers a cascade of feel-good chemicals, dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins, flooding your system with natural mood boosters. It also reduces cortisol, the stress hormone, helping you relax almost instantly.

On a neurological level, laughter activates multiple brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex (responsible for creativity) and the limbic system (which processes emotions). This enhances the quality, wellbeing and efficiency of our day-to-day activities as well as our cognitive abilities.

But the benefits don't stop there! Physically, laughter increases oxygen intake, stimulates circulation. Studies suggest that regular laughter can strengthen the immune system, lower blood pressure, and even reduce pain by releasing natural painkillers.

So, the next time you find yourself sick, tired or in an awkward, scary or even an embarrassing situation just laugh! Because after all, laughter is the best medicine.

*Joy is a feeling of happiness that comes from success, a sense of wellbeing or good luck.*

You feel joy when you get good results in your exams, win a football match or accomplish a goal. Joy is one of the best feelings you can experience and is a result of hard work and determination. But finding joy isn't only about chasing big dreams or achieving milestones. It can also be found in simple, everyday moments, like the warmth of sunlight, a gentle breeze, or the sound of laughter.

# Joy

*Theme of the Month:*



Another path is to find things that make you lose track of time, things that you are so engrossed in you don't think of any worries and stressors, this might mean rediscovering old hobbies or nurturing current passions. Connecting with others can also be a great source of Joy. Often our best memories are with friends, family and even pets. Simply talking and staying close to a loved one can be a rich source of happiness. It's also important to let go and *stop striving for perfection*. Constantly pressuring yourself to improve and meet unrealistic expectations can take a serious toll on your mental health. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is take a break, breathe, and be content with who you are at this moment.

*Joy often comes not from being perfect, but from accepting yourself as enough.*

Joy isn't just a fleeting feeling, it's a powerful emotion that can significantly impact our health, mindset, and relationships. Modern research has highlighted the crucial role joy plays in shaping a fulfilling life.

- Experiencing joy leads to a stronger immune system, better heart health, and reduced stress levels. It boosts the production of antibodies and lowers cortisol, the stress hormone, which contributes to chronic inflammation and disease risk.
- <https://www.southtabor.com/the-science-of-joy/>
- Joy is recognized as a unique emotional state, separate from gratitude or satisfaction. It plays a specific role in increasing subjective well-being and often coexists with other positive emotions like gratitude, forming an upward spiral of emotional growth.
- <https://longevity.stanford.edu/lifestyle/2023/11/15/joy>

# *Book Recommendations on the Theme*



1

## ***Big Magic - Elizabeth Gilbert***

Celebrates the joy of living creatively, without fear or perfectionism holding you back.

2

## ***The Little Book of Hygge - Meik Wiking***

A charming exploration of Danish culture's cosy, joy-filled lifestyle and how we can embrace it daily.

3

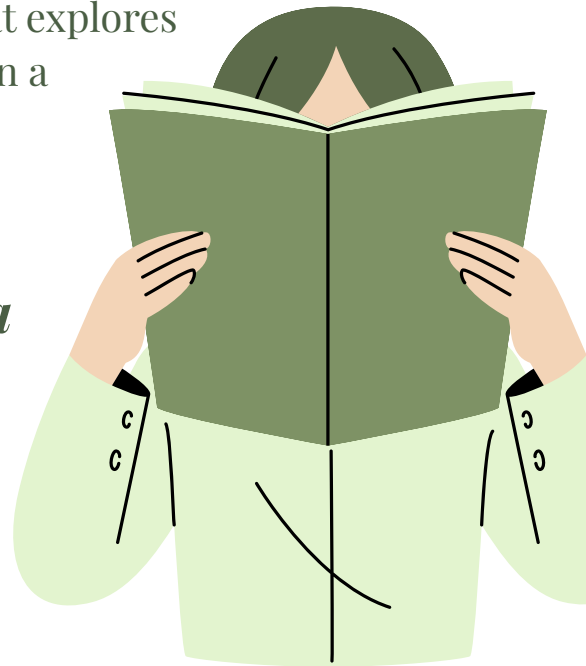
## ***Before the Coffee Gets Cold - Toshikazu Kawaguchi***

A quietly joyful and imaginative story that explores love, loss, and hope through time travel in a cozy café.

4

## ***The House in the Cerulean Sea - TJ Klune***

A magical and delightfully hopeful story about love, acceptance, and unexpected joy.





# Journal prompts



## ***1. Mood Changer:***

When has laughter instantly lifted your mood?

## ***2. My Personal Comedian:***

Who makes you laugh the most, and why?

## ***3. Then vs Now:***

How has your sense of humor changed over time?

## ***4. Bonded by a laugh:***

Has laughter ever helped you make a new friend?

## ***5. Strength in Smiles***

Can humor be a quiet form of strength?

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