

# Webinars



## Webinar Toolkit: September 2022

### *“The Neuroscience of Laughter”*

*This toolkit will cover some of the contents from the webinar, including:*

- *Why do we Laugh?*
- *The Neuroscience of Laughter*
- *Fun Facts*
- *Laughter Yoga Resources*

*If you missed this webinar linked to this toolkit, you can watch the recording available on the Kaelo website - <https://www.kaelo.co.za/introducing-free-monthly-webinars/>*

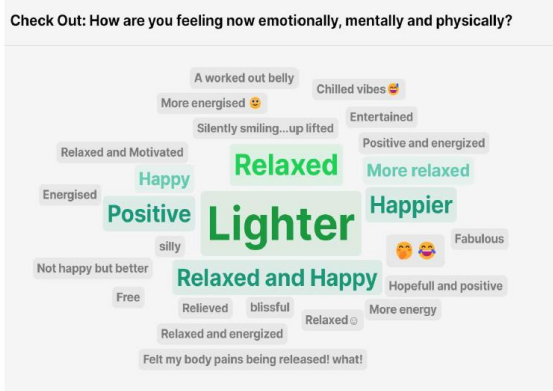
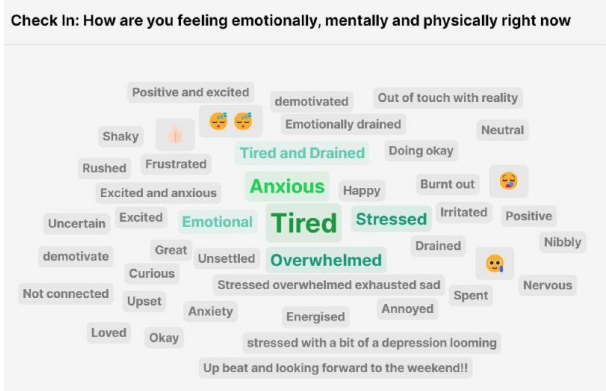
### *Your Facilitator*



*Lesa Burger*



**Check-In before the webinar vs Check-Out responses (done after the webinar) from our audience:**



**Why do we Laugh?**

*Laughter stimulates multiple physiological systems that decrease levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol and epinephrine, and increase the activation of the dopamine dispensing reward system of the brain. It is a stress reliever, and shifts energy within the body.*



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## Neuroscience of Laughter

Laughter is a potent Endorphine Releaser

- One of the most recent studies on laughter shows that laughing with others releases endorphins in the brain via opioid receptors.

Laughter is contagious and forms social bonds

- The *endorphin effect* described above also explains why social laughter is so contagious. Spreading endorphin release through groups promotes a sense of togetherness and safety.
- Each brain in a social unit is a transmitter of those feelings, which triggers the feel-goods in other brains via laughter.

Laughter fosters brain connectivity

- Not all laughter is the same, and it turns out that decoding a laugh is more challenging than it seems.
- One study found differences in how we perceive, for example, joyous laughter versus taunting laughter versus tickling laughter, each of which activates connections between different brain regions.
- So, laughter fosters rigorous brain-region connectivity that kicks in when we hear a laugh, as our brains work to decipher what sort of communication is coming through.

Laughter is central to relationship

- A study showed that women laughed about 126% more than their male counterparts, while men seem to instigate laughter the most—and there's an interesting application of those results to how relationships form and are maintained.
- Women typically rate a sense of humor as a top-three trait for a potential mate. Men tend to rate women who laugh a lot (i.e. laugh at their jokes) higher than those who don't.
- It's no surprise, then, that couples who laugh together report having higher-quality relationships.
- Laughter is a nonnegotiable for all involved.

Laughter has an effect similar to antidepressants.

- Laughing activates the release of the neurotransmitter serotonin, the same brain chemical affected by the most common types of antidepressants, SSRIs.

Laughter protects your heart.

- Research has shown that laughter has an anti-inflammatory effect that protects blood vessels and heart muscles from the damaging effects of cardiovascular disease.
- How this happens isn't entirely understood, but it seems related to lessening the body's stress response, which is directly linked to increased inflammation.
- Regular, hearty laughter should probably be part of every heart disease prevention program

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## Fun Facts

<p><i>Just 10 to 15 minutes of laughing a day can burn up to 40 calories, according to a Vanderbilt University study. Researchers determined that the increase in heart rate and oxygen consumption during these funny moments boosts the burn.</i></p>	<p><i>Loma Linda University showed that laughing improved the memory of adults in their 60s and 70s</i></p>
<p><i>University of Maryland School of Medicine researchers found that hilarious movies improved the function of blood vessels and increased blood flow in a group of 20 thirty-somethings.</i></p>	<p><i>And other research has shown that laughing can improve immunity, help regulate blood sugar levels, and improve sleep.</i></p>

<https://www.rd.com/list/laughter-facts/>

## Laughter Yoga Resources:

- Laughter Exercises:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fq4kTZuLops>
- Laughter - The Science of Breathing:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79BCGdOLnoE>
- Laughter Yoga University:  
<https://laughteryoga.org/laughter-yoga/aboutlaughter-yoga>

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**Thank you for joining the session!**

Remember you can access the recordings, toolkits and register for each monthly session on the Kaelo website: <https://www.kaelo.co.za/introducing-free-monthly-webinars/>

**Up next month:**



## **Optimising health through behavioural change**

**Tuesday, 11 October, 14:00 CAT**

**Register on: <https://www.kaelo.co.za/introducing-free-monthly-webinars/>**

### **Your Facilitator**



**Tracy Helps**  
Clinical Social Worker

**We look forward to seeing you there!**