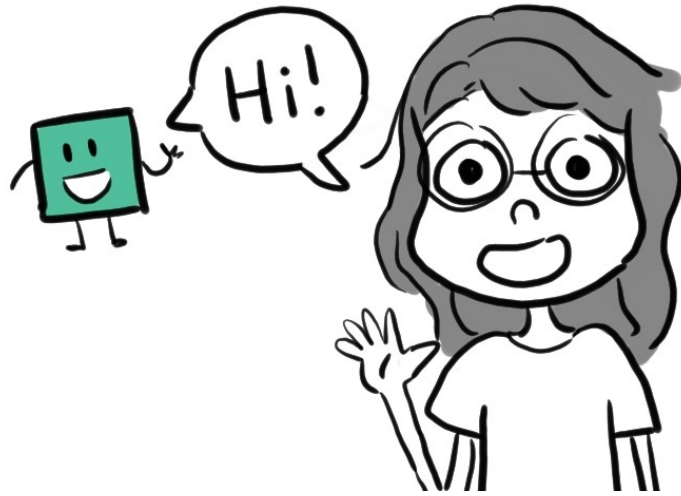


MY SSRI

1. This is my personal experience
2. I'm not a professional.



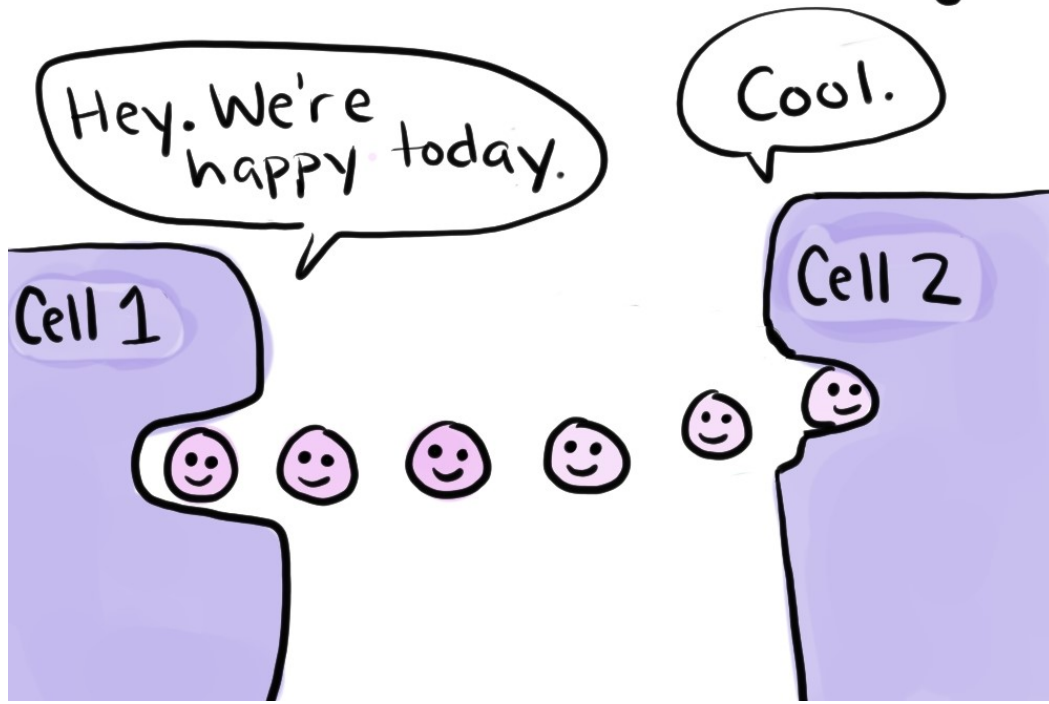
Serotonin is a neurotransmitter linked to happiness.



It is believed (though not quite understood) low serotonin levels cause anxiety/depression.



Serotonin is sent between nerve cells (AKA neurons) to relay the happy message.



Your body has a reuptake system to maintain equilibrium. If Cell 1 reuptakes too much serotonin, Cell 2 won't receive the message, and issues will arise. (Note: this is a simplified explanation.)

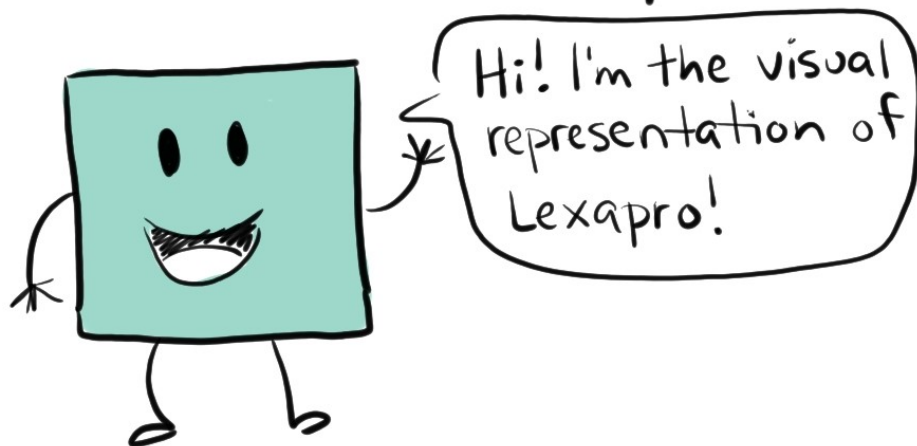


But sad cells are no fun!
This is when modern
medicine steps in.



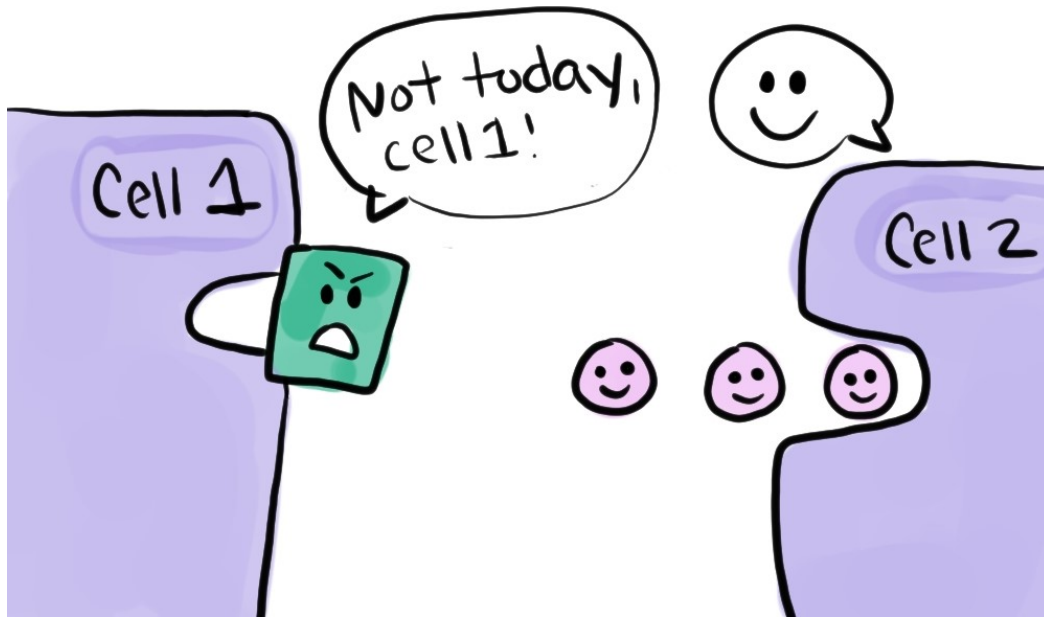
Scientists created all sorts
of medications to help.

I take 10mg of escitalopram
(known as Lexapro) every other day.

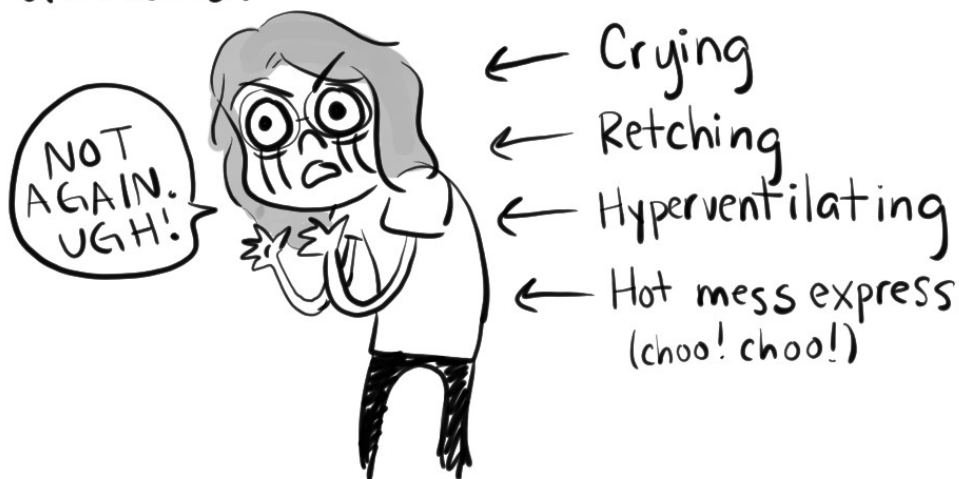


Lexapro is a Selective Serotonin
Reuptake Inhibitor - most people
say SSRI for short.

SSRIs are thought to stop reuptake process, thus allowing Cell 2 to receive the good news. (Hooray!!)



I started Lexapro 3½ years ago. I was depressed + anxious, but what really bugged me were the panic attacks.



I had 2+ a day. Without prompting. It was obnoxious.

I told my doctor about my situation.



She prescribed Lexapro and asked me to take 10mg for 2 weeks. I thought, "2 weeks? That's simple. 14 days is nothing."

The adjustment phase was HORRIBLE. I slept 16 hours a day for 3 weeks. I wanted to vomit each time I ate, but I was determined to continue.



3 months after starting Lexapro, I no longer wanted to puke after every meal, and I could stay awake, but I still had panic attacks. Usually at night.

WHEEZE

RETCH

PANT



It took 7 months for the panic attacks to go away. Now I only have a huge attack every year or so.

Fun fact: My latest heave-fest was 8 months ago while walking my dog!

Such... bad... timing!

GASP

GAG



I love waking up each day and not having to anticipate an attack.

After 2½ years, I decided to wean myself off Lexapro. I ultimately felt the most like ME taking 10 mg every other day.

Now I can put the "fun" in functional!



If I miss a dose, I have brain zaps, which are 2-3 seconds during which my brain feels like it's being electrocuted. They don't exactly hurt, but they're disorienting and remind me of my current dependency to Lexapro.

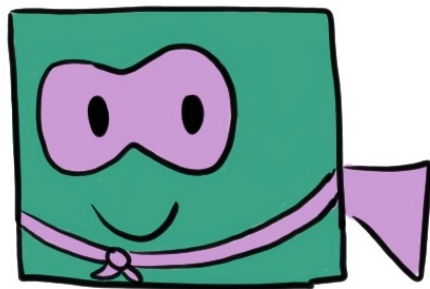
Despite those pesky zaps,
I truly believe Lexapro has
improved my quality of life.

No shame in my
game! Fewer panic
attacks, too.



No one should feel ashamed
for medication used to treat
acute or chronic mental illness.
Lexapro isn't a "happy pill." I'm
still anxious. Still paranoid.
Still depressed.

I'm not the
hero you need to
solve all your problems.



Lexapro allows me to live
without fear of unexpected
panic attacks.

Antidepressants are not a fix-all. Medication takes away certain freedoms, but those losses are worth feeling human for sometimes.

That doesn't sound uplifting, does it? Oops! But really, needing medication is **OKAY.**



THE 
END!