

Hello everyone, we hope you are all safe and well. This week 18-24 May is **Mental Health Awareness week**. Normally we would have planned a week of activities but even though we are all still at home there is much you can do to look after your own mental health and reach out to others who may be struggling. The theme this year is **Kindness**. We have seen extraordinary acts of kindness throughout this pandemic and hope that this will continue.

Why Kindness as a theme?

Kindness is defined by doing something towards yourself and others, motivated by genuine desire to make a positive difference. We know from the research that kindness and our mental health are deeply connected. Research shows that kindness is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging. It helps reduce stress, brings a fresh perspective and deepens friendships. Kindness to ourselves can prevent shame from taking away our sense of identity and help boost our self-esteem. Kindness can even improve feelings of confidence and optimism. (mentalhealth.org)

Helping others feels good 😊

1. There is some evidence to suggest that when you help others, it can promote physiological changes in the brain linked with happiness.
2. It creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation
3. It helps keep things in perspective
4. It helps make the world a happier place – it's contagious!
5. The more you do for others, the more you do for yourself

The benefits of helping others can last long after the act itself, both for you and them.

During the week, we would like you to carry out or reflect on an act of kindness. Take a photo or video (with permission!) or tell us what you are doing on our social media pages and use the hashtags:

#KindnessMatters

#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek



Examples of how you can get involved with random acts of kindness

Call a friend that you haven't spoken to for a while

Tell a family member how much you love and appreciate them

Make a cup of tea for someone you live with, help with a household chore

Arrange to watch a film at the same time as a friend and video call

Tell someone you know that you are proud of them

Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them

Send a motivational text to a friend who is struggling

Send someone you know a joke or an inspirational quote to cheer them up

Send an interesting article to a friend

Contact someone you haven't seen in a while and arrange a phone catch up

Spend time playing with your pet

Reach out to call a friend, family member or neighbour who is experiencing loneliness or self-isolation or support to a vulnerable neighbour

Donate to a charity and/or Foodbank

Offer to skill share with a friend via video call - you could teach guitar, dance etc.

Offer to send someone a takeaway or a meal

For local support

Online and support guides - www.hacw.nhs.uk/coronavirus-and-mental-wellbeing

Online therapy programme – <https://whc.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>

Online counselling – www.kooth.com

<https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/now-were-talking>