

Spread a little kindness...



Friday May 22nd

I've heard it said many times this week that paying attention to our own mental health feels more pressing than ever as we deal with the impact of coronavirus. If we are to be effective in providing the support for the young people in our care, we have to look after ourselves first. I saw the table below in Nottinghamshire's daily bulletin, and thought the questions gave a good framework for reflection:

Five key principles to support emotional health and well-being in the aftermath of a pandemic : Questions to ask yourself and reflect upon

Emotional well-being first – for everyone	When I am feeling emotionally well, what sort of things am I typically doing? What can I do to demonstrate to myself and to others that I am prioritising emotional well-being?
Reaffirm strengths and core values	What am I good at, and how do I know this? What do other people value in me? What motivates me, what are my passions? What matters to me most, and why do these things matter to me? What can I do to reaffirm to myself and to others what I value most?
Place relationships front and centre	What are the relationships in my life that are most important to me? Who are the people that support me when I am feeling emotionally vulnerable? What 'shared experiences' have nourished these relationships? How do these relationships positively affect my sense of belonging and my experience of trust? What can I do to show myself and others that I value my relationships?
Reaffirm safety and routines	What is it that makes me feel safe, and what do I do to bring this about? Which are the routines in my life which ground me? What can I do to reaffirm and bolster the things that make me feel grounded and safe?
Acknowledge loss, change and bereavement	In what ways have I experienced loss, change or bereavement over the last few weeks? What have I done that has helped me to stay grounded in the face of this loss and change? What can I do to remind myself of what works for me when I encounter loss, change or bereavement in the future?

During the week, I have shared a range of resources and further reading about kindness and mental health, but the message is always the same. Acts of kindness have a positive impact, on the person receiving, but also the person showing kindness. For those interested in finding out more, the MHF have produced a research summary, with links to a range of research studies, available from:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week/kindness-research>



**Keep
connected
online**

**With friends
and family**

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

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Tell a family member how much you love and appreciate them

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Arrange to have a cup of tea and virtual catch up with someone you know

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

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Tell someone you know that you are proud of them



Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them

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Send a motivational text to a friend who is struggling

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Send someone you know a joke to cheer them up

Send someone you know a picture of a cute animal

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Send an inspirational quote to a friend

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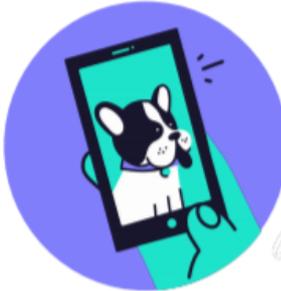
Send an interesting article to a friend

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Send an inspirational story of kindness people around the world are doing for others to someone you know

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




I hope you have found these daily bulletins interesting and helpful—I would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff who got in touch to share their experiences and knowledge, and to highlight and signpost resources. Please continue to get in touch if you have anything else that you wish to share.

There were lots of other things that people sent that I haven't had time to share—a colleague who highlighted the weekly WOW awards (and all the variations that have developed over time) as a great way of practicing gratitude, and others who spoke of the support they have had from their mentors and managers in school.

I'd like to finish with something that was sent by one of our members of staff:

'Acts of kindness cost us nothing, we can all afford to give it, it can and does change lives. A smile, a quick hello (a long hello). Time. Saying thank you and showing appreciation, support, caring, and being there through good times and bad. These are the things I like to think I stand by, we usually find that people gravitate towards kind people, people who make them feel valued and nurtured. And we'll never regret showing kindness.'