

KINDNESS

Kindness, by definition, is to do something towards others or yourself that is driven by a genuine desire to make a positive difference.

The Mental Health Foundation's **"Why Kindness Matters"** Guide explains the research into the health benefits of kindness:

Helping others feels good

- **Wellbeing** - Research has found there's a link between acts of kindness and increased feelings of wellbeing.
- **Active** - there's a suggestion that helping others can improve our support networks and improve how active we are which can then improve our self-esteem as a result.
- **Brain** - some evidence suggests helping others can promote changes in our brain that are linked to happiness!

Reduces Isolation and creates a sense of belonging

Helping others is thought to be one of the ways that people create, maintain, and strengthen their social connections which can be done through volunteering or through practicing kindness in our own existing social circles. Research has found that volunteering at food banks can also help reduce loneliness and isolation.

It helps keep things in perspective

Some research has found that being aware of our own acts of kindness alongside awareness of the things we are grateful for can lead to increased feelings of happiness, optimism, and satisfaction. Therefore, doing good may lead to a more positive outlook about your own situations.

Acts of kindness help to make the world a happier place

A single act of kindness can boost feelings of confidence, being in control, happiness and optimism and these feelings may encourage individuals to repeat good deeds they've experienced - this can lead to an act of kindness snowball effect and contribute to a more positive community!

The more you do for others, the more you do for yourself

There's a link between acts of kindness and self-esteem levels: the benefits of helping others can last long after the act itself, for those offering kindness, and those who benefit.

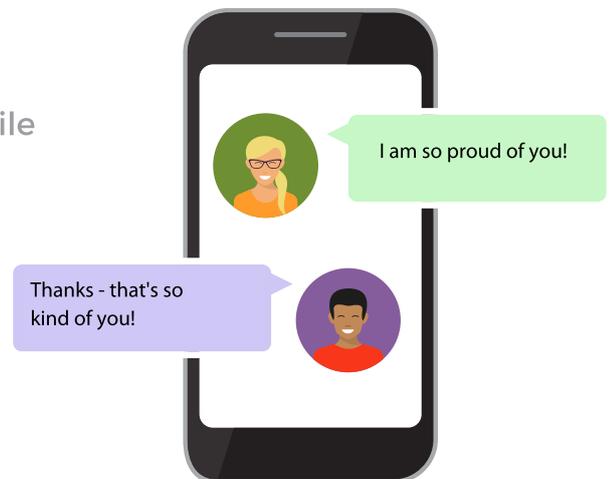


BE KIND TO OTHERS

Darwin and his work on human evolution found that mankind is a profoundly social and caring species and argued that sympathy and caring for others is instinctual. The ways we can practice kindness towards others can come in many forms - acts of kindness or good deeds don't need to be in the form of grand gestures - small acts can mean just as much if not more!

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation has 7 tips to start making kindness the norm in your everyday life:

1. Send an uplifting text to a friend or family member
2. Let someone merge into traffic with a wave and a smile
3. Include intentional moments of kindness, laughter, and delight in your daily routine
4. Go slightly outside of your comfort zone at least once a day to make someone smile
5. Share a compliment with a co-worker or friend
6. Reach out to a family member you haven't spoken to in a while
7. Treat someone to a cup of coffee - a friend, a stranger or even yourself! (though you may have to make it take-away of course to comply with COVID measures!)



Head to their website for further ideas on how to be more kind to others, to yourself and even to the planet!

www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas

COMMUNITY KINDNESS

If you feel that you'd like to spread kindness toward your wider community, there are a variety of ways you could do so. You could donate food/goods/clothes to those in need; volunteer your time (dependent on COVID restrictions); or donate any amount of money you could afford to a local charity, perhaps a cause that is important to you?

Volunteering

You could sign up to be a telephone Befriender for the elderly – Age UK's charity partner Silver Line aren't currently processing further volunteer applications due to an overwhelming response over lockdown! But keep an eye out on their [website](#) for future requests!

Volunteering options for local charities may be limited currently but maybe look closer to home for opportunities to offer your time. Perhaps an elderly or vulnerable neighbour needs help with their shopping during lockdown – or just a socially distanced chat through the window?

If this has inspired you to want to do more, here are some great local causes that would benefit from your help:

Foodbanks

“Helping Hands” through Renewal Christian Centre
Donate food for their foodbank via the drop off point in Solihull - head to their website [here](#) for more information.

Kingfisher Foodbank

See their [website](#) for information on what food is required, drop off points and for locations of donation crates that are in supermarkets!

Local Charities

[Change into Action](#)

[Solihull Carers Trust](#)

[Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid](#)

