



Counselling and Support
for Young People

Kindness Resource Pack

(in support of Mental Health Awareness Week 2020)

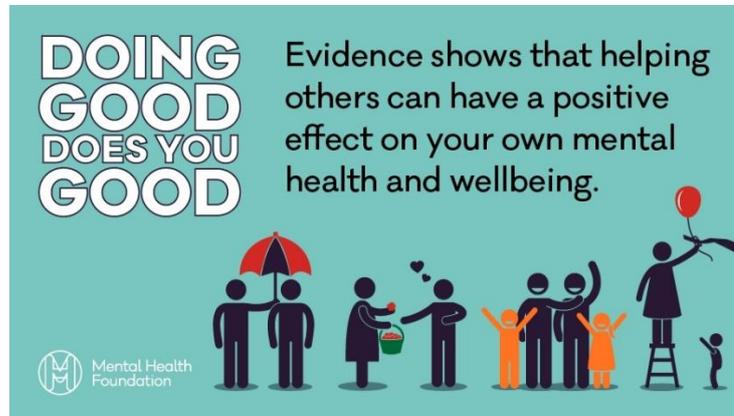
Contents

Introduction.....	p3
Overview.....	p4
Altruism.....	p6
Being Kind to Ourselves.....	p8
Resources – Books.....	p10
Resources – Internet.....	p11

Introduction

This resource pack has been put together to support Mental Health Awareness Week 18-24 May 2020. The theme for this week is “kindness”. The original theme was to be “sleep”, but the Mental Health Foundation has changed the focus due to the difficult times we find ourselves in. The massive and sudden slow down in our daily lives has been difficult, but acts of kindness large and small abound. When we are busy rushing around, meeting deadlines and working hard, it is easy to forget to make time to be kind to ourselves and to others. For the purpose of this resource we will be looking at altruism and empathy and kindness to ourselves.

While this pack has been created with Mental Health Awareness Week in mind, we hope you will be able to reuse the information at other times within your community.



Overview

Taking time to be kind reduces stress, makes us feel good, improves our mood and heightens our self-esteem. Research shows us that there is a strong correlation between well-being, happiness and compassion. Kindness is about shared humanity: it strengthens relationships, develops community and deepens solidarity. Kindness is contagious – acts of kindness rarely stand alone.

“No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another. Good example is followed. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves”

Amelia Earhart

While it may seem unnecessary to teach children and adults about kindness, our schools, workplaces and communities often lack compassion and empathy. As educators and parents, it is vitally important that we model kindness to our young people and build on our natural tendencies to enhance our care for others.

The benefits of kindness are numerous, some of which are listed below:

- Kindness causes physiological changes in the brain
- Kindness improves support networks
- Kindness improves self-esteem
- Kindness improves our sense of belonging and reduces isolation
- Kindness improves our confidence
- Kindness helps us to keep things in perspective
- Kindness allows us to realise other people have bad days
- Kindness allows us to be more positive and optimistic
- Kindness allows us to be in control



Altruism

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world”

Desmond Tutu

Being kind to someone else, doing good, does not have to be a big gesture, it can be any random gesture. Here are some suggestions:

- Keep connected online with friends and relatives
- Tell family members you love them and are grateful for them
- Say hello and smile at a neighbour
- Write to a relative or friend who is feeling down or lonely
- Empathise with a friend who is having a difficult time, listen and share common experiences. Talk about what worked for you
- Tell someone a joke to cheer them up
- Tell someone you are proud of them
- Share your pictures of favourite animals or places
- Help out at home without being asked
- Make someone a cup of tea or a drink at home
- Do some art or make something to send to a relative/friend
- Ask your brothers and sisters if they would like to do something with you that you will enjoy

Whilst all these suggestions are important ways of showing kindness to others, it is important to remember why you are doing it and not to overload yourself with altruistic acts at the expense of looking after yourself.



Being kind to ourselves

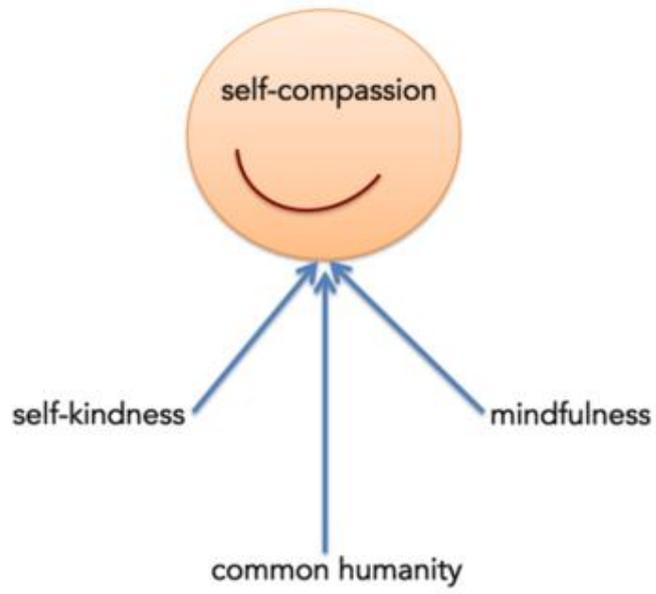
“Kind words are the music of the world. They have a power which seems to be beyond natural causes, as though they were some angel’s song which had lost its way and come down to earth.”

Frederick W Faber

Practising self-compassion is a difficult thing to do. It is all too easy to use hurtful phrases to chastise ourselves when we feel disappointed in our achievements or our responses to others at work, school or home – judgemental phrases such as “I’m so stupid,” “I’m such an idiot,” “I look terrible”. Being kind to ourselves, not judging ourselves and realising that it’s ok to get things wrong helps us to accept we have limitations; after all, we are only human. Being self-compassionate helps lift our spirits, build our self-esteem, feel more confident and realise that negativity from others may mean that they are having a bad day and its not really about anything you may have said or done.

Here are some suggestions for practising self-compassion:

- Recognise what you are feeling and tell yourself it is ok to feel that way
- Speak to ourselves as if we were speaking to a good friend
- Reminding ourselves we are part of a common humanity: everyone makes mistakes, we are not alone
- Take time to be mindful
- Go for a walk
- Take a hot bath
- Exercise
- Use your inner voice to be supportive: “it’s ok that I didn’t finish today, I will work harder tomorrow and complete it then.”
- Do not compare yourself to other people. You have qualities and strengths unique to you
- Remember “You yourself,” as the Buddhist saying goes, “as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.”



Resources

Books

Karen Bluth & Kristin Neff. "The Self-compassion Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness and Compassion Skills to Overcome Self-criticism and Embrace who you are (An Instant Help Book for Teens) "

Vanessa King. "50 Ways to Feel Happy: Fun activities and ideas to build your happiness skills."

Vex King. "Good Vibes, Good Life: How Self-Love Is the Key to Unlocking Your Greatness"

Charlie Macksey. "The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse"

Carol McCloud and David Messing. "Have you Filled a Bucket Today"

Pat Zietlow Miller. "Be Kind"

NGK. "Harry The Happy Mouse: Teaching children to be kind to each other"

Jessica Prime. "Child Author Project" Onjali Rauf. "The Boy at the Back of the Class" R J Palacio. "Wonder"

Lizzie Velasquez. "Dare to Be Kind: How Extraordinary Compassion can

Transform Our World"

Resources

Internet

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/doing-good-does-you-good/health-benefits-altruism>

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/>

https://www.actionforhappiness.org/media/671201/kindness_project.pdf

<http://kindnessuk.com/schools/resources.php>

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/kindness-resource-list>

<https://positivepsychology.com/kindness-activities-empathy-worksheets/>



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