Care first

Part of PRIORY

Kindness and Mental Health – in line with World Kindness Day

People who are kind and compassionate see clear benefits to their wellbeing and happiness. They may even live longer. Kindness can also help reduce stress and improve our emotional wellbeing. We all have so much going on in our lives - including competing strains and stresses. This can see kindness pushed to one side, in favour of what is urgent or trending now.

It can be easy to signal kindness by posting online and following a trend, but harder to commit to kindness in our daily words and actions.

Some of the simple ways to show kindness

1. **Listen and show interest -** By simply listening to someone and showing interest in the conversation, you can truly change someone's life. At the very least, you will show them that what they have to say matters. Allow them to speak fully, without interrupting, and give cues that you're listening.
2. **Show Compassion -** Likewise, showing compassion is a great act of kindness. You can do this by communicating how you understand and care for the recipient. Be vocal about your feelings toward the subject, giving an emotional response to what they are telling you. By doing so, you're also validating their feelings which is an act of kindness greater than any.
3. **Give genuine compliments -** One of my favourite ways to spread kindness is by giving compliments. I can't tell you how greatly my day improves when someone gives me a simple compliment. In fact, I tend to remember compliments that were given to my years ago. If you are truly interested in being kind to others, give a genuine compliment.
4. **Offer help -** Another easy way to be kind, is to offer your help. By handling a difficult task or giving advice on a serious subject, you're easing the burden of another. By being a little creative with your thinking, you'll discover all sorts of ways you can help one another.
5. **Say thank you -** A single “thank you” can go a very long way and unfortunately, many people don't hear it often. You can return a kindness by just saying thank you. This is especially important when encountering people who are doing a service for you: nail techs, your waitress, soldiers, etc.
6. **Consider others' feelings when making decisions -** I tell you this and I tell you it very lightly because it's situational. To consider another's feelings when making decisions is a very good deed. I am by no means recommending that you put the needs or desires of another before your own. However, it's nice to be considered when decisions are made. For example, if you're planning a family vacation – plan something specifically for the others who are attending.
7. **Give a handmade gift -** The most special gifts tend to be handmade ones. It's the simple thought that someone took the time out of their day to make something just for you that's so special. Consider making handmade gifts rather than buying something. This will make a world of a difference – especially around the holidays.

8. **Just smile -** This may sounds like a task that is so simple, it couldn't possibly make a big difference. A smile shows you are kind and easily approachable. It's a win-win for everyone.
9. **Complete a task for someone -** Much like offering your help to someone, you can simply complete a task without asking or being asked to do so. This can be something as simple as cleaning up a mess someone else made or clearing the table for your waitress.
10. **Offering patience -** Patience doesn't come easy, especially in our fast-paced society. By simply being patient with an individual, you can make them feel more comfortable. The times when people are kind to me, are the things that stick with me.

What are the benefits of showing kindness?

You may be wondering: What are the benefits of kindness and why should we be kind to others?

Psychologically, acts of kindness make us feel grateful, empathetic, and compassionate. These are positive feelings that give us a sense of belonging and community. Biologically, kindness releases chemicals like the "love hormone," oxytocin, which helps us form social bonds based on trust.

Sadly, in today's fast-paced world many of us are so busy trying to keep up that we lose sight of what's truly important. As we're looking down at our phones and browsing social media, we're walking by the mom with her stroller struggling to open the door, or the wallet that fell out of the man's pocket a few feet ahead. Opportunities to be kind are all around us – and the smallest acts of kindness are often what make the biggest difference.

Here are six science-backed benefits of practicing kindness:

- Increases happiness
- Boosts energy
- Reduces anxiety and depression
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces pain
- Promote longevity

More information

If you would like to hear more about this topic, please join our live Webinar on 'Kindness and Mental Health – in line with World Kindness Day' on **Monday 13th November** at **12pm**. To register, please use the following link –

https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4280738950638660693

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.