

50 random acts of kindness

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www.mentalhealth.org.uk

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Research shows that helping others can be beneficial to our own mental health. It can reduce stress, improve our emotional wellbeing and even benefit our physical health.

Today, why not take action within your schools, workplaces and local neighbourhoods to help people and communities thrive? It's so important to look after each other within our communities. This is how we protect and sustain good mental health for all.

What are the benefits?

1. Helping others feels good

When you help others, it promotes positive physiological changes in the brain associated with happiness.

Helping others improves social support, encourages us to lead a more physically active lifestyle, distracts us from our own problems, allows us to engage in a meaningful activity and improves our self-esteem.

2. It brings a sense of belonging and reduces isolation

Being a part of a social network leads to a feeling of belonging. Face-to-face activities such as volunteering at a drop-in centre can help reduce loneliness and isolation.

3. It helps to keep things in perspective

Helping others in need, especially those who are less fortunate than yourself, can provide a real sense of perspective and make you realise how lucky you are, helping you to achieve a more positive outlook on things that may be causing you stress.

4. It helps make the world a happier place – it's contagious!

Acts of kindness have the potential to make the world a happier place. It can also encourage others to repeat the good deed that they've experienced themselves – it contributes to a more positive community.

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

Evidence shows that the benefits of helping others can last long after the act itself by providing a 'kindness bank' of memories that can be drawn upon in the future.

Physical health benefits

1. It reduces stress

Positive emotions reduce stress and boost our immune system, and in turn can protect us against disease.

2. It helps get rid of negative feelings

Negative emotions such as anger, aggression or hostility have a negative impact on our mind and body. Engaging in random acts of kindness can help decrease these feelings and stabilise our overall health.

3. It can help us live longer

Giving and helping others may increase how long we live. Studies of older people show that those who give support to others live longer than those who don't.

**Turn the page for 50
random acts of kindness.**