

# Kindness & Mental Health



## Kindness and Mental Health

Kindness, altruism, or selflessness, is the principle or practice of concern for the welfare of others – in short, it's putting other people's needs before your own<sup>1</sup>. Evidence has shown that helping others can have a positive effect on your own mental health and well-being. For example, it can reduce stress, and improve mood, self-esteem, and happiness.

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## What are the benefits?

**Helping others feel good!** When you help others, it promotes positive physiological changes in the brain associated with happiness. Helping others improves social support, encourages us to be more physically active, distracts from our problems, and allows us to engage in meaningful activity.

**Sense of belonging & reduces isolation:** Face to face activities can reduce loneliness and isolation.

**It Helps Keep things in Perspective:** Different perspectives can impact our outlook on life. Helping others in need can provide us with perspective and allow us to appreciate what we have.

**It's Contagious!** Acts of Kindness have the potential to make the world happier and improve confidence, control, and optimism.

**The More You Do for Others, the More You Do for Yourself:** Evidence shows that the benefits of helping others has long lasting affection by providing a “kindness bank” of memories.

**It Reduces Stress:** Positive emotions reduce stress and boost our immune system.

**It Can Help Us Live Longer:** Giving and helping others may increase how long we live. Evidence shows that those who give support live longer than those who don't.

## Things to Consider

- Do Something You Enjoy
- Keep Others in Mind
- Don't Overdo It!
- Keep a Good Deeds Diary



## What You Can Do

- Volunteering
- Mentoring
- Doing something for a good cause
- Random acts of kindness

To learn more about mental health and ways you can enhance it, visit [www.novascotia.cmha.ca](http://www.novascotia.cmha.ca)