



Be kind whenever possible.

It is always possible.

the 14th Dalai Lama

Cascade of Kindness

A Readers Guide to Kindness: for Positive Mental Wellbeing of Self and Others

By

**Mind in Enfield in Collaboration with the Enfield Libraries Service
For Mental Health Awareness Week, 18-24 May 2020**

“Three things in human life are important,” wrote novelist Henry James in the early 20th century. “The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind.”



1. Welcome to the Guide

Mind in Enfield has collaborated with the Enfield Council Library Service (ECLS) to highlight the power of kindness and reading – particularly helpful in times of challenge. As you will see it is as much for the individual as those around them. We hope this guide and suggested practice will have a positive ripple effect for the mental wellbeing of the reader and their community.

A message from the Enfield Libraries Service - 'Mind in Enfield is a service that provides so much in the way of support and learning resources about mental health for our local community, a collaboration with them seemed perfect for a time like this and a true example of Enfield standing together'.

2. Live and Work productively

If someone has positive mental wellbeing they generally:

- feel relatively confident in themselves and have positive self-esteem
- feel and express a range of emotions
- build and maintains good relationships with others
- feel engaged with the world around them
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses of daily life
- adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

3. The 5 Ways to Wellbeing

The 'Five ways to wellbeing' have been researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation. A combination of all of these 5 behaviours help to enhance individual well-being and may have the potential to reduce the total number of people who develop mental health disorders in the longer term.

The 5 Ways are:

Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research.

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

More information can be found at:

<https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

Mind has practical ideas about these are done by working people:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

The New Economics Foundation have also written 'The Five Ways To Wellbeing at a Time of Social Distancing':

<https://neweconomics.org/2020/03/five-ways-to-wellbeing-at-a-time-of-social-distancing>

4. Ideas of Kindness

Kindness can link to the 5 Ways to Wellbeing as follows:

- It is central to making connections
- It is needed to truly observe
- It is at the heart of truly giving

Eva Wiseman in the Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/apr/01/the-cult-of-being-kind>) wrote that kindness is replacing mindfulness as the buzzword for how we should live.

She reminds us that kindness is not new. Aristotle said: "It is the characteristic of the magnanimous man to ask no favour but to be ready to do kindness to others."

Kindness is mankind's "greatest delight," said Roman philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius.

Earlier, Piero Ferrucci (who wrote *The Power of Kindness*, 2006) said:

- Life goes on because we are kind to one another
- Kindness is making less effort, it's the most economic attitude
- Kindness has to do with what is most intimate to us, often not expressed by men or women
- Kindness requires us to be in the present which is a gift
- Kindness requires patience, which is not as heavy or tedious as we may think
- Time is an illusion, a mental construct
- Gratefulness is easily forgotten, but also easily evoked
-

A pdf extract of Piero's book can be found at: <http://pieroferrucci.it/pdf/The%20Power%20of%20Kindness%20-%202006.pdf>)

5. Kindness and Positive Mental Health



The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) published a guide to kindness called 'Doing Good Does You Good' You Good'

The MHF guide shows that helping others is actually beneficial for our own mental health and wellbeing. It can help reduce stress, improve our emotional wellbeing and even benefit our physical health, as follows:

It creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation

Volunteering and helping others can also help us feel a sense of belonging, make new friends and connect with our community. Face-to-face activities such as volunteering at a food bank can help reduce loneliness and isolation.

It helps keep things in perspective

Many people don't realise the impact that a different perspective can have on their outlook on life.

Helping others, especially those who are less fortunate than yourself, can help to put things into perspective and make you feel more positive. There is some evidence that being aware of your own acts of kindness, as well as the things you are grateful for, can increase feelings of happiness, optimism, and satisfaction. Doing good may help you to have a more positive outlook about your own circumstances.

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

Acts of kindness have the potential to make the world a happier place. An act of kindness can improve feelings of confidence, being in control, happiness and optimism. It may also encourage others to repeat the good deed that they've experienced themselves – contributing to a more positive community.

Helping others feels good

There is some evidence to suggest that when you help others, it can promote physiological changes in the brain linked with happiness. Helping others can also improve our support networks and encourage us to be more active. This in turn can improve our self-esteem.

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

The benefits of helping others can last long after the act itself, both for you and them.

Book is available from: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/doing-good-does-you-good>

6. Kindness - Start with Yourself

According to Maarianna Pogosyan in Psychology Today, Cousineau (a psychotherapist) has observed how remarkably unkind people can be towards themselves when they talk about their lives. "If we would tune into our internal dialogue, most likely we wouldn't say those same words to someone we love: I am not good enough, I'm not smart enough, I am not *something* enough. We are mired in regrets from the past or worries about the future. We compare and despair," she says. Naturally, it may be easier to be kind to others than to ourselves, so it may take some intention and effort to befriend ourselves, too.

The key to learning to be kinder to ourselves lies in **self-compassion**. Self-compassion stands upon three pillars: self-kindness (treating yourself with the kindness and understanding you would show to someone you love), common humanity (recognising that you are not alone in your pain and that suffering is a shared human experience), and mindfulness (holding your negative experiences as they are – without suppressing them or over-identifying with them). As a bonus, self-compassion comes with a wealth of well-being benefits: from building resilience, optimism and healthier stress response, to reducing depression, anxiety and rumination.

For more go to: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/between-cultures/201904/why-choose-kindness>

7. Acts of Kindness for Self and Others

World Kindness Day takes place on 13 November. Here are some ideas of kindness from the Mental Health Foundation you can try for yourself and others:

Being kind to yourself

- Read more about why it's important to find time for self-care
- Prioritise some “me” time so you can relax and reflect.
- Treat yourself to something small like buying or planting yourself some flowers
- Do something you enjoy like reading, or listening to a favourite song or piece of music
- Spend some time in nature, which is good for your wellbeing

Being kind at home and in your community

- Call a friend that you haven't spoken to for a while
- Post a card or letter to someone you are out of touch with
- Send flowers to a friend out of the blue
- Find out if a neighbour needs any help with shopping
- Send someone a handwritten thank you note
- Walk your friend's dog
- Tell your family members how much you love and appreciate them
- Help with household chores
- Check on someone you know who is going through a tough time
- Help a friend who wants to get active

Kindness during the coronavirus outbreak



Send someone
you know a
picture of a
cute animal



Kindness during the coronavirus outbreak



Arrange to watch a film
at the same time as a
friend and video call



Kindness during the coronavirus outbreak



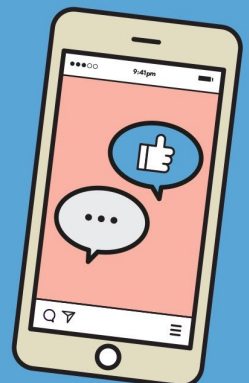
Reach out to call a
friend, family
member or
neighbour who
is experiencing
loneliness or
isolation



Kindness during the coronavirus outbreak



Send a motivational
text to a
friend who
is struggling



8. Why Reading can be Good for Mental Health

Reading can reduce stress

Losing yourself in a good book has been shown to reduce your levels of stress. Research by Dr David Lewis showed that reading as little as six minutes a day can reduce stress levels by 60% by reducing your heart rate, easing muscle tension and altering your state of mind.

That same study showed that reading was better at reducing stress than music, drinking a cup of tea, going for a walk and playing video games.

Reading can provide an escape from the 'real world'

Closely linked to reducing stress levels when you read is the ability to escape from the real world. I did this a lot as a child as a coping mechanism to dealing with the emotional hurt I experienced from my family. I often become immersed in that world and helped me to forget my worries. Research has shown that escapism is more complex than just reading for light-hearted entertainment, but it did show that people found the process transformative changing the way people interact with the world and others.

Reading helps you develop empathy for others

People who read fiction have been shown to improve your level of empathy, the ability for you to understand someone else's beliefs, feelings and thoughts. Known as the theory of mind. Research has shown that people exposed to fiction predicted the results of an empathy task and even positively correlated with social support (but remember correlation does not mean causation!). Further research into the impact of fiction on empathy showed that it was temporarily enhanced after reading fiction.

Reading works your brain and prevents memory loss

Participating in cognitive activities, such as reading over your life-time (both early and later in life) was shown to slow down memory loss when compared to those who didn't participate in mentally stimulating activities. The same study also found that the rate of mental decline was reduced by 32% when people participated in reading, writing and other activities later on in life. While those with infrequent stimulating activity found that their decline was 48% faster than those with average activity.

Reading groups help to treat mental health issues

There is scientific research that shows that reading and then talking about what you have read could be beneficial to mental health and well-being. There is something called bibliotherapy and it has a profound effect on people suffering with depression. Liverpool Health Inequalities Research Institute examined a two weekly reading group program for people diagnosed with depression over a 12-month period and reported a significant improvement to mental health. Participants reported improved concentration, better emotional understanding, increased self-awareness, and the ability to discuss meaningful issues related to self and being.

Reading helps teenagers develop insights into being an adult

Research has shown that reading for pleasure in teenagers has three key benefits, reading was shown to enhance academic performance, social engagement and personal development. Fiction helped teens by providing significant insights into mature relationships, personal values and cultural identity all of which are important in the transition from being a child to becoming an adult.

Reading can make you smarter

Research has shown that reading does in fact make us smarter. Cognitive differences have been seen between those who read a lot and those who read a little. People who

are exposed to more written information are associated with higher vocabulary, general knowledge, and verbal skills.

Check out the MHBC podcast: www.mentalhealthbookclub.com (They look at books, media and speak to people who think mental health is important. It also identifies books that represent people in a positive and realistic way supporting the mental health community)

9. Enfield Libraries Service and Mental Health

At Enfield Libraries we do our best to provide community spaces that prioritise information and learning, but above all we want these spaces to be safe and welcoming for our users. We run regular activities for people of all ages to inspire learning and creativity, but also to tackle social isolation and to give people a space away from sources of stress and chaos in their daily lives. While we are unable to provide those services during this global health crisis, we want to do our best to provide mental health and wellbeing resources for our community to provide that same support from afar.

Books on Prescription and the Digital Library

At Enfield Libraries we carry Books on Prescription, a list of books recommended by The Reading Agency that cover a number of topics regarding mental and physical health. Books on Prescription titles are available for Enfield library members of all ages and for a variety of needs, with special 'Shelf Help' titles designed for teens and young adults, titles focused on Dementia and long-term health conditions.

The full list is available at: <https://reading-well.org.uk/>

Usually, these titles can be reserved free of charge via our online catalogue or in branch. However, even in these unprecedented times you can still access many of these books via OverDrive, Libby, and BorrowBox. These are eBook and audiobook borrowing services that are free to use as part of your library membership. However, if you do prefer a physical book you can still add titles to your Wishlist on our online catalogue to reserve once library services return to normal.

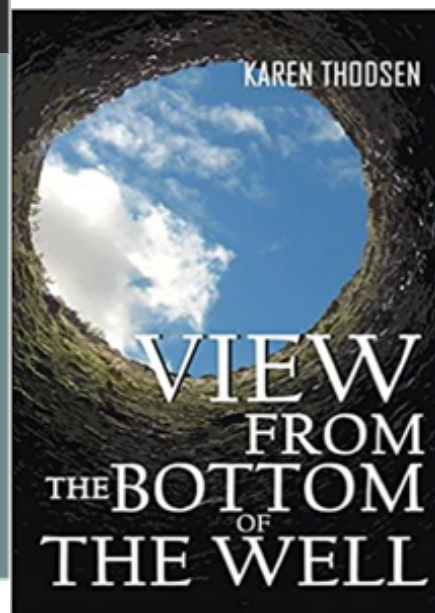
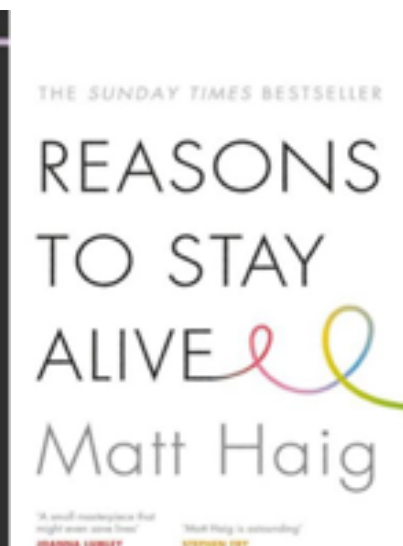
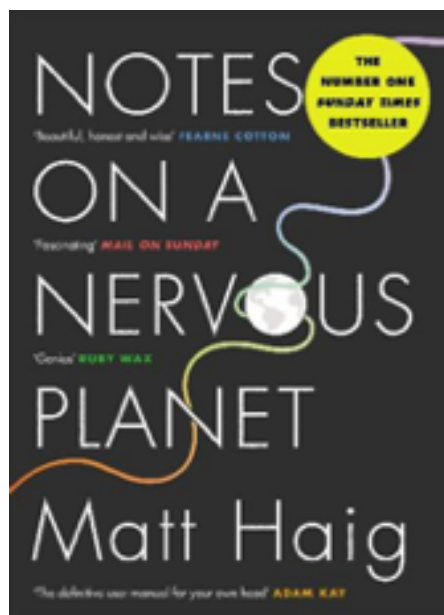
Library members can also access free virtual courses on mental health, mindfulness and a variety of other topics to keep your mind active while you're at home via Allison Courses, The Great Courses and Future Learn. All of these services are available via our Digital Library. Even if you are not currently a library member, joining online will give you access to all of these resources and much more.

Visit: <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/libraries/> for more details.

THE READING AGENCY

Recommended Reads

Here are some Books on Prescription for Mental Health that Enfield Libraries staff recommend:



- **Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world** by Mark Williams and Dr Danny Penman
- **Reasons to Stay Alive** by Matt Haig
- **Notes on a Nervous Planet** by Matt Haig
- **I Had a Black Dog** by Matthew Johnstone
- **Night Shift** by Debi Gliori
- **View from the Bottom of the Well** by Karen Thodsen
- **Mindfulness on the Go** by Padraig O'Morain
- **First, we Make the Beast Beautiful** by Sarah Wilson

...and finally:



Support for Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing in Enfield

A. How to Improve Mental Wellbeing

To improve and maintain mental wellbeing, whether there is a diagnosis of a mental health condition or not people can:

- • Think about what is affecting their wellbeing
- • Build positive relationships
- • Take time for themselves
- • Look after their mental health
- • Look after their physical health

- Ask for help if they need it

A Mind guide covering these ideas can be found at:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/wellbeing/wellbeing/>

B. To Find Out More About Mental Health Conditions

If you've been diagnosed with a mental health problem you might be looking for information on your diagnosis, treatment options and where to go for support.

Our information pages will help you learn more:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/>

C. Mind in Enfield Support for Positive Mental Health

We have 3 departments for: Advice, Counselling and Wellbeing. All run when our building is open, or continue where possible remotely if we are working from home. The Advice team help with benefits and housing issues (but not homelessness); the Counselling team offer 1-2-1 counselling sessions under the NHS IAPT service; the Wellbeing team offer activities (such as arts and crafts, or discussion groups), courses (such as self-esteem, and effective communication), and workshops (eg Mindfulness for Stress Reduction).

How to Access Mind in Enfield Services

The counselling service can be accessed through self-referral (the form is on our website); the advice team by referral (the form on our website is for medical professionals only); the Wellbeing team can send out a form for self-referral by email or post.

For full details visit the website: www.mindindenfield.org.uk.

Should you or your clients want to reach our services, our direct phone numbers and office hours are:

Advice: Mon-Thurs 9.30am-5.30pm – T: 0208 906 7505

Counselling: Mon-Weds 9.30am-8.30pm, Thurs 9.30am-5.30pm, Fri 9.30am-12.30pm
– T: 0208 906 7508

Wellbeing: Mon-Fri 10am-4pm – T: 0208 906 7507

If people are not sure of what help they need but think Mind in Enfield may be able to support in some way, then they can call Reception on the new number: Mon-Fri 10am-4pm (leave a message outside those times) – E: reception.desk@mind-in-enfield.org.uk T: 0208 906 7506.

D. Enfield Connections

Enfield Connections run in association with Mind in Enfield. This is to sign-post for support or advice on issues ranging from debt management, homelessness, planning for later life, volunteering, health and wellbeing. The full contact details are:

Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm - you can call 020 3960 0129, SMS: 077 4164 7569, Email: info@enfieldconnections.org.

If you are hearing impaired, you can call through NGTS by calling 18001 followed by 077 4164 7569.

You can also submit an online enquiry form via the My Life website: <https://mylife.enfield.gov.uk/enfield-home-page/content/voluntary-community-sector/enfield-connections/>

If you call outside of these hours, please leave a message and a member of our team will be able to get in touch.

E. Enfield Council's Community Support Line during Covid-19

For those that are feeling isolated and in need of support through the pandemic whether it's for food, help with prescription deliveries, or just need someone to talk to, the Enfield Stands Together project has a support line available for Enfield residents on T: 020 3821 1966. Lines are open Mon – Fri 9:30-4:30 and Sat 10-2.

[Online resources / coping at home with COVID19](#)

Mind - Short information on 'Coronavirus and Wellbeing'

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/

Kooth

<https://www.kooth.com/>

Kooth is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and free at the point of use. Kooth gives children and young people between 11 and 26 access to professional help when they need it; providing support from qualified counsellors seven days per week, until 10pm.

Good Thinking

www.good-thinking.uk

Good Thinking is an intuitive, easy to use online service which will help you find tools and information to help yourself feel better. From the basics of reading tips from other users on getting a better night's sleep, right through to completing a

clinically approved self-assessment, there is something to support you no matter who you are or what your circumstances may be. Good Thinking can also help by connecting you with people in a similar situation to you. The service is free to everyone with a London postcode.

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Infoline: 03444 775 774

Text service: 07537 416905

Email: support@anxietyuk.org.uk

Anxiety UK is a user-led organisation supporting people with anxiety, stress, and anxiety-based depression by providing information, confidential advice, and support. They offer a number of services, including a digital online therapy service (counselling and CBT).



Be Mindful

<https://www.bemindfulonline.com/good-thinking/>





Online mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) course for reducing stress, anxiety and depression, improving sleep and maintaining and changing general wellbeing for a more wakeful, healthier, happier life.





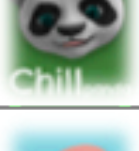






Free for Londoners.

Free Mindfulness Exercises

<https://mindfulnessexercisess.com/free-mindfulness-exercises/>

Mental Health Apps

	<p>Student Health App Reduce your worries, feel more confident and get the health information you need as a student Free</p>
	<p>Thrive Use games to track your mood and teach yourself methods to take control of stress and anxiety Free</p>
	<p>WorryTree Notice, record and manage your worries using cognitive behavioural therapy techniques. Free</p>
	<p>MyCognition Pro Approved by NHS Builds mental resilience, reduces stress and anxiety and other symptoms, need to train for at least 15 minutes per day. Free</p>

	Beat Panic Overcome panic attacks and anxiety wherever you happen to be £0.99
	Bluelice Helps young people manage their emotions and reduce urges to self-harm Free
	Calm Harm Reduce urges to self-harm and manage emotions in a more positive way Free
	Catch It Learn to manage negative thoughts and look at problems differently Free
	Chill Panda (Being tested in the NHS) Use breathing techniques to help you relax more, worry less and feel better Free
	Cove (Being tested in the NHS) Create music to reflect emotions like joy, sadness and anger to help express how you feel Free
	eQuoo: Emotional Fitness Game Use adventure games designed by psychologists to help you increase your emotional fitness Free, with in-app purchases
	Feeling Good: positive mindset Use audio tracks to help relax your body and mind and build your confidence Free, with in-app purchases
	My Possible Self: The Mental Health App Learn how to manage fear, anxiety and stress and tackle unhelpful thinking Free, with in-app purchases
	SilverCloud An eight-week course to help you manage stress, anxiety and depression at your own pace Free
	Stress & Anxiety Companion Breathing exercises, relaxing music and games to help calm your mind and change negative thoughts. Free, with in-app purchases