



# Mental Health Awareness Week

18-24 MAY 2020

# What is Mental Health Awareness Week?



- ▶ In a world that is increasingly opening up to and understanding those with mental health issues, Mental Health Awareness Week is now a firm fixture on calendars in the UK and beyond.
- ▶ It's organised by the Mental Health Foundation, and focuses on a major issue each and every year.
- ▶ Since the first Mental Health Awareness Week in 2001, they have raised awareness of topics like body image, stress and relationships.

# Why is this year's theme KINDNESS?

- ▶ Kindness has certainly been prevailing in recent times. Amid the fear, uncertainty and hard times, there has been an amazing sense of hope and community, with kindness at its very core.
- ▶ The added benefit of helping others is that it is good for our own mental health and wellbeing.

"We have chosen kindness because of its singular ability to unlock our shared humanity. Kindness strengthens relationships, develops community and deepens solidarity. It is a cornerstone of our individual and collective mental health. Wisdom from every culture across history recognises that kindness is something that all human beings need to experience and practise to be fully alive."

Mental Health Foundation

# Connection between kindness and mental health

- ▶ Kindness and mental health are deeply connected as kindness brings with it a sense of connection and belonging
- ▶ Acts of kindness can strengthen relationships and foster a sense of community
- ▶ A single act of kindness (like collecting shopping or cooking a meal) can really help those who are feeling isolated right now
- ▶ Kindness reduces the stress level of the giver and the receiver of it!



BE  
KIND

# Laurie Santos on Kindness...



Laurie is a leading Professor at Yale University. Her course on "The Science of Wellbeing" is the most popular course in Yale history!

- ▶ Laurie says that people who engage in random acts of kindness, however big or small, boost their well-being.
- ▶ One of her studies found people who spent money on others reported greater happiness
- ▶ Another study discovered that a simple act of talking to somebody on a train or a plane, can immediately boost your mood.

# Kindness to yourself

- ▶ It is really important at the moment to make sure you are being kind to yourself as well as others
- ▶ What do you already do to be kind to yourself? (maybe it's exercise, reading, listening to music?)
- ▶ Make sure your inner voice remains positive
- ▶ Accept that you are doing your best
- ▶ Keep reminding yourself you ARE good enough
- ▶ If you find it hard, ask yourself "What would I say to a good friend in a situation like this?"



# How can you get involved in Mental Health Awareness Week?

- ▶ The Mental Health Foundation are asking you to do 3 things:



*Reflect on an act of kindness. Share your stories and pictures (with permission) of kindness during the week using **#KindnessMatters** and **#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek***



*Use resources from their website in your family and community to join with thousands in practising acts of kindness to yourself and others during the week*



*Share your ideas on how you think we could build a kinder society that would support our mental health using **#KindnessMatters** and **#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek***