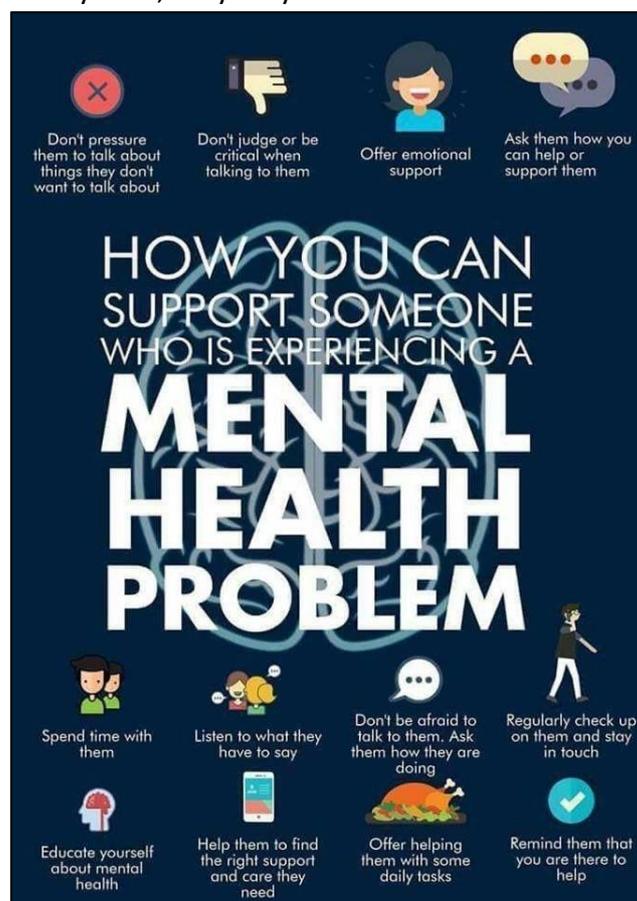


Today is the **third** day of #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek2020 (18th-24th May).

The topic this year is **kindness**.

We already know the importance of being **kind to others**.

But what does that really look like? Are you wondering how to support a friend, child or a family member who is struggling? Here are some helpful and practical ideas to help in understanding how to help someone. Around 1 in 4 people experience mental health problems each year. Most of us know a friend, colleague or family member who has struggled with their mental health. We all have moments of anxiety, stress or low mood at times. It is when these feelings go on for a prolonged period, seem to get worse or affect our day-to-day lives, they may then be considered to be a problem





Express concern and reassure them

Show that you care about the person by letting them know you are concerned about them, reminding them you have time for them and that they do not have to avoid things with you.

It's good to recognise when someone confides in you and reassure them by letting them know you are ready and willing to listen when they need to talk. It makes such a difference to people if they feel like someone truly cares, then they are more likely to open up more.

Offer your time to listen and be patient

Listening is an important skill. Ask open questions that start with "how", "what", "where" or "when". This might help people open up but try not to sound like you are quizzing them! Accept that you may not always be given the full story. There may be reasons why they have found it difficult to ask for help. Just being there, ready to listen, may be helpful for someone who may want to open up later.

Act as you usually do together

Behaving differently or ignoring somebody because you don't know what to say can make someone feel more isolated. Do not underestimate the power of kind words, whether by phone, messaging or in person.

If they do not want support, don't force it

Gently exploring their reasons for not wanting to get support may help work out what's getting in the way. If they are merely unsure whether to get help or not, or too embarrassed to seek help then just talking and listening without judgement will be sufficient for the time being. Reassuring them that seeking advice from a professional is a very courageous thing to do might just give them the boost they need. Do not force someone to talk to you or get help, and do not go to a doctor on their behalf. This may lead to them feeling uncomfortable, with less power and less able to speak for themselves.

Look after yourself

It can be very hard, saddening and emotionally exhausting to hear someone you care about in distress and suffering. Remember to be kind to yourself and make time to relax or do something you enjoy.

Offer practical help

Small acts of kindness – like offering to help with the shopping or to go to appointments with them – may help. Finding out what works for them is key, everyone is different.

As ever, being **kind to yourself** is very important.

HOW TO INCORPORATE MENTAL HEALTH INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

@BELIEVEPHQ

1. Make sure you have time throughout day to practice self care. Schedule in some "me" time
2. Spend time to really connect with colleagues or family members
3. Engage in something which can boost your mental health (E.g. exercise, volunteering)
4. Incorporate relaxation into your day. Why not try some deep breathing?
5. Take time to observe and assess your feelings and emotions
6. At the end of each day write down 3 good things you have achieved or are grateful for
7. Plan some activities which are pleasurable and give you a sense of achievement
8. If you experience negative thoughts write them down and challenge them
9. Look after your physical self. Eat a balanced diet, take breaks and go for a walk
10. If you are feeling low or anxious then don't be afraid to talk to someone

Be kind to yourself every day

Use our **self-help app** to track your mood and find practical tips and techniques to look after your emotional health.

To find out more, visit selfhelp.samaritans.org

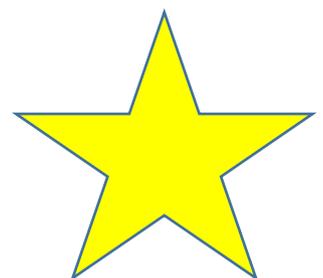
SAMARITANS
A registered charity

Have you downloaded the Samaritans app?

You might like to try today's Mindfulness video. Here is the link. Why not give it a go?

It's called – Breathing exercises for Anxiety

https://youtu.be/dxSnk_cpzFs



I love this grounding exercise – why not give it a try! It can really help if you or your child are feeling upset, anxious or panicky.



Please let me know how you are feeling!

Remember that you are not alone, no matter how you may be feeling.

Have you done something kind for someone else today?

Bear in mind that I am here for you or your child if you ever need me.

Best wishes.

From Miss A Nabdoo

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