

# SUPPORTING OTHERS



This article supports the theme for February of 'Improving Others Wellbeing' on the Care first Wellbeing Calendar for 2023.

## **Supporting those around us can improve our wellbeing**

People who are kind and compassionate see clear benefits to their wellbeing and happiness. They may even live longer. Kindness can also help reduce stress and improve our emotional wellbeing. We all have so much going on in our lives - including competing strains and stresses – not to mention the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This can see kindness pushed to one side, in favour of what is urgent or trending now. It can be easy to signal kindness by posting online and following a trend, but harder to commit to kindness in our daily words and actions. But if we take the time to be kind to other people, we can reap the emotional dividends. It can really make a difference and especially for people who are vulnerable or struggling.

Now is the time to re-imagine a kinder society that better protects our mental health. Kindness could be built into business decisions, government policy and official systems in a way that supports everyone's mental health and also reduces discrimination and inequality. But that can start by individual commitments to showing kindness in our words and our actions.

## **Top things you can do to help others**

### **Express concern and say you can help**

Letting someone know you're worried is a good way to open up a conversation – it shows you care about the person, have time for them and that they do not have to avoid things with you.

### **Reassure them**

The first time someone mentions their worries is a big step. It's good to recognise this and reassure them. Let them know you're there to listen when they need to talk.

### **Be patient**

You will not always know the full story. There may be reasons why they have found it difficult to ask for help. Just being there can be helpful for someone who may want to open up later.

### **Do not force it**

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.

### **Offer practical help**

Little acts of kindness – like offering to do the shopping or to go to professional appointments with them – can help. Find out what works for them.

### **Act as you usually do together**

Do what you usually do – behaving differently can make someone feel more isolated. Do not be afraid to offer kind words and a space to talk, whether by phone, messaging or in person.

### **Offer your time to listen**

Listening is an important skill. Ask open questions that start with “how”, “what”, “where” or “when”. This can help people open up.

### **If they do not want support**

Gently explore their reasons for not wanting to get support. If they are unsure whether to get help, just talking and listening without judgement could help work out what’s getting in the way.

## **How Care first can help**

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support.

Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.