



ELSA Newsletter 8: Kindness

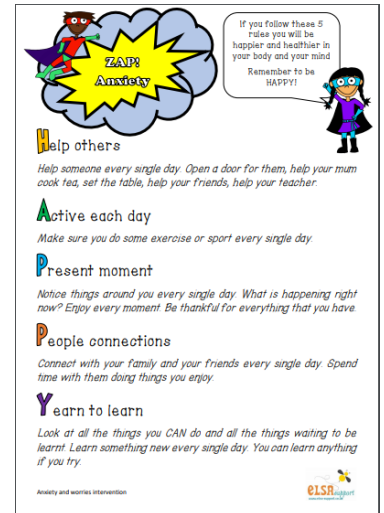


This week is [Mental Health Awareness Week](#), and the theme is “kindness”. It was chosen because of the power of kindness during lockdown to strengthen not only our communities and relationships, but also our own individual well-being.

Why be kind?

Being kind and doing things to help others will not only benefit those who are vulnerable or struggling, but can also improve our own mental health. Research shows that acts of kindness towards other people increase our own sense of well-being, strengthen relationships, increase optimism and happiness, boost our self-esteem, and help us keep a balanced perspective about our own problems.

Helping others is the ‘H’ in our HAPPY acronym that we teach the children to remember 5 steps to good mental health.

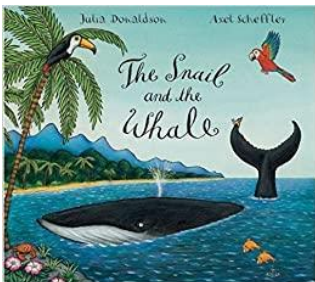


The starfish story

When we think about all the problems in the world and all the needs of our country/community/family, it is easy to become overwhelmed and dispirited. What difference can one person make? The starfish story (where a boy returns washed-up starfish to the sea one at a time, despite being told he can't save them all) is a lovely way to demonstrate to children that every little act of kindness really does make a difference. Watch [my video](#) of the story, or download this version which includes a starfish chart that children can fill in every time they do something kind:



<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/the-starfish-story-and-activity/>



The Julia Donaldson book *The Snail and the Whale* also reminds children that no one is too small to make a difference and help a friend.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000cslw/the-snail-and-the-whale>

Kindness during quarantine

How can your child show kindness during quarantine? Encourage them to think of ways to be kind to:

Family - video calling elderly or isolated family and doing activities like cooking, reading or playing a game alongside them. Write them a letter, send a craft or photos. Within your household, how they can be kind to you, to siblings, or pets? Remind them to think of the person who they are trying to be kind to, and consider what they need, like or would really appreciate.

Friends - make them a present, write them a note or just chat while doing an activity “together” via Zoom.

Community - Saying thank you: either in person, as people step out of your way on a walk, via a note or email to a teacher, or a sign or window art to thank delivery workers. Donating to a food bank, or passing on old toys or books to younger children you know.

The world - raising money for a charity, sponsoring a child in another country, taking a pledge to use less electricity or plastic.

There are lots more ideas for kind acts during lockdown here:

<https://blog.kidadl.com/articles/acts-of-kindness-to-keep-kids-busy>

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/kindness-calendar>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zhkybdm>



You will never speak
to anyone more than
you speak to yourself
in your head. be kind
to yourself.

Be kind to yourself

When we are having a bad day, we can easily be very critical of ourselves. Stop and ask yourself if you would talk to a friend in the way you're thinking about yourself. Do not compare the reality of your life to other people's picture perfect social media feed; we are all doing the best we can in lockdown! Radio 1 has a great slot called “Everyone's Rubbish”, where listeners share their disastrous days. It's a great reassurance that we all mess up sometimes! Try to remember the things that will make you happy when you're having a tough day.

