

Project Connect Newsletter

Data Point of the Week

A study by happiness researcher, Sonja Lyubomirsky, found that participants who performed five acts of kindness every week for six weeks saw a significant boost in happiness, particularly if they performed their five acts in a single day rather than spread out over each week.

Another study split participants into three groups and assessed the impact of prosocial versus self-focused behavior on mood.

- **Group 1** engaged in acts of kindness for others or for the world
- **Group 2** engaged in acts of kindness for themselves
- **Group 3** engaged in neutral behaviors (control group)

After six weeks, Group 1 showed a significant increase in positive emotions and decrease in negative emotions, while Group 2 showed no significant differences compared to the control group.

Reflection

When we are stressed or depressed, we're often encouraged to focus on *self-care*. Basic self-care like getting a good night's sleep, and moving your body have a big impact on mood, but self-care is often interpreted as "treating yo self," which has no lasting impact on mood.

The symptoms of anxiety and depression include an inward focus and ruminative or perseverative thinking. Anything that gets you out of your own head is helpful! Focusing on others by engaging in acts of kindness and altruism makes you expand your focus beyond your own concerns.

One reason performing acts of kindness is so powerful is because our behavior shapes how we see ourselves. When we act with kindness and generosity, we're more likely to see ourselves as a kind, thoughtful, and caring person. And it feels good to lift someone else's spirits.

Acts of kindness also build trust, friendliness, and connection, helping strengthen relationships.



Connection Skill and Action Step: Perform Acts of Kindness.

This practice involves engaging in 3-5 acts of kindness or generosity, ideally in one day. You can visit the [Random Acts of Kindness](#) site for ideas and inspiration. To get the most out of this exercise, take a few minutes at the end of the day to reflect on and savor the acts of kindness you performed and the impact they had on the recipients.

Questions to reflect on or to spark conversation. Please share your responses in the comments of [this blog post](#). I'd love to hear from you!

Have you been the recipient of an act of kindness? How did you feel about it?
Have you practiced random, or non-random acts of kindness? How did it go and what impact did it have on your mood?

In community,
Jessica Gifford, LICSW
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If you know of other people who might want to receive this newsletter, they can sign up for it [here](#).