

WELLBEING

Mental Health Awareness Week

18th – 24th May 2020



According to the Mental Health Foundation’s ‘Doing Good?’ survey, 76% of respondents agreed that society has become less kind, and more selfish and materialistic.

Organised by the Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual campaign aimed at raising awareness of mental health and “inspire action to promote the message of good mental health for all.”

In response to the ongoing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the theme of the event will be focusing on the relationship between ‘kindness’ and our mental health.

Mental health & kindness

Due to the ways in which the outbreak has affected our daily lives, the Mental Health Foundation has decided that we spend mental health awareness week celebrating the acts of kindness that have emerged while the world has suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic.

By focusing on the importance of kindness and the role that it plays in our mental health, the goal of the campaign is to help shape our society’s outlook on mental health as we return to normality in the future.

Benefits of kindness

Studies have shown that practicing kindness can boost serotonin and dopamine levels in your brain, which are known as the “feel good, happy hormones.” While negative emotions such as anger and jealousy contribute to the production of cortisol - the ‘stress hormone’ - which in turn, can lead to a weakened immune system and weight gain.

Simply put, being kinder in our daily lives can reduce stress and improve our emotional wellbeing and physical health.

How do I get involved?

With the COVID-19 outbreak causing much distress and concern around the world, it’s the ideal time for us all to show each other more kindness and compassion.

From residents singing on their balconies in Italy, to people clapping in their doorways for the NHS and key workers in the UK, there has been an inspiring amount of kindness seen around the world during these uncertain times.

If you need some suggestions on how you can get involved with Mental Health Awareness Week 2020, here are a few ideas:

Random acts of kindness - Use the extra time we have at home to make the world a happier place by carrying out random acts of kindness. These can be

as big or small as you would like, as long as they come from a place of sincerity and compassion.

For example, you could; reach out to friend who you haven’t spoken too in a long time, make a cup of tea for someone you live with or make a donation to a charity close to your heart. The possibilities are endless!

Be kind to yourself - It can be easy to forget about yourself while practising kindness, however, self-care is essential in maintaining healthy general wellbeing. Treat yourself to something you enjoy, such as watching your favourite film or spending an evening relaxing with a bath and a book.

Spread the word - Use the hashtag #WorldMentalHealthWeek on social media and share any stories that you have found inspiring during these times. The more positivity and kindness that we can spread via our social channels, the better.

If you would like to find out more information on any of the topics mentioned in this article, please contact the Health Assured 24/7 confidential helpline.

Or alternatively, visit our portal to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing: www.healthassuredeap.com

TOPICAL

International Day of Families

15th May 2020

According to the latest official figures, there are over 20.3 million families living in the UK and Ireland.

On the 15th May 2020, the world acknowledges International Day of Families, an awareness event proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993.

The event is aimed at promoting awareness of issues relating to families and to "increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them."

In a nutshell, International Day of Families offers an opportunity for us all to remind ourselves of the importance of family in today's society. Strong family units and support networks help us feel more secure, give us belonging and feel more optimistic about the world.

With the health and wellbeing of the world's population being on everyone's mind due to the outbreak of COVID-19, there is no better time to reflect on the importance of family and the role it plays in our lives.

COVID-19: How to observe International Day of Families

Depending on how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected your living situation and family life, you may find obstacles that make observing the awareness day difficult.

However, regardless of how many family members you share the same roof with, there are still plenty of ways to connect to the people closest to you and observe the event in a meaningful way. Here are a few suggestions...

Technology - There are lots of free online video calling platforms that allow you to stay connected to your loved ones during this difficult time. Arrange a video call on the 15th May and celebrate the awareness day with the people most important to you, wherever you, or they, are in the world.

Volunteer - Sadly, there are those who don't have a support network or available family members to lean on in times of need. Donate your spare time to the NHS and volunteer to be a part of their Check-in and Chat service. Offer a listening ear and support vulnerable people at risk of loneliness in their homes.

Reflect - Family doesn't have to mean that you are related. Any person that you deeply care about can be considered as 'family'. Use the awareness day as an opportunity to think about what family really means to you and how you can strengthen the relationships that matter most to you.

Letters - Texts, messages and emails are great ways to stay in touch with those closest to you during these tough times. However, can you even remember the last time you wrote a hand written letter? Writing can be a fun, meaningful and therapeutic way to

keep in contact with your loved ones. If you live with others, get them involved too!

COVID-19: Time with the family

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, many of us are spending more time at home and for those who live with children; this time can be both a blessing and challenge.

If you are struggling to think of ideas on how to occupy the little ones during these challenging times, read our [blog post](#) for some suggestions. Alternatively, if you would like to read our tips on how to cope with isolation as a family, [click here](#) to read more.

While these turbulent times can be a challenging period for families, whether they are under the same roof or not, use International Day of Families 2020 as a chance to reflect on the importance of family and how you, and your loved ones, will all come through this time as a stronger unit

It's important to know that if you need to access our services to discuss any concerns you may have, our [confidential helpline](#) is available 24/7, 365.

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LEGAL

Neighbour disputes



Although we generally aim to live in a peaceful and comfortable environment, with quiet enjoyment of our property and surroundings, it is not uncommon for problems to arise in neighbourhoods, which disrupts the peace.

This article focuses on the law surrounding the most common neighbourhood problems and the ways in which such disputes can be resolved.

Boundary Disputes

A boundary dispute is one that arises where two neighbouring properties believe they have the right to a piece of land. The general boundaries of the property will be displayed in the Official Copy of the Land Registry title plan, with most boundaries being defined, such as fences, walls and hedges.

If you encounter a disagreement with a neighbour regarding a boundary, informal discussions with your neighbour at an early stage can be helpful. It may be appropriate to write to your neighbour detailing your concerns, and how you wish to proceed to resolve the matter.

If you are unable to agree where the boundary lies, it may be necessary to obtain advice from a [chartered surveyor](#) specialising in boundary disputes, who will

be able to survey the land and check the deeds and plans for the property.

Mediation: If the dispute cannot be resolved amicably, you may choose to escalate the dispute to mediation to reach a mutually agreed outcome, with the assistance of a skilled and experienced independent mediator.

Court Action: If mediation fails or the other party refuses to engage, it may be necessary to escalate the dispute to court for resolution. This should be considered as a final resort as court cases can be complex, costly and lengthy. Resolution through solicitors is also advisable prior to court action.

Noise Nuisances

Noise is the most frequent nuisance complained of and includes unreasonable, persistent loud noise after 11pm and before 7am, or other inappropriate volume of household noise, such as barking dogs. If you are experiencing a noise disturbance, ensure you keep record of when the noise nuisance occurs, including the date, time and how loud the nuisance was.

If informal attempts to resolve the issue have not been successful, nuisances can be reported to the local council's environmental health department to investigate. A noise abatement order can be issued if deemed the noise amounts to a statutory nuisance. This order is a formal warning asking the individual to stop making certain noises entirely, or to restrict the times at which they can make such noise. If the abatement order is breached, the

council may consider additional measures such as a financial penalty or even prosecution.

Harassment

Harassment from neighbours can be particularly distressing and can take place in a variety of different forms, such as email, text, telephone calls and physical presence. This behaviour does not necessarily have to be violent, however it must cause alarm or distress, for example stalking or threatening behaviour.

If harassment happens frequently it can be reported to 101, the non-emergency police number if there is no immediate threat, or using 999 where there is immediate risk. The police have the power to issue an harassment warning notice detailing the law of harassment and warning against further behaviour of this nature.

Civil action can also be taken against the individual for harassment, where an application can be made to your local county court for an injunction to prevent continuation of the harassment.

If you are having trouble with a neighbour, contact our [24/7 confidential helpline](#) for support and guidance about your next steps.

Or alternatively, visit our portal to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing: www.healthassuredeap.com