

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELLBEING



Grades 4-7

Random Acts of Kindness to Support Mental Wellbeing Arts Education and Health Education

Purpose of the Lesson:

Supporting someone else's mental health can be so easy and simple. Showing someone kindness on a bad day could be enough to lift their spirits if they're experiencing challenges with their mental health. In this lesson, students will explore the concept of kindness on a deeper level and brainstorm ways they can support the mental well-being of others by performing random acts of kindness. Students will create an art piece that they can gift to someone else to support their mental wellbeing. They will also reflect on how performing random acts of kindness can support their own mental health and wellbeing.

Curriculum Competencies:

Health and Physical Education

- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being (Grade 4)
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use (Grade 4)
- Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity (Grade 4)
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grade 5, 6, 7)
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others (Grade 5, 6, 7)

Arts Education

- Choose artistic elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques and environments using combinations and selections for specific purposes in art making (Grade 4)
- Intentionally select artistic elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments to express meaning in their work (Grade 5, 6, 7)
- Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play (Grade 4, 5, 6, 7)
- Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences (Grade 4, 5, 6, 7)
- Explore relationships among cultures, societies, and the arts (Grade 4, 5)
- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts (Grade 6, 7)

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English Language Arts

- Recognize and appreciate how different features, forms, and genres of texts reflect different purposes, audiences, and messages (Grade 8/9)
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts (Grade 8/9)
- Recognize how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identity (Grade 8/9)
- Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking (Grade 8/9)

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Video

[A Hot Dog for Kindness](#) - Paz Parel-Sewell

Guiding Questions:

- How would you define a “random act of kindness?”
- What random acts of kindness have you experienced?
- How did these acts of kindness make you feel when they happened to you?
- What benefits can random acts of kindness have on the mental wellbeing of those around us?
- How can doing random acts of kindness support your own mental wellbeing?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Queue up video/set up projector

1. Have the students watch the video “A Hot Dog for Kindness” This can be found [HERE](#).

2. Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.

3. Have your students right down experiences they’ve had with random acts of kindness.

These can be big things, like your parent or guardian surprising you with a gift, your favourite snack, a trip, etc. Or they can be smaller things, like someone lending you their pencil, a stranger smiling to you on the street, etc.

4. Ask your students how these experiences impacted them. Get them to really reflect on how these small gestures and acts of kindness impact their day, their week, their month, their year, their lives. Have them write down the feelings they felt when these experiences happened to them and when someone showed them small acts of kindness. You can use this comprehensive list of emotions to help spark deeper connection to their feelings. Sometimes it can be hard to think of emotions beyond “happy”, so this can help support them in making deeper connections:

Connected / Loving	Aliveness / Joy	Tender	Grateful
Accepting	Amazed	Calm	Appreciative
Affectionate	Awe	Caring	Blessed
Caring	Bliss	Loving	Delighted
Compassion	Delighted	Reflective	Fortunate
Empathy	Eager	Self-loving	Grace
Fulfilled	Ecstatic	Serene	Humbled
Present	Enchanted	Vulnerable	Lucky
Safe	Energized	Warm	Moved
Warm	Engaged		Thankful
Worthy	Enthusiastic		Touched
Curious	Excited		
Engaged	Free		
Exploring	Happy		
Fascinated	Inspired		
Interested	Invigorated		
Intrigued	Lively		
Involved	Passionate		
Stimulated	Playful		
	Radiant		
	Refreshed		
	Rejuvenated		
	Renewed		
	Satisfied		
	Thrilled		
	Vibrant		

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5. Have your students share their experiences and their feelings with partners or in small groups. Encourage your students to reflect with each other on the random acts of kindness they've experienced and how these acts of kindness made them feel. Once they've had a chance to share with each other, provide them the opportunity to share with the class if they feel comfortable doing so.

6. Discuss with your students how random acts of kindness can support both your mental health and the mental health of the person receiving the kindness. Share this quote with your students:

"Part of depression and anxiety are feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Practicing random acts of kindness makes people feel helpful, optimistic, efficacious, and boosts self-esteem" — HOORIE SIDDIQUE, PHD

Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-random-acts-of-kindness-can-boost-your-health-5105301#:~:text=Practicing%20random%20acts%20of%20kindness,%2C%20and%20boosts%20self%20esteem.&text=%E2%80%9CPart%20of%20depression%20and%20anxiety,%20Desteem%2C%E2%80%9D%20she%20says.>

Open up a dialogue about this quote. Have your students discuss how this can be true in their pairings or small groups.

7. Explain the curriculum connections to your students. Tell them that they will have the opportunity to create art pieces that can be a random act of kindness for someone in their life. Have your students reflect on someone they know that might be experiencing a harder time than usual, issues with their mental health or someone who they think could just really use some kindness. This could be a friend, a family member, a crossing guard or a staff member at the school. It could be someone from their favourite local restaurant, their coach or instructor, etc.

What they choose to create is entirely dependent on what they want to express to the person they're sharing some kindness with. You can provide them with some suggestions, like a letter that they decorate beautifully, paper flowers that they cut out, etc., but ultimately the creation should be tailored to the person they're gifting it to.

Accommodations/modifications:

- Students who are visually impaired can write a letter to someone and you can act as a scribe
- Students whose first language isn't english can write their note in their first language, if their art piece has words on it

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8. Lesson Closure. Have your students reflect on how creating this art piece made them feel. Spark a discussion about how they predict the experience of giving this art piece to the person they intend to give it to will make them feel. You can even get your students to share their experience with the class in gifting their art once they've done so. Discuss with them how mental wellbeing can be really tricky to navigate, but sometimes it just takes a simple act of kindness to really make someone's day, which can also make their day!