

THE SCIENCE BEHIND BEING KIND: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

1. What does it mean to be kind? (*Define kindness*).

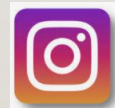
Kindness is making someone feels like s/he belongs or feels special. Like the world didn't make a mistake.

John-Tyler Binfet, Ph.D.

Mental Health in Schools Conference
May 2, 2023, Richmond, BC



@kindnessprof



@barkubc



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Okanagan Campus

Faculty of Education
Okanagan School of Education



Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council



OVERVIEW OF OUR TIME TOGETHER

1. Introductions
2. Quick Overview of UBC's B.A.R.K. Program
3. The Science Behind Kindness
4. Ways Students are Kind
5. Practicing Thievery – Reflecting on Moving Forward

SETTING AN INTENTION FOR OUR SESSION

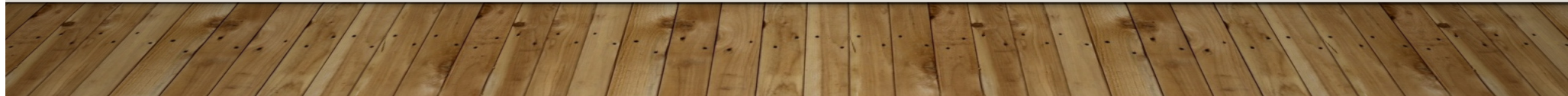


Take a minute to think about the kind of learner you'd like to be this afternoon. What kind of learner do you want to be during our time together?

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH?

(WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION DEFINITION)

“A state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” (Dodd et al., 2021, p. 2)



WWW.BARK.OK.UBC.CA



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Okanagan Campus



Faculty of Education
B.A.R.K.

[Programs & Session Dates](#) ▾ [Research & Partnerships](#) ▾ [Get Involved](#) ▾ [About](#) ▾

[Donate](#)

[Contact](#)



Building Academic Retention Through K9s (B.A.R.K.)



ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY



BUILDING CHILDREN'S CONFIDENCE THROUGH K9S

JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2020.1846643>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 Check for updates

Exploring Children's Perceptions of an After-school Canine-assisted Social and Emotional Learning Program: A Case Study

Nicole M. Harris and John-Tyler Binfet

University of British Columbia, Kelowna, Canada

ABSTRACT

This study explored children's perceptions of a canine-assisted social-emotional learning program developed within the framework of a canine therapy program at a mid-sized Canadian university. Data collection made use of interviews, field notes, and observations. Children ($N = 8$, 5–11 years) from an after-school program participated in a six-week intervention after which participants were interviewed about their experiences in the program, their learning of social and emotional competencies, and the role of the therapy dogs in facilitating their socioemotional development. Using conventional content analysis, salient themes reflecting participants' experiences were identified. A within-case analysis was conducted followed by a cross-case analysis to identify what participants collectively saw as important. Salient themes to emerge through cross-case analysis were: 1) the dogs were meaningful and essential to the program, 2) it was an enjoyable and positive experience, and 3) participants reported evidence of social-emotional learnings. Evidence from this study suggests that the therapy dogs might have provided behavioral and emotional support. Findings suggest that integrating therapy dogs into social and emotional learning initiatives can provide unique advantages and improve children's engagement and learning of social and emotional skills. Findings are discussed within the context of human-animal interactions and social and emotional education.

ARTICLE HISTORY

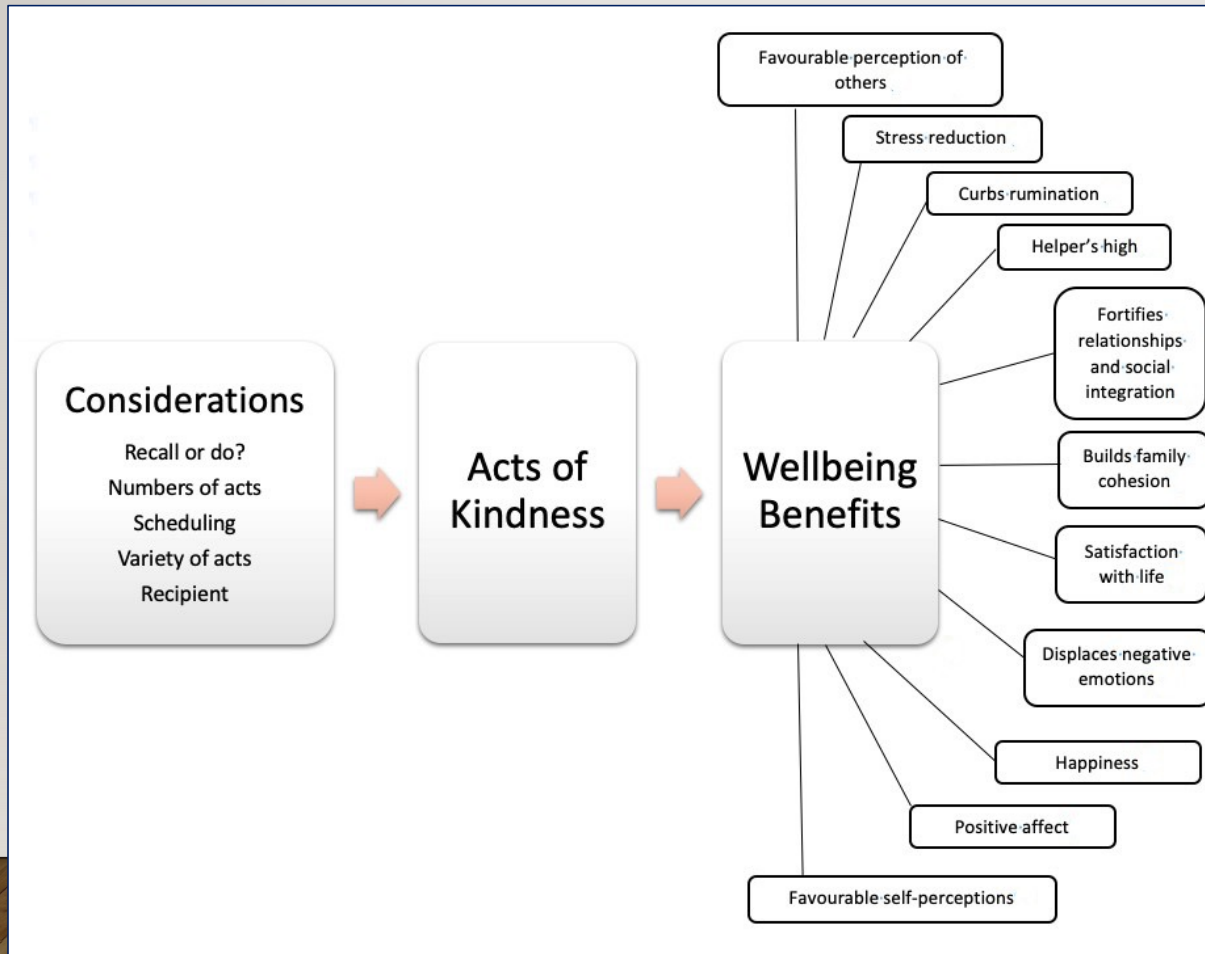
Received 7 June 2020
Accepted 26 October 2020

KEYWORDS

Canine-assisted interventions; children; social and emotional learning; therapy dogs



Being Kind Promotes Well-Being & Bolsters Mental Health



+ Academic Engagement

School Psychology International
1-18
© The Author(s) 2019
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/0143034319854474
journals.sagepub.com/home/spi
SAGE

Article

Perceived school kindness and academic engagement: The mediational roles of achievement goal orientations

Jesus Alfonso D. Datu 
The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR China


Nansook Park
University of Michigan, USA
University of Johannesburg, South Africa

The Virtuous Cycle: Social Media Influencers' Potential for Kindness Contagion

Tiegan Bradley¹, Kelley Cours Anderson² , and Ashley Hass³



Kindness Makes You Happy and Happiness Makes You Healthy: Actual Persuasiveness and Personalisation of Persuasive Messages in a Behaviour Change Intervention for Wellbeing

Ana Ciocarlan¹ , Judith Masthoff² , and Nir Oren¹ 

¹ University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK
{a.ciocarlan,n.oren}@abdn.ac.uk

² Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
j.f.m.masthoff@uu.nl

A Systematic Review: What's Kindness in School and How to Grow It?

Wisnu Wibowo^(✉) and Yulia Ay...

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta
wisnuwibowo.2021@student.un...



© 2022 American Psychological Association
ISSN: 1528-3542

Prosocial Behavior Reliably Reduces Loneliness: An Investigation Across Two Studies

Isabelle Lanser and Naomi I. Eisenberger
Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles

THE SCHOOL KINDNESS SCALE

Psychology in the Schools, Vol. 53(2), 2016
View this article online at wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/pits

© 2015 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
DOI: 10.1002/pits.21889

MEASURING KINDNESS AT SCHOOL: PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF A SCHOOL KINDNESS SCALE FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

JOHN TYLER BINFET

University of British Columbia, Okanagan

ANNE M. GADERMANN AND KIMBERLY A. SCHONERT-REICHL

University of British Columbia

In this study, we sought to create and validate a brief measure to assess students' perceptions of kindness in school. Participants included 1,753 students in Grades 4 to 8 attending public schools in a large school district in southern British Columbia. The School Kindness Scale (SKS) demonstrated a unidimensional factor structure and adequate internal consistency. The pattern of associations of the SKS to a corpus of theoretically relevant constructs obtained via student self-reports (classroom supportiveness, optimism, happiness, prosocial and social goals, satisfaction with life, and academic self-efficacy) provided evidence for convergent and discriminant validity. Furthermore, the SKS was significantly and positively associated with teacher reports on students' empathy, social skills, and peer acceptance. Analyses by gender and grade indicated that girls perceived significantly higher levels of kindness in school than did boys, and that students' perceptions of kindness in school decreased from fourth to eighth grade, with fourth-grade students reporting the highest levels of kindness in school and eighth-grade students reporting the lowest levels. The theoretical importance of investigating students' perceptions of kindness in the school context and the practical implications of this research for informing educational efforts to promote social and emotional competencies in school communities are discussed. © 2015 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

School Kindness Scale

How true is each statement for you?	Disagree a Lot	Disagree A Little	Don't Agree or Disagree	Agree a Little	Agree a Lot
1. The adults in my school model kindness.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Kindness happens regularly in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kindness happens regularly in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My teacher is kind.	1	2	3	4	5
5. At my school, I am encouraged to be kind.	1	2	3	4	5

The Science of Kindness



The image shows a screenshot of a National Post article. At the top, the National Post logo is displayed in a yellow banner. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for NEWS, FULL COMMENT, SPORTS, CULTURE, LIFE, MORE, DRIVING, CLASSIFIEDS, JOBS, SUBSCRIBE, and FINANCIAL POST. The main image is a photograph of two young children, a girl and a boy, looking at something together. The girl has pigtails and is wearing a patterned top, while the boy is wearing a white t-shirt. Below the image is a headline: "Kindness: What I've learned from 3,000 children and adolescents". To the left of the headline is a date and time stamp: "28 April 2018, 10:30 CEST". Below the headline is a short paragraph of text. To the right of the text is a small profile picture of the author, John-Tyler Binfet, and his name and title: "John-Tyler Binfet, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia". Below the author's name is a small icon for a disclaimer of interests.

NATIONAL POST

NEWS · FULL COMMENT · SPORTS · CULTURE · LIFE · MORE · DRIVING · CLASSIFIEDS · JOBS · SUBSCRIBE · FINANCIAL POST

Kindness: What I've learned from 3,000 children and adolescents

28 April 2018, 10:30 CEST

Kindness, from the perspective of young children, is an act of emotional or physical support that helps build or maintain relationships with others. *Illustration.*

Address Electronic After asking more than 3,000 students about kindness, I've learned a lot about just how children and adolescents understand and enact kindness, especially at school. The results might surprise parents and educators.

Twitter 24

Facebook 119

LinkedIn

Printer

Author

 **John-Tyler Binfet**
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Declaration of interests

John-Tyler Binfet receives funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Article

The Who, What, and Where of School Kindness: Exploring Students' Perspectives

Canadian Journal of School Psychology
2019, Vol. 34(1) 22–37
© The Authors 2017
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/0829573517732202
journals.sagepub.com/home/cjs



John-Tyler Binfet¹ and Holli-Anne Passmore¹

Abstract

The aim of this exploratory study was to examine fourth to eighth graders' conceptualizations of kindness at school (i.e., their definition of kindness, an example of an act of kindness they have done, who they see as the most salient adult agent of kindness, and which location they deem that kindness happens most). To date, kindness research has focused predominantly on assessing the effects of being kind on student well-being and little is known about how students understand kindness and are kind in school. Across definitions and examples of kindness, the themes of helping others, showing respect, and encouraging others were prevalent. Teachers and principals were identified as the main adult agents of kindness; the classroom and outside/playground were identified as the two main kindness locations. Understanding how students conceptualize kindness within the school context holds implications for educators seeking to foster prosocial behavior among students.

Find a Therapist (City or Postal Code)

Preview

Edit

Publish Settings



John-Tyler Binfet Ph.D.
Canines, Kids, and
Kindness

Kindness and Your Mental Health Workout Plan

Being intentionally kind boosts your well-being.

Posted Apr 14, 2021 | Reviewed by Gary Drevitch



KEY POINTS

- Infusing intentional kindness into your daily life bolsters your well-being.
- Kind acts can include physical activities, supporting or helping those in need, or simply being kind to others.
- Being intentionally kind to others can reduce stress.

Child Psychiatry & Human Development
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-021-01299-z>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Mental Health Benefits of Kindness-Oriented Schools: School Kindness is Associated with Increased Belongingness and Well-Being in Filipino High School Students

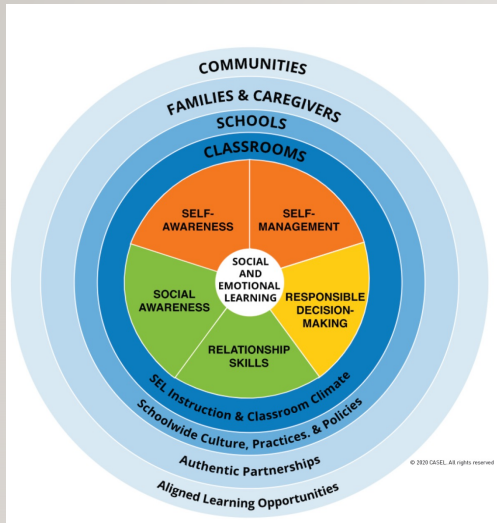
Jesus Alfonso D. Datu¹ · Nino Jose Mateo² · Silvia Natale³

Participant 379 – Female, Grade 11

12. What advice would you give to teachers to encourage kindness in students or to encourage kindness at school?

I would encourage teachers to talk more about mental health so that everyone is aware of it. And how to be kind to someone who is hurting, and know how to deal with that.

SEL + KINDNESS



ABOUT WHAT IS SEL? SEL

SEL is...

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.

Table 2.1. Social and Emotional Competencies and Kindness

Social and emotional competency	Skill building for kindness
1. Recognize and manage emotions	Students can be taught about the positive benefits to self and others from being kind. Specifically, students can learn that positive emotions can arise from being kind and can replace negative emotions.
2. Show care and concern for others	Kindness requires perspective-taking. Encouraging students to generate a list of recipients in need of kindness helps foster this. Enacting kindness helps students develop the capacity to show they care about others.
3. Develop and maintain positive relationships	Friendships and connections may be bridged by acts of kindness and friendships can be fortified through kindness to one another.
4. Make responsible decisions	Students can be encouraged to reflect upon the quality of their kind acts and whether kind acts they have planned put themselves in harm's way (e.g., delivering kindness to strangers in a homeless camp).
5. Set and achieve positive goals	When kindness is random or responds to the immediate need of others, there may be little planning involved, but many acts of kindness require planning and a series of steps to execute. The frequent request that students plan and execute a series of kind acts falls into the category of setting and achieving a goal (i.e., "complete five acts within one week").

HOW IMPORTANT IS KINDNESS?

(KARRIS & CRAIGHEAD, 2012)

VIA Character Strengths	<i>M, SD</i>	<i>α</i>
1. Playfulness/humor	4.06 (0.52)	.83
2. Love/intimacy	4.01 (0.56)	.78
3. Kindness/generosity	4.00 (0.47)	.79
4. Honesty/integrity	3.96 (0.45)	.73
5. Social/emotional intelligence	3.89 (0.50)	.78
6. Gratitude	3.85 (0.53)	.82
7. Curiosity	3.83 (0.51)	.82
8. Fairness/equity	3.82 (0.53)	.81
9. Citizenship/teamwork	3.78 (0.48)	.71
10. Perspective	3.78 (0.50)	.79
11. Judgment/critical thinking	3.78 (0.48)	.77
12. Hope/optimism	3.70 (0.62)	.81
13. Leadership	3.69 (0.52)	.79
14. Bravery/valor	3.67 (0.58)	.83
15. Creativity	3.66 (0.61)	.88
16. Appreciation of beauty and excellence	3.57 (0.70)	.85
17. Industry/perseverance	3.55 (0.58)	.88
18. Zest/enthusiasm	3.55 (0.56)	.79
19. Forgiveness/mercy	3.46 (0.64)	.85
20. Modesty/humility	3.30 (0.54)	.73

Character strengths in 75 nations: An update

Robert E. McGrath*

School of Psychology, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ 07555, USA

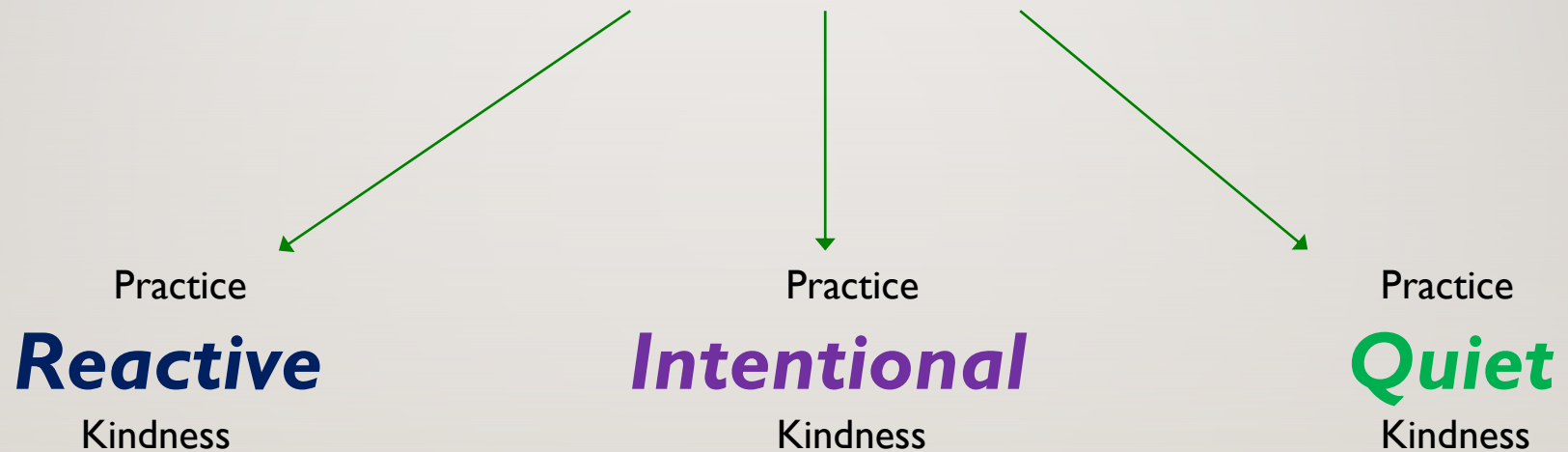
(Received 4 July 2013; accepted 18 December 2013)

This study represents an extension of Park, Peterson, and Seligman, who found substantial convergence across 54 nations and all 50 US states in the self-report of character strengths. Though their overall sample was substantial, some countries were represented by as few as 20 cases. The present study updates their work, using a sample of 1,063,921 adults who completed the Values in Action Inventory-Inventory of Strengths online between 2002 and 2012. The results for 75 nations each represented by at least 150 respondents suggest substantial cross-cultural similarity in endorsement of the strengths. The most highly endorsed character strengths were Honesty, Fairness, Kindness, Judgment, and Curiosity, while the least endorsed were Self-Regulation, Modesty, Prudence, and Spirituality. Though the participants probably represent a biased sample for many of the countries examined in the study, these results suggest grounds exist for cross-cultural dialog on how to advance the development of good character.

Keywords: character strengths; VIA-IS (Values in Action Inventory); cross-cultural

WHAT I'VE LEARNED ABOUT KINDNESS

3 Different Ways to Be Kind





The International Journal of
Emotional Education

ISSN: 2073-7629

Volume 7, Number 2, November 2015 pp 35-51

www.um.edu.mt/cres/ijee

Not-so Random Acts of Kindness: A Guide to Intentional Kindness in the Classroom

John-Tyler Binfet¹

Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Okanagan, Canada

Much has been written about random acts of kindness – acts performed spontaneously and often to strangers. The topic of kindness and the benefits arising from performing kind acts holds both empirical and applied interest in the fields of education and psychology. Encouraging students to reflect upon and perform intentional acts of kindness develops perspective-taking, increased social membership, and a structured way of encouraging kindness within the school context. This paper provides an overview of kindness research and argues for the need to promote intentional acts of kindness by providing a framework for teachers to support students in the performance of intentional kindness.

Keywords: kindness, kindness definitions, teaching, social and emotional learning, positive education

HOW FULL IS YOUR KINDNESS GAS TANK?



IT'S IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY A RECIPIENT BANK

Intentional Kindness Planning Sheet

Name: _____ Class: _____

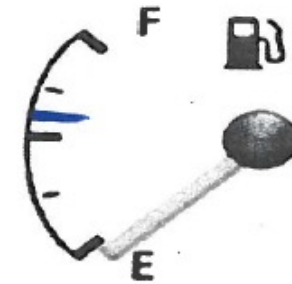
How kind are you currently?
Indicate on the gas tank your
current level of kindness? Is there
room for improvement?



Brainstorm a list of all the people or places in your school or community you think could use some kindness




IDENTIFYING A RECIPIENT BANK

How kind are you currently? Indicate on the gas tank your current level of kindness? Is there room for improvement?



Brainstorm a list of all the people or places in your school or community you think could use some kindness

- Cerly - My Mum - Teachers in general
- Mirzanda - My daddy - Bathrooms
- Tana - Susie (my little sister) - Corner area
- School - The lunch ladies
- Izzy - Chip (my dance teacher)
- Mrs. Guzen (respect) - Education ass.sents
- Classmates - Mr. Brunelle - My Auntie

	STEPS	WHAT TO CONSIDER:	
RECIPIENT	STEP 1: Identify your Recipient	Someone you know/ Familiar location - OR - A stranger/Unfamiliar location	
	STEP 2: Decide on the kind of kindness you will do	Materials (e.g., giving an object, making something) - OR - Time or Energy (e.g., helping someone)	
	STEP 3: Decide if you want to be known or anonymous	Known - OR - Anonymously (the recipient won't know it was you!)	

PREPARATION	STEP 4: Figure out the details	What's involved? What do you need? Prepare your materials & gather supplies	
	STEP 5: When is a good time?	When? When would be the best time to do your kind act?	
EXECUTION	STEP 6: Do your act of kindness	Execute	
EVALUATION	STEP 7: Assessment	How did it go? Did your act go as you planned? How do you think your recipient felt? How did you feel?	

Directions: Plan 5 Kindness activities (three that occur within school and two outside of school). Use the following grid to help you plan each of your activities. Do your best to plan DIFFERENT activities (don't repeat). Be creative!

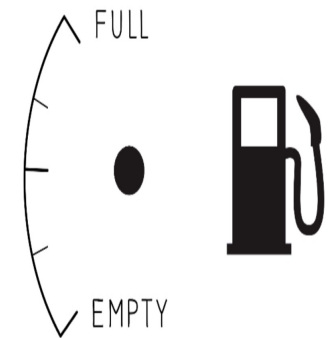
		<i>Kind Act #1</i>	<i>Kind Act #2</i>
RECIPIENT	STEP 1: Identify your Recipient		
MECHANISM	STEP 2: Decide on the kind of kindness you will do		
FORMAT	STEP 3: Decide if you want to be known or anonymous		

POST-KINDNESS REFLECTION

Directions: By now you have completed your Intentional Acts of Kindness. It's time to reflect on what and how you did and on any impacts doing kindness had on you.

1. Revisiting the Kindness Self-Assessment

How kind are you currently?
Indicate on the gas tank your current level of kindness. Is there room for improvement?



2. Thinking back to the RECIPIENTS of your kindness (the people who received kindness from you), WHO do you think was most appreciative or grateful? Why?

Describe each kind act below (be detailed!).	Describe who this kind act is for and how you know this person (e.g., classmate, friend, teacher, stranger)	Do you know this person or group? Circle one.
Act 1: Be kind and don't fight with my sister.	For: Mom, Dad, sister	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
Act 2: Eat my Dinner and lunch and don't complain.	For: Mom	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
Act 3: Be kind to some one new.	For: someone who needs a friend	<input type="radio"/> YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NOT yet

Act	What? Describe what you will do for each kind act (<u>be specific/give details</u>).	Who? Who will receive this kind act from you?	When? When will you do this kind act this week?
#1	help her with her homework (Dictées, Spelling, Math)	My Sister ✓	3 rd
#2	wash the dishes or make dinner	My Mom ✓	7 th
#3	Help him install the Base boards	My Dad	2 nd
#4	Compliment / help her relax because of mistakes.	My friend Anna ✓	2 nd
#5	relax and realize that I am fine and I should stop hating myself.	Myself ^{nah} _{no}	2 ^{1st}

**IS THERE A REASON NOT TO INTEGRATE INTENTIONAL KINDNESS INTO YOUR PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE?
(LYUBOMIRSKY & LAYOUS, 2013; POST, 2005)**

- Practicing kindness can be brief (not time intensive)
- Kindness can be self-initiated
- Low-cost intervention
- Bi-directional benefits (to initiator and recipient)
- Helps build caring communities
- Fosters well-being, buffers mental health
- Kindness fosters positive emotions that replace negative preoccupations
- Kindness encourages “other-regarding” (i.e., encourages perspective-taking)
- Can be intentionally integrated into our daily routines

