

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK > > >

Mental Health Awareness week takes place next week from 18 – 24th May and this year, more than ever, we all need to address the stigma associated with mental health and use the chance to support both ourselves and others.

As I have written on a number of occasions, just like physical health, we can all suffer from mental ill-health at different times of our lives and we need to pay attention to both of these aspects to be completely healthy.

This is especially true now, considering the uncertain times we are living through and how we are all trying to decipher what the new normal may look like and how it will affect our work and home lives.

This week has been used by the Mental Health Foundation since 2001, as the UK's national week to raise awareness of mental health, the problems that can arise and inspire action to promote the message of good mental health for all.

Each year Mental Health Awareness week focuses on a planned theme. This year that theme was 'sleep' however, as most things in 2020 it had a last minute change.

So what is our focus now? **'Kindness'**.

"NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED TO REDISCOVER KINDNESS IN OUR DAILY LIVES."

As Mark Rowland, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation, said "Now more than ever, we need to re-discover kindness in our daily lives. We want to use Mental Health Awareness Week to celebrate

the thousands of acts of kindness that are so important to our mental health. And we want to start a discussion on the kind of society we want to shape as we emerge from this pandemic."

The Oxford English Dictionary states that kindness is 'the quality of being kind' or 'a kind act' however when we consider kindness, we need to remember that kindness starts with being kind to ourselves, not just those around us.

A recent study reported how a range of kindness activities boosted personal happiness (Rowland L, Curry OS, 2018). The study conducted with 683 people over a period of seven days was designed to test whether performing different types of kindness activities had differential effects on participants subjective happiness. Interestingly, the study revealed that performing acts of kindness boosted the

happiness and well-being of participants. The results therefore suggest that performing kindness activities boosts happiness. Additionally, there was correlation between the number of kind acts someone did and increased happiness.

It really is not surprising that currently we are all probably experiencing feelings of anxiety, frustration, and anger, and it can be all too easy to direct these emotions at others.

However, that will have a detrimental effect on both ourselves and others, therefore it is vital that kindness prevails in these uncertain times.

Over the last 8 weeks alone the demolition community and that of NFDC members have demonstrated many acts of kindness with news arriving daily. If you haven't already had the time to read it, I'd recommend taking a look at how members have risen to the challenge in the latest issue of Demolition & Dismantling Magazine. It certainly brings a smile to my face to think of the kindness and generosity that exists within our industry. Aesop, the ancient Greek storyteller, once said,

"NO ACT OF KINDNESS, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, IS EVER WASTED."

and so now is the time to up those acts, both for others and yourself.

The Mental Health Foundation suggest some ways that you can help reduce stress and improve your emotional wellbeing with some simple acts of kindness:

- Reach out to call a friend, family member or neighbour
- Tell a family member how much you love and appreciate them
- Make a cup of tea for a colleague or someone you live with
- Help with a household chore at home
- Tell someone you know that you are proud of them
- Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them
- Spend time playing with your pet
- Donate to a charity
- Lend your ear – call a colleague and ask how they are finding the change in routine
- Give praise to your colleagues for something they have done well
- Donate to foodbanks

This is most certainly not a to do list so if you can manage one thing, no matter how big or small rest assured your kindness is making a difference.

And remember you need care and kindness too so make sure you give some of that kindness to yourself. One cannot pour from an empty cup!

As many are likening our current situation to an emergency similar to the 1940s I shall leave you with a quote by Sir Winston Churchill which rings true in our new normal;

**“WE MAKE A LIVING BY
WHAT WE GET.
WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT
WE GIVE.”**

