



Kindness as a Way to Wellness

As people living with mood disorders, we spend a lot of time focused on our internal selves – our minds, our moods, and our emotions. We might not focus as often on our outward actions in the world. Doing small things to make the world a better place can bring us closer to wellness.



*If you want others
to be happy,
practice compassion.*

*If you want
to be happy,
practice compassion.*

— The Dalai Lama —

Many people living with mood disorders know that relationships and community are a part of our recovery. On the other hand, practicing kindness can be extremely difficult, especially when living with symptoms like irritability, anger, sadness, paranoia or feelings of worthlessness. But acts of kindness may not require a lot of effort. Look for small ways you can make kindness part of your life, no matter how you feel. You might start by asking yourself these questions at the end of each day:

- Was I selfish or unkind today?
- Do I owe an apology?
- Have I kept something to myself that I need to talk with someone about?
- Was I thinking of myself all day, or did I think of others?
- How can I be kinder tomorrow?

For more information:

www.ActsOfKindness.org www.HowIStayedAlive.com

Kindness includes many habits we know as simple good manners: saying “please” and “thank you,” waiting your turn, lending a helping hand, or cheering someone up with a smile. Kindness also means being generous with your presence and your time, and giving without expecting anything in return. When we show others the kindness we would like shown to us, we often find that it comes back into our own lives.

Many people living with mood disorders

What can I do?

- Take time to listen to someone else.
- Contact an old friend or family member you haven’t talked to in a while
- Visit a neighbor
- Open a door for someone
- Help a new person at your job or support group
- Volunteer
- Compliment someone

Start with this list and add your own ideas.

In *How I Stayed Alive When my Brain was Trying to Kill Me, One Person’s Guide to Suicide Prevention*, Susan Rose Blauer writes, “Acts of service build self-confidence, reinforce connection with living things and remind us that we have the ability to be kind, to others and to ourselves... For suicidal thinkers, there’s an added bonus: while you’re busy doing a good deed, your brain is temporarily diverted and suicidal thoughts are put on hold.” (Harper Collins, 2002)



In *The Healing Power of Doing Good*, Allan Luks writes “Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders both serious and minor, psychological and physical.”

(iUniverse, 2001)

*Forget injuries,
never forget
kindnesses.*

— Confucius —

The best known of the kindness groups in America is The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, who believe that “as people tap into their own generous human spirit and share

kindness with one another, they discover for themselves the power of kindness to effect positive change.”

Adding kindness into our lives is a valuable part of wellness. Small acts of thoughtfulness can help us connect with the world, grow emotionally and improve others’ lives as well as our own.

Please help us continue our education efforts.

Yes, I want to make a difference.
Enclosed is my gift of:

\$100 \$50 \$20 Other \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

E-MAIL _____

Check (payable to DBSA) Money order
 VISA MasterCard Discover AmEx

ACCOUNT NUMBER _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

- I wish my gift to remain anonymous.
- Please send me _____ donation envelopes to share.
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- I have enclosed my company's matching gift form.

If you would like to make your gift a Memorial or Honorary tribute, please complete the following:

In Memory of/In Honor of (circle one)

NAME _____

Please notify the following recipient of my gift:

RECIPIENT'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

Please send this form with payment to:
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
730 N. Franklin Street, Suite 501,
Chicago, IL 60610-7224 USA

Questions?
Call (800) 826-3632 or (312) 642-0049

Credit card payments may be faxed
to (312) 642-7243.

Secure online donations may be made
at www.DBSAAlliance.org.

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DBSA does not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatments or medications for mood disorders. For advice about specific treatments or medications, individuals should consult their physicians and/or mental health professionals.

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading patient-directed national organization focusing on the most prevalent mental illnesses. The organization fosters an environment of understanding about the impact and management of these life-threatening illnesses by providing up-to-date, scientifically-based tools and information written in language the general public can understand. DBSA supports research to promote more timely diagnosis, develop more effective and tolerable treatments and discover a cure. The organization works to ensure that people living with mood disorders are treated equitably.

Assisted by a Scientific Advisory Board comprised of the leading researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, DBSA has more than 1,000 peer-run support groups across the country. Over four million people request and receive information and assistance each year. DBSA's mission is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.

Download this brochure and find important information, breaking news, chapter connections, advocacy help and much more at www.DBSAAlliance.org

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**We've been there.
We can help.**



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