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"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."

— Marcel Proust

THE BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE

As the amount of daylight we get starts to dwindle, the weather gets drearier, and the temperature dips, it can be easy to see the world and one's life through a similar dark and oppressive lens. It is not uncommon for people to experience what some have dubbed "winter blues" from November through to February. People often get less sunlight, socialize less, and face added stress associated with various winter holidays. There are many ways one can combat the "blues", such as exercise and connecting with others. However, this winter, we would encourage you to think about practicing gratitude to help add some light to these dark winter days.

Gratitude can be described as the acknowledgment and appreciation of the positive aspects of one's life. Gratitude can come from something intrinsic to us or can be a result of other people's actions or words. Practicing gratitude has been associated with several mental, physical, and interpersonal benefits and has the potential to reduce stress. Fostering the ability to recognize the good things in life or that people have done for us, particularly when we are experiencing hardships, is correlated with increases in mental strength and resiliency. Additionally, gratitude is associated with improvements in psychological health by reducing feelings of frustration, envy, regret, and depression, and increasing happiness. These benefits can help us cope with the hard feelings that often pop up during the winter months.

Interestingly, practicing gratitude towards others has been shown to improve interpersonal relationships. Researchers have found that saying a simple "thank you" to a stranger or a new acquaintance is associated with a greater willingness to pursue an ongoing relationship with the grateful person. Explicitly expressing our appreciation to the people around us, no matter if they are a lifelong friend or someone who could become one, can help strengthen the connections that make life fulfilling.

Gratefulness has many benefits that can help improve one's life, especially during these drab and weary winter months. Continue reading to find ways we can practice gratitude and incorporate it into our daily routine.

Source: Morin, A. (2015). 7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude.

4 SIMPLE WAYS TO PRACTICE GRATITUDE

1

Speak it

Voicing your gratitude to others can help strengthen relationships. Whether you are expressing your appreciation for something big or small, pay attention to when you are saying “thank you” and be intentional. This can help make gratitude a primary focus in your day-to-day life.

2

Show it

Actions often speak louder than words. Try to make time in your day to show the people around you that you are grateful for what they bring to your life. This can look like writing thank-you cards or notes, taking the time to give them a helping hand, or returning a favour.

3

Write it

One of the most popular ways to practice gratitude is by keeping a gratitude journal. Try paying attention to the things people do for you or the things you find yourself appreciating throughout the day. Before bed, write them down in your journal and write what makes you grateful for them so that you can reflect on them in the future.

4

Think it

Another way you can practice gratitude is to meditate on it. Try setting aside time in your day to find a quiet, comfortable place where you can relax and focus on your thoughts. During this time, practice positive affirmations and think about what you are grateful for or what makes you happy. An example of this would be: *“Today, I did the best I could. I’m grateful for the effort I was able to give.”*

WORKSHOPS

COPE

- This workshop uses the principals of mindfulness to help students in grades 5,6, & 7 achieve better mental wellness and cope with issues like anxiety, overthinking, stress, self-harm, sleep loss, and social media use.

Lifelines

- Lifelines is an evidence-based program for grades 5,6, & 7 designed to integrate youth suicide prevention into both the culture and mission of the school, which is to provide a safe learning environment for its students. Classes emphasize help-seeking behaviours and are aimed at students who encounter peers who may be thinking of suicide.

Reaching Out

- This workshop introduces the topic of suicide to youth and teaches about warning signs, that it's okay to talk about suicide, how participants can respond to suicide, and advises participants it is okay to ask for help and to connect with a safe adult.

Self-Care 101

- A central goal of this workshop is to invite youth to see that each of us has mental health and, similar to caring for our physical health, we can learn to nurture and improve our mental health through our actions, experiences, and lifestyle choices.

Contact our **Community Education Coordinator** at

community.education@crisis-centre.ca or 778.693.2765 for more information!



UPCOMING TRAINING:

Volunteer Training

It gives you a new perspective and a new way of looking at your own problems when you have a chance to understand others. The training is invaluable for your own communication skills and relationships.

Please contact our Team Lead at
information@crisis-centre.ca to apply or for more information.

Our training includes skills training, healthy coping, communication, peer support, and education to prevent and respond to crisis and suicide.

GRASP

- This 12-hour skill building program provides youth from Grades 9-12 with self-awareness, communication, and coping skills that will aid them in their personal growth as well as contribute to an overall plan for ongoing youth suicide prevention programs within schools and communities.

ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

- Living Works' two day, interactive workshop that prepares caregivers to provide suicide life-assisting first-aid intervention.

safe (Suicide Awareness For Everyone) TALK

- Living Works' three-hour workshop which prepares helpers to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first-aid resources.

suicideTALK

- Ranging from 90 minutes to a half a day, Living Works' suicideTALK invites all participants to become more aware of suicide prevention opportunities in their community.



ASIST Workshop

(Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

Dates: February 18th & 19th

Location: UNBC Prince George

Please contact Cianna Wetterlind at
community.assistant@crisis-centre.ca
to register.



Once Upon a Time by Cynthia Andal

Once upon a time

There was a little girl who drew pictures of her cats

And her home and her sister

And the tree that grew in her front yard

She had a little book with a heart on the front that
kept her pictures safe

And when she was a little sad

She looked at her book and was less alone

She grew up a bit

And now her book was decorated with flowers

And she had a special place that she sat to think and
draw

She drew the date she had

And her best friend

And the forest and fields that she would run through

And the ocean

She wrote stories in her book now too

And when she was a little sad

She looked at her book and was a little less alone

Later still

She had her own family

And things looked different

But she still had her book

And her stories and pictures were of her own cats

Her own tree in the front yard

The trip she took to swim in the ocean with her
children

Mountains she climbed and people she loved

And when she was a little sad

She looked at her book and was less alone

Still more time passed

And the world was not that easy

She spent a lot of time sad

Watching hurting people hurt other hurting people

The book was empty

No new pages were being filled

And even when she thought about her stories

It seemed pointless in such a broken place as this

When she was a little sad

She didn't look at her book and she was quite alone

And then

Not one day but many

She saw a tree and a small rabbit

And they reached her so she drew them on a scrap
of paper

Since she no longer had a pretty book

Then she watched some people gather to celebrate
each other

And she drew them too

She went with her pencil and her new notebook to
places where people were hurting

And she drew them

She drew marches

She drew strikes and elections and parties and
sadness and happiness and togetherness

And she drew trees and flowers and baby animals
and lakes and

When she was a little sad

She looked at the book and was less alone

She felt grateful



Crisis Prevention,
Intervention & Information Centre
FOR NORTHERN BC

We are here for you 24/7

• • • • • Crisis Centre for Northern B.C. Resources • • • • •

- Northern B.C. Crisis Line: **250-563-1214, 1-888-562-1214**, 24/7
- Northern B.C. Youth Line: **250-564-8336**, 24/7
- BC Suicide Line: **1-800-784-2433**, BC-wide, 24/7
- 310-MENTALHEALTH: **310-6789**, BC-wide, 24/7
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: **9-8-8**, National, 24/7

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