



Christmas Kindness

every connection matters™



The Christmas Season & Stress

For some, the festive season is the most anticipated time of the year; however, for others, just the thought of Christmas sends their stress levels sky-high.

Whether you love it or not, Christmas brings some inevitable stress, whether it is worrying about sticking to your Christmas budget, being around difficult family members, feeling pressured to have the 'perfect' Christmas, or simply having your routine disrupted. In fact, these factors have led to many considering Christmas one of the most stressful events.

As a result, it is particularly important to look after your own wellbeing and mental health at Christmas by helping manage and reduce the impact of festive stress. Many people feel they don't have the time or the money to carry out self-care during the festive period; however, research has discovered an easy, free, and effective stress management technique that most of us already do at Christmas – simply, the Act of Kindness.

Acts of Kindness

The [Australian Kindness Movement](#) defines an Act of Kindness as "a spontaneous gesture of goodwill towards someone or something".

With the 'festive spirit' encouraging an attitude of generosity and care for others, kindness and Christmas are often seen as one and the same; however, what research has found is that your Christmas kindness can significantly reduce your stress levels, both physically and mentally benefitting yourself and others around you.

Multiple studies have discovered that being kind to others not only makes the recipient feel good, it can actually improve the giver's stress levels, mental health, emotional wellbeing, and physical health. In addition, acts of kindness have been found to be infectious in communities and result in a kindness chain reaction.

How Does It Work?

Neurobiological studies have found that, when a human being performs an act of kindness, the brain produces the neurochemicals known as the 'Happiness Trifecta': Oxytocin, Dopamine, and Serotonin. These neurochemicals send happiness boosts around our body.

Not only does it feel good, the release of these hormones balances your serotonin levels, lowers your blood pressure and cortisol levels, and blocks pain signals to the brain. This can improve cardiac health, circulation, and digestive health, decrease symptoms of depression and stress, and even increase life expectancy.

Benefits of Kindness

The many benefits of acts of kindness can be summarised into physical, psychological, and social benefits.

Physical Benefits

In addition to increased life expectancy, acts of kindness can strengthen your immune system, improve cognitive performance, increase your energy levels, and lower your heart rate.

Psychological Benefits

Acts of kindness can decrease feelings of loneliness, depression, and helplessness, increase your sense of calm and relaxation, improve your vitality, and help you manage depression and anxiety. In addition, it can help you create a 'kindness bank' of memories that can be used to boost self-esteem and increase resilience levels.

Social Benefits

Acts of kindness also have positive effects on others. Recipients of kindness often feel happy, valued, and loved, and can lead to others following suit and being kind to others in return. Acts can also improve social relationships, increase the sense of connection, and contribute to positive communities.

CALL 1300 364 273 SMS 0401 33 77 11

www.acaciaconnection.com
info@acaciaconnection.com



acaciaEAP
employee assistance program

12 Christmas Acts of Kindness

In the spirit of Christmas, we have provided 12 Acts of Kindness ideas to help get you started:

1. **Hold a door open for someone:** holding the door open is a simple way to help someone feel treated
2. **Leave post-it notes with positive messages on your mirror:** whether for your roommates or your family members, leave messages to help brighten their mood
3. **Say thank you:** let someone close to you know how much you appreciate them by sending them a text message
4. **Donate clothes, toys, or non-perishable food items:** purchase some extra food in your groceries or an extra toy during your Christmas shopping and donate to charities such as the Smith Family, The Connections Uniting Care Christmas Food and Gift Appeal, or the Kmart Wishing Tree
5. **Smile at a stranger on the street:** help cheer up a passer-by
6. **Give up your seat on the bus:** make someone's commute a little easier
7. **Help out an elderly neighbour:** acts like offering to pick up groceries can make a huge difference
8. **Reduce the road rage:** let a fellow driver merge into your lane to help them on their way
9. **Go visit someone in hospital:** Christmas can be a lonely time for people in hospital. Contact your local hospitals to see how you can bring some Christmas cheer
10. **Clean up your local area:** pick up trash at the park or playground to help give back to your local community
11. **Become a mentor:** mentoring allows you to support your peers by sharing knowledge, experience, and emotional support. See if your work has a mentoring program you can sign up to or look online
12. **Volunteer:** many charities are in desperate need of volunteers this Christmas. Get involved with activities such as gift wrapping, making deliveries, preparing food, fundraising, or sorting donating items.

Before You Start

It is really important to pause before you start carrying out Acts of Kindness and consider the following.

Do Something you Enjoy

Make sure that you carry out Acts of Kindness that align with your interests to make them more fun and more achievable for you. For example, if you hate shopping maybe don't volunteer to shop for a friend. Instead, you might decide to treat the family to a movie night.

Stay Simple

Remember Acts of Kindness don't have to be grand gestures or expensive – simple acts such as a smile are the easiest and sometimes most powerful acts of kindness.

Give Within your Means

Acts of Kindness can deplete energy, time and sometimes money. Make sure you don't overdo it, be careful not to provide more than you can give to avoid burnout and stress.

Be Kind to Yourself

Most importantly, remember that you deserve kindness too! Try to carry out acts of kindness for yourself over Christmas and remember to not expect too much of yourself.



CALL 1300 364 273 SMS 0401 33 77 11

www.acaciaconnection.com
info@acaciaconnection.com



acacia EAP
employee assistance program