

 Happiness Intervention n/a Client Yes

## Random Acts of Kindness

Lyubomirsky, Tkach, and Yelverton (2004) tested the effect of kindness on wellbeing. In their intervention, Lyubomirsky and colleagues asked students to perform five random acts of kindness per week for six weeks. These kindness acts were described as behaviors that benefit others or make others happy, typically at some cost to the giver (e.g., cook a meal for someone, donating blood, help someone with yard work or offering your seat to an elderly, disabled or pregnant person). Students in the control group did not receive any kindness instructions. The results of this study showed that the students who performed random acts of kindness experienced an increase in happiness, whereas the control group experienced a slight decrease. These findings support the idea that deliberately practicing kindness positively affects wellbeing.

### Goal

The goal of the exercise is to increase wellbeing by consciously performing acts of kindness. Becoming more aware of one's kind behavior toward other people has been found to increase subjective happiness (Otake et al., 2006).

### Advice

- This exercise is typically used as “homework” for the client. After the first week or so, the exercise can be evaluated in terms of its effects on the client as well as his/her environment. How did people react? What did it feel like to act in this way? Inform clients that kindness can involve both small and big gestures, letting a car merge in front of you, or helping someone move.
- The website <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org> offers many tips on kindness.

### References

- Lyubomirsky, S., Tkach, C., & Yelverton, J. (2004). Pursuing sustained happiness through random acts of kindness and counting one's blessings: Tests of two six-week interventions. *Unpublished data*, University of California, Riverside, Department of Psychology.
- Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., & Frederickson, B. L. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: A counting kindnesses intervention—*Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7, 361-375.



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### Instructions

Small acts of kindness can brighten another's day. Every week, commit to making five random acts of kindness. They can be large or small; it is your choice. The template below can help you keep track:

#### This week I helped others by:

Act of Kindness #1

Act of Kindness #2

Act of Kindness #3

Act of Kindness #4

Act of Kindness #5

#### Next week I intend to help others by:

Act of Kindness #1

Act of Kindness #2

Act of Kindness #3

Act of Kindness #4

Act of Kindness #5