THE IMPORTANCE OF
ACTS OF KINDNESS

During this uncertain and difficult period, people have been coming together and are supporting one another; from completing a weekly food shop for a vulnerable neighbour, to clapping for our NHS workers on Thursday evenings. In the midst of this crisis, there has been a spike in spontaneous acts of generosity and empathy, as we have demonstrated we can all choose to be kind. Not only do acts of kindness help others, but it has also been proven to be good for our own mental health, as helping others can decrease stress and can improve our overall wellbeing. Therefore, this means that being kind to someone can not only make them feel supported and cared for, but can also make you feel good too.

In addition, it's important to note that kindness also breeds kindness. When we hear about the efforts and help that others have given during this time, it inspires us to be kind too. Take Captain Sir Thomas Moore, more commonly known as Captain Tom, who on 6 April 2020, at the age of 99, began to walk laps of his garden in aid of NHS Charities Together, with the goal of raising £1,000 by his hundredth birthday. Captain Tom united over a million people to show generosity and donate for our NHS, and when the morning of his hundredth birthday arrived, the total raised by his walk passed £30 million.

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."

- Maya Angelou

Furthermore, kindness makes us feel part of a broader, connected and supportive community. During the lockdown we have needed more than ever not just our friends and family, but our neighbours, post workers, newsagents, etc.

Although a lot of things have changed through COVID-19, the fundamental ways that we can be kind to each other remain the same. They do not have to be big gestures to make a big difference and here are some examples from The Mental Health Foundation of acts of kindness you might wish to try:

- **Reach out to call a friend, family member or neighbour who is experiencing loneliness or self-isolation, offering to help where needed**
- **Tell someone how much you love and appreciate them**
- **Make a cup of tea for someone you live with or help with a household chore at home**
- **Arrange to have a cup of tea and virtual catch up with someone you know**
- **Tell someone you know that you are proud of them**
- **Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them**
- **Send a motivational text to a friend, an interesting article or a joke to cheer them up**
- **Donate to a charity**

So, today why not carry out a random act of kindness, or note a random act of kindness someone does for you. Either way, it is worth us all remembering, small acts of kindness can make a big difference and there is no better time, in the words of Maya Angelou, to "try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."