

# LIVEWELL NURSING

## Cultivating a Culture of Kindness and Gratitude in Nursing

*By: Angela Mitchell, CNO*



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In the high-pressure environment of healthcare, the cultivation of a culture of kindness and gratitude among nurses is essential for fostering a positive workplace atmosphere and enhancing care delivery. Research indicates that kindness and gratitude are not only beneficial for mental well-being but also improve team dynamics and patient outcomes (Frangieh et al., 2024). This article explores how nurses can actively promote these values in their daily practice.

Kindness in nursing involves empathy, compassion, and support for colleagues and patients alike. According to Robinson et al. (2020), acts of kindness—whether through supportive communication, active listening, or small gestures of appreciation—can significantly impact the morale of nursing staff and the overall patient experience. For instance, a simple thank-you note, or an encouraging word can boost a colleague's spirits during a challenging shift, reinforcing a supportive work environment. Nurses can cultivate kindness by integrating strategies such as mindfulness and reflection into their routines. By practicing mindfulness, nurses can enhance their emotional intelligence, allowing

them to respond more empathetically to the needs of both patients and coworkers (Jiménez-Picón et al., 2021). Additionally, creating opportunities for informal interactions, such as team coffee breaks or check-ins, can foster relationships built on trust and kindness.

Gratitude plays a crucial role in enhancing workplace culture. Expressing gratitude not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also promotes resilience among nursing staff (Rieckert et al., 2021). Nurses can implement gratitude practices by regularly acknowledging the efforts of their peers, celebrating small wins, and sharing positive feedback in team meetings. This practice can create a ripple effect, encouraging others to express appreciation and, consequently, enhancing the overall workplace atmosphere. Furthermore, incorporating gratitude into providing care can significantly enhance the healing environment. A research survey by Aparicio et al. (2022) highlights that when nurses express gratitude towards patients, it fosters a sense of belonging and improves patient satisfaction. Simple expressions of thanks for patients' cooperation or acknowledging their concerns can help build rapport and trust.

To institutionalize kindness and gratitude, it is recommended nursing leaders should consider implementing structured initiatives within their department. While organizational and leadership initiatives are important, the individual actions of nurses play a crucial role in institutionalizing kindness and gratitude. To cultivate a culture of kindness and gratitude in nursing, individual nurses can take proactive steps that contribute to a supportive and appreciative environment. Even with structured initiatives in place, it is the actions of individual nurses that can truly make a difference.

# (Continued) Cultivating a Culture of Kindness and Gratitude in Nursing

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Nurses can create their own opportunities for mentorship by reaching out to less experienced colleagues, offering guidance, and sharing knowledge. This not only fosters a supportive atmosphere but also reinforces the values of kindness and gratitude within their teams. Additionally, nurses can establish informal peer recognition systems by regularly acknowledging their colleagues' efforts, whether through verbal praise, notes of thanks, or even shout-outs during team meetings. Such gestures can help to normalize expressions of appreciation and create a culture where kindness is celebrated (Frangieh et al., 2024). Participating in or initiating a "kindness challenge" can also be an effective individual action.

Nurses can set personal goals to perform and share acts of kindness within their teams, inspiring others to do the same. These small, intentional acts can collectively reinforce a culture of appreciation and compassion. Furthermore, nurses can enhance their emotional intelligence and communication skills through self-directed learning or participation in workshops. By seeking out resources focused on compassion in nursing, they can reflect on their interactions and consciously integrate kindness into their daily practice (Robinson et al., 2020). Engaging in discussions with peers about the importance of these skills can also create a supportive environment where kindness and gratitude are prioritized.

By mentoring colleagues, recognizing peers, participating in kindness challenges, and enhancing their emotional intelligence, nurses can contribute significantly to a nurturing and positive workplace culture. Cultivating a culture of kindness and gratitude within nursing is not only beneficial for nurses but also improves the overall quality of patient care. By fostering supportive environments, practicing gratitude, and implementing structured initiatives, nurses can create a workplace that values compassion and appreciation. As the field of healthcare continues to evolve, prioritizing kindness and gratitude will be essential for promoting well-being among nursing staff and improving patient outcomes.

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# IN THIS EDITION

Cultivating a Culture of Kindness and Gratitude in Nursing.....	1-2
EBSCO .....	3
The Heroes of Kindness and Care.....	4
Gratitude and Kindness.....	5
November: A Time for Gratitude and Kindness .....	6
Rethinking Gratitude and Kindness .....	7
The Power of Gratitude in Nursing: Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro .....	8
A Collective Approach to Self-Care & Gratitude .....	9



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For consideration in next issue, please submit entries by close of business on December 20, 2024. Submission limits: 125-275 words

**December Topic: *Celebrations***



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# The Heroes of Kindness and Care

By: Edgemoor DPSNF Nursing

In every healthcare setting, the true heart of patient care lies not just in medical expertise, but in the compassion and kindness shown by the caregivers. Our nurses embody this spirit every single day, and we recently had the privilege of seeing their extraordinary dedication shine through during a special event.

In October Edgemoor holds a Halloween celebration this year a car show was incorporated along with a photo booth and games with small novelty prizes for the residents. The moment the Halloween and car show event was announced, our nursing team ensured that the residents had the chance to participate and enjoy the festivities. Their commitment to making each resident feel valued and included was evident in everything they did. Not only did they ensure physical safety; they created an atmosphere of warmth, joy, and connection, and brought joy and entertainment to the event by dressing in their Halloween costumes! They turned a special occasion into something memorable for everyone, and their enthusiasm did not go unnoticed.

What makes our nurses truly exceptional is their ability to offer not only skillful care but also emotional support. They take the time to listen, to comfort, and to show genuine concern for each resident's well-being. Their kindness touches lives in profound ways, transforming a simple care routine into an act of love and compassion. Whether it's offering a smile, a reassuring word, or a gentle touch, they make every interaction meaningful.

The care our nurses provide is a beautiful example of the difference that kindness can make. It's easy to take for granted the countless hours they spend ensuring our residents' needs are met. But these nurses do so much more than meet basic medical needs—they inspire a sense of safety, dignity, and hope in everything they do.

To our incredible Nurses, CNA's and Ancillary staff: we are forever grateful for the countless ways you bring light into our residents' lives and into the hearts of everyone who has the privilege of working with you. You are true heroes of kindness and care, and we are so fortunate to have you as part of our team.

"Every nurse has that one patient that they'll remember forever." —Unknown



*Left to right:* Mustard Jocelyn Carpio, Blondie Jennylyn Tapeç, Nun Hien Dinh, Ketchup Pinky Molina, Queen Joetta Perez, Student Edwina Casanada, Pepsi Joy Esmerald Go, Pizza Maricienne Abeleda, Carolina Fernandez SN PM, Vampire: Cezaria Weger



*Left to right:* Merlyn Trinidad DON, Phoebe Pascual HIMC, Lemel Danganan, Michelle Tello SN, Amabel Marinkovic



# Gratitude and Kindness

By Tyler Eickholt, PHN, EISB-IZ, Vaccine Education and Clinical Outreach (VECO)

In November, many cultures celebrate Thanksgiving, reminding us to reflect on gratitude and kindness. A core element of nursing is caring for others, which involves significant emotional labor. By incorporating gratitude and kindness into our daily practice, we can enhance the well-being of both healthcare professionals and the individuals we serve.

Gratitude promotes emotional well-being and resilience. It arises when we feel thankful for something or someone in our lives, benefiting our mental and physical health. Research shows that practicing gratitude correlates with lower depression rates, better impulse control, greater optimism, and higher self-esteem. Additionally, it can lead to lower blood pressure, reduced cortisol levels, and a stronger immune system (Cox, 2018). There are many ways in our everyday interactions to practice gratitude.

One example of a gratitude practice in our public health staff meetings is the “shout out” segment, where colleagues publicly recognize and thank one another. This fosters a sense of value and teamwork. When an individual feels valued, it is easier to provide compassionate care. Other simple gratitude practices include gratitude journaling, creating a gratitude jar, or texting someone three reasons you appreciate them. These can enhance positivity and serve as a beacon of light during tough times.

Kindness is intrinsic to public health and underpins compassionate care. COSD public health nurses embody empathy and kindness, using gestures like warm smiles or listening ears to create a sense of safety and comfort with clients. When clients feel cared for, their recovery journey becomes more hopeful. Whether it is through polite conversation while vaccinating a patient, or sharing holiday recipes with a colleague, let us continue recognizing the profound impact of gratitude and kindness in our interactions.



**The VECO Team practicing gratitude techniques.**

Front: Stephanie Quach, Sr. PHN. Back L to R: Annette Solorio, PHN, Emma King, PHN, Tyler Eickholt, PHN, and Kate McLaughlin, Sr PHN.

*Missing in photo: Brenda Aguirre, PHN and Sheila Rinker, PHN Supervisor*

**Reference:** Cox, S. (2018, April). The power of gratitude. *Nursing Management*, 49(4),56. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.numa.0000531176.85470.42>.

**Resource:** Gratitude Practice for Nurses- Toolkit for Well-Being

[Gratitude\\_Nurses\\_Toolkit.pdf \(berkeley.edu\)](#)

## November: A Time for Gratitude and Kindness

*By: Lauren Amado-Manchego, RN, PHN*

As we approach the close of another year, November offers us an opportunity for reflection. It's a time to pause and consider the moments we are most grateful for—big or small. This month also serves as a reminder of the profound impact that even the smallest acts of kindness can have on those around us. Maya Angelou's words capture this sentiment beautifully:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

In our roles across the county, we are constantly engaging with people, and our work is centered around the connections we make with those we serve. While we may not always see the direct impact of our efforts, the kindness we show and the care we provide can leave lasting impressions. These interactions, often beyond our awareness, can shape lives in ways we may never fully understand. As we move through this season of gratitude, let's remember that the simple act of making someone feel seen and valued can be one of the most powerful gifts we give.



# Rethinking Gratitude and Kindness

By: Jaye Obana, PHN, South Public Health Center



The phrases of guidance for gratitude and kindness we have heard from our childhood:

"Be nice."

"Say, please."

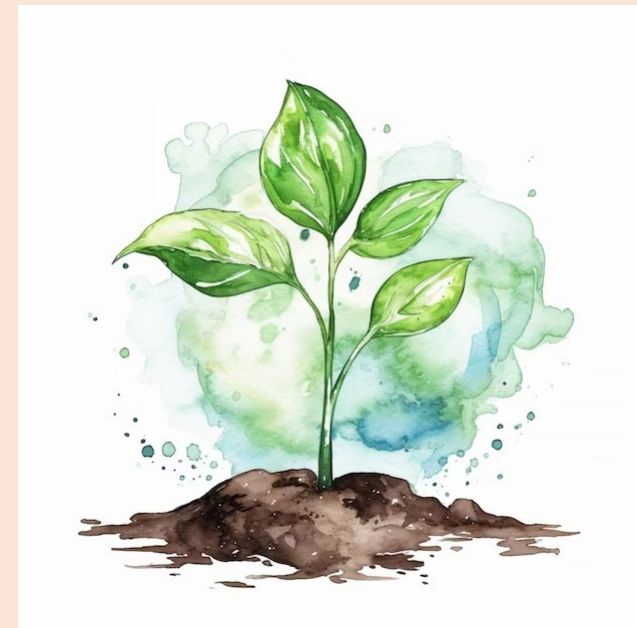
"Say, thank you."

It is easy for us to have, show, and receive gratitude and kindness from others, as we should, because that is what we were told makes our world a better place.

But what is truly important? Adding a couple more words to these phrases from our childhood... "to yourself" and "for yourself." Have some gratitude and kindness for yourself, too. For many of us, this is not easy; it is a challenge. How about we give it a try?

"The key to evolution, like healing, is going at our own pace."

– Dr. Oliver Wolf from TV show, Brilliant Minds





# The Power of Gratitude in Nursing: Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro

By: Dulce Pluma, BSN, RN, PHN, Public Health Services – Maternal, Child and Family Health Services

Gratitude is a powerful tool in nursing. It helps us find strength in the most challenging moments, deepens our connection with patients, and fosters resilience amidst long shifts and emotional challenges (Sansone & Sansone, 2010). As a nurse, I've seen firsthand how gratitude can transform care—from providing comfort in a patient's toughest hours to simply appreciating the teamwork that makes our work possible. I experienced the profound impact of gratitude not just in my nursing career but also while hiking Mount Kilimanjaro, a height of 19,341 ft above sea level. As I ascended on the tallest free-standing mountain in the world, I reflected on the privilege of being a nurse, caring for others, and the gift of my health. Each step up, Mount Kilimanjaro reminded me of the endurance and dedication that nursing requires—and how gratitude can fuel both.

Gratitude, in nursing and life, is about recognizing the small victories and the relationships we build (Clasen & Vore, 2024). Whether it's a patient's smile or the camaraderie shared with colleagues, these moments carry us through the most demanding days. Just as Kilimanjaro challenged me physically and mentally, so did nursing. But embracing gratitude for every step—both literal and metaphorical—makes the journey not just bearable but rewarding. Gratitude has not only enriched my nursing practice but also inspired me to climb greater personal heights, like summiting Kilimanjaro. It's a powerful reminder that every challenge, like every patient interaction, is an opportunity for personal growth and enlightenment.



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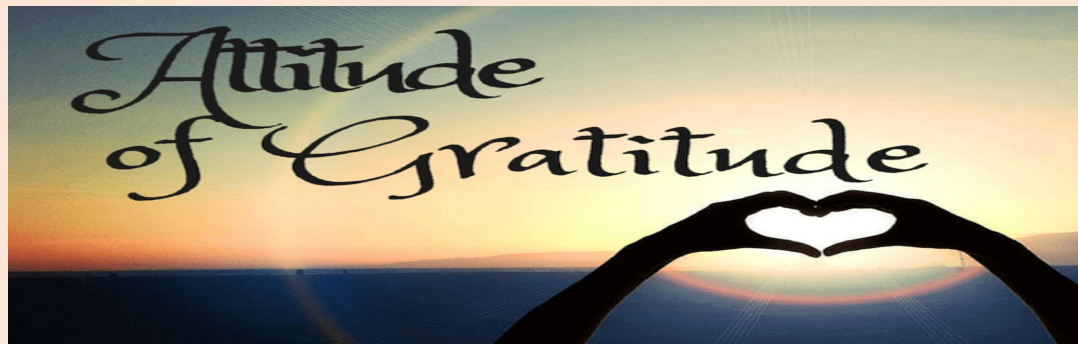


# A Collective Approach to Self-Care & Gratitude

By: Trina Rey, PHN, Aging & Independence Services-IHSS

As nurses, we are familiar with self-care tools and techniques that can be used to help prevent burnout and improve resiliency. We know we should get regular exercise, eat healthy, stay hydrated and try to sleep well, and we are aware of the importance of managing various personal and workplace stressors. “Professionals who are not protected with appropriate tools and resources are especially vulnerable to and more easily compromised by compassion fatigue” (Watson, 2024, p. 67). One method that can be used to combat such fatigue, is practicing gratitude. Halm & Loebach (2024) state that as a self-care option, gratitude can be practiced anywhere. It begins with intention to learn to see the positive, deepening our awareness of what we appreciate. When we practice gratefulness, scientists have demonstrated that reward pathways in the brain related to stress and interpersonal bonding are activated, improving connections and relationships that strengthen support networks. Thus, by engaging in small moments of gratitude throughout the day, we retain these neural networks to shift from a negative to a positive focus and thereby change our emotional responses to everyday situations (p. 150).

While a powerful tool, exercising gratitude is just one of the ways nurses can foster the practice of self-care and put forth efforts to improve our professional quality of life (QOL). That said, being trained in self-care techniques and demonstrating personal resilience are just a few of the ingredients needed to promote growth in this area (Watson, 2024, p.69). A study by Watson (2024) suggests that not only nurse resiliency, but also organizational support, and a healthy work environment are critical components that factor into a nurse’s overall professional QOL. As a result, it is crucial for nursing leaders, educators, and nurses, to advocate for a team approach to the promotion of professional QOL outcomes (p. 69). Halm & Loebach (2024) also claim that promoting healthy self-care practices is as much of an organizational imperative as an individual priority. Nurse leaders can foster a culture of gratitude by infusing it into the routines of their role and teams as well as into the fabric of the larger organization (p.150).



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