THE CATALYST

Checking In On Others

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The purpose of today's blog is to help us all remember the importance of checking-in on one other as we continue to deal and cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of us are facing challenges that we may have never encountered before, which can be extremely difficult to manage. However, with this is mind, we must try to remember that in order to be able to provide support to others, we need to take care of ourselves first and foremost.

Some of us may tend to be natural helpers; the ones our friends and family turn to in times of stress, and it is very important that we're able to be at our best when supporting those around us.

One topic we discuss in depth during a MHFA course is the idea of checking on others. We know that self-isolation can lead to poor social health, which directly impacts one's mental heath. That's why today, I am encouraging you to check-in on those around you to see how they're doing. Make sure they have any supports necessary in place, ask if they have family, friends, neighbours who they connect with daily, whether in person, respecting physical distancing of course, or online. Ask them what they're doing to pass the time or even schedule a regular phone or video call to see how they're doing.

We especially want to be mindful of seniors living alone, as they may benefit from being checked-in on a bit more often.

When you're asking someone how they're doing, it's very important to remember it's not just about their physical health but their mental health as well. Ask them how they're dealing with everything and take the time to listen and validate any concerns they may be having. There are uncertainties during this time but provide facts, i.e. if someone is worried abut grocery stores running out of food, remind them the shelves are being stocked daily and stores remain open. Let them know that you're there for them if they need anything, and that they can always reach out to talk.

Sometimes, we all just need someone there to listen to us, and truthfully, this is one of the most important types of support we can provide. We can all do our part to help create a safe place and stay present – by providing empathy and an understanding. You'd be surprised to see the positive impact this can have on someone.

If you get a sense that someone may be struggling with a mental health problem and may benefit for additional supports, be sure to familiarize yourself with local/national resources and provide them with that information. Research if your area has a Distress Centre or local crisis line, or resources to a specific age group such as Kids Help Phone.

Let’s work together to take care of ourselves as well as those around us.

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