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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Mental Health Awareness Week 18 -24 May 2020

What is Mental Health Awareness Week and when does it happen?

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) will take place from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 May 2020.

The theme for 2020 is 'kindness'.

Mental Health Awareness Week is the UK's national week to raise awareness of mental health and mental health problems and inspire action to promote the message of good mental health for all.

Mental Health Awareness Week has been run by the Mental Health Foundation since 2001.

How can I get involved in Mental Health Awareness Week?

During Mental Health Awareness Week, hundreds of events take place around the country to raise awareness for mental health. Schools, businesses, community groups and even people in their own homes host events to raise money for the Mental Health Foundation.

CWU Organised Events:

- On Tuesday 19th May at 6pm CWU will host a Facebook live session nationally. Dave Ward and Dave Joyce will be joined by prominent Labour MP Rosena Allin-Khan with other guests TBC. The CWU will outline our work on developing our mental health strategy and the panel will take questions from the membership. Full details of the session will be shared on the CWU social media channels this weekend.
- CWU North West Region & North West Mental Health Network – Mental Health Online Q&A Zoom Event Wednesday 20th May at 5pm (See LTB257/20).

[Sign up to their newsletter](#) to receive the latest updates on this campaign.

What resources are available?

If you're running an online fundraising event or even if you just want to raise awareness, maybe via your website or social media, there are a variety of [resources available](#).

You can also download the [Mental Health Awareness Week supporter pack](#) - filled with lots of fun and exciting ways to support during the week.

Due to COVID-19, orders for their green ribbon pins and 'how to' guides have been temporarily suspended, however you can still download each of their guides free of charge and use their virtual green ribbon pin via social media. [Find out more.](#)

How can I fundraise during Mental Health Awareness Week?

The Mental Health Foundation is a charity that relies on public donations and grant funding to deliver and campaign for good mental health for all.

Check out their list of [Virtual Events](#) that you can get involved with this May!

Why kindness?

Kindness has been chosen because of its singular ability to unlock our shared humanity. Kindness strengthens relationships, develops community and deepens solidarity. It is a cornerstone of our individual and collective mental health. Wisdom from every culture across history recognises that kindness is something that all human beings need to experience and practise to be fully alive.

Celebrate kindness

Shine a light on the ways that kindness is already flowering at this time. We have seen it in the dancing eyes of 100-year-old [Captain Tom Moore](#) as he walked his garden to raise money for the NHS and in the mutual aid groups responding to local needs. We want that kindness to spread further in every community in the UK.

Finally, use the week to explore the sort of society we would like to emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Kindness and Mental Health

Kindness is defined by doing something towards yourself and others, motivated by genuine desire to make a positive difference. We know from the research that [kindness and our mental health are deeply connected](#). The research shows that kindness is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging. It helps reduce stress, brings a fresh perspective and deepens friendships. Kindness to ourselves can prevent shame from corroding our sense of identity and help boost our self-esteem. Kindness can even improve feelings of confidence and optimism.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, do three things:

- Reflect on an act of kindness. Share your stories and pictures (with permission) of kindness during the week using **#KindnessMatters** and **#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek**
- Use the resources available in your family, school, workplace and community to join with thousands in practising acts of kindness to yourself and others during the week

- Share your ideas on how you think we could build a kinder society that would support our mental health using **#KindnessMatters** and **#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek**

MHFA Address Your Stress Toolkit

In 2018 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England launched their [Address Your Stress Toolkit](#) to support that year's campaign and the Toolkit remains a useful resource. This included a set of practical resources designed to help people better understand and manage stress. The toolkit is still available to those wishing to use it on the above link.

Get involved

The Mental Health Foundation and MHFA want Mental Health First Aiders, Trade Union Reps, Mental Health Ambassadors and Champions to support the Mental Health Awareness Week campaigns and to make the most of the information and toolkits provided during Mental Health Awareness Week and beyond. The CWU Health Safety and Environment Department is joining with MHFA England, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, Re-Think Mental Health and the Samaritans in supporting Mental Health Awareness Week. We are therefore encouraging Reps to get involved with the campaigns within the Union, as well as with friends, family and colleagues.

Mental Health First Aid England (MHFA) have produced a short video 'supporting your mental health whilst working at home' which is available on the following link:

<https://youtu.be/es8l7JAyYmk>

Useful links

Mental Health Foundation and Mental Health at Work New Partnership Information:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/news/mental-health-foundation-welcomes-leading-workplace-enterprise-its-group>

Mental Health Foundation – How to support someone with a mental health problem:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/supporting-someone-mental-health-problem>

Mental Health Foundation home page:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

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