



# CONNECT WITH EASE

*Employee Assistance Service for Education*

## Overview:

*November:  
National Gratitude Month*

*The Benefits of  
Expressing Gratitude*

*How to Show Yourself  
Gratitude*

### **EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**

#### **CONNECT WITH EASE:**

**(800) 882-1341**

#### **Free confidential professional help for district employees and family members:**

- Family troubles. Emotional distress.
- Job stress.
- Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use.
- Grief. Loss.
- Life transition issues.

Professional counselors are ready to help. Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7 assistance.

## MESSAGE FROM EASE

The month of November is traditionally a time for us to reflect on giving thanks for all that we have in our lives. Being mindful and creating consciousness around cultivating an "attitude of gratitude" can be a blessing to yourself and others! Gratitude is a spontaneous feeling and emotion, but the intentional act of practicing gratitude has a profound impact on us. Studies show that specific areas of the brain are involved in experiencing and expressing gratitude. So much so that brain scans of people demonstrating expression of gratitude show lasting changes in the brain's prefrontal cortex that heighten sensitivity to future experiences and cultivate neural pathways for gratitude. The emotion generates a climate of positivity that both reaches inward and extends outward. Gratitude is a skill that is well worth cultivating.

People who regularly practice gratitude by noticing and reflecting upon the things they are thankful for experience positive emotions and feel more alive. The benefits of gratitude are endless. The best way to reap the benefits of gratitude is to notice the goodness around you and the things you are grateful for every day. During difficult times, gratitude is more important than ever. Research shows that gratitude can help us cope with traumatic events, regulate our negative emotions, and improve our well-being. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. Focusing on gratitude can help one make a mental shift in recognizing goodness and blessings even in the midst of great pain and suffering. Gratitude also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals—whether that is other people, nature, or a higher power. This month, we encourage you to try on and practice an "attitude of gratitude." Make it fun and practice at home with family and friends, and even at work with colleagues! Taking time to reflect and practice gratitude can be difficult for some struggling with grief, loss, or other challenges. Being gentle with yourself and others is essential!

*EASE is available for support when needed.*

# THE BENEFITS OF EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

By: EASE STAFF

This month is National Gratitude Month, and it reminds us to practice being grateful for the people and things in our lives. According to psychiatry researchers, gratitude is the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself and represents a general state of thankfulness and/or appreciation (Sansone & Sansone, 2010). It may not be easy to express gratitude or feel grateful when we have endured many changes, losses, and challenges due to the pandemic. But if we focus on what is valuable and meaningful in our life, we can begin to recognize what we may feel grateful for, despite the pandemic. It may be something small like having a hot cup of coffee in the morning or access to clean water. Then there are the big meaningful things like good health or accomplishing a goal.

Gratitude creates a positive effect inward for ourselves and outward towards others, strengthening our social relationships. **Who are those people in your life that you are grateful for? What are the small things that bring you joy?** Research has found that practicing gratitude has powerful benefits on our physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Practicing gratitude is linked to resiliency, lower stress levels, higher immune system functioning, lower blood pressure, better sleep, and fewer symptoms of depression. Practicing gratitude towards others can also foster closer, more satisfying relationships.

Sincerely thanking someone honors their help and humanity as well as validates their efforts. You could make someone's day or week by thanking them!

Rejoice in all the good things in your life this month. Encourage one another to express and focus on what they are thankful for.

<https://positivpsychology.com/gratitude-appreciation/#>  
<https://health.ucdavis.edu/health-news/newsroom/gratitude-the-best-medicine-during-tough-times/2021/05>  
<https://chopra.com/articles/11-creative-ways-to-express-gratitude>



## How to Show Yourself Gratitude

We often go through life without pausing and taking inventory of all the wonderful things about ourselves. I invite you to find some time this month to show gratitude towards yourself.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Make a list of ways you've impressed yourself lately.
- Treat yourself to something you enjoy, like a massage or a hike.
- Compliment yourself! - say it while looking in the mirror, write it in a journal or jot it on a sticky note and put it on your refrigerator.
- Give yourself time to enjoy a passion you're sometimes too busy to fit into your schedule.
- Take an inventory of all the good things you've done for other people and the world.
- Write yourself a love letter. *Seriously.*
- Let go of any conditions you have for being kind to yourself -- meaning you appreciate yourself even if you didn't accomplish or do anything specific.
- Share the beauty you are with the people around you, knowing they're fortunate to have you in their lives.
- Pray - faith-based reflections can be powerful; you can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.
- Meditate - there are dozens of free meditations online for practicing gratitude.

<https://tinybuddha.com/blog/50-ways-to-show-gratitude-for-the-people-in-your-life/>



# TALK TO US

EASE has counselors available when you are ready.  
(800) 882-1341