



# From the Grove A MENTAL WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

by Dr. Wanda Hall-Myers

## GRATITUDE

### Could It Be Good For Your Health?

We have all heard it! Be thankful. Appreciate what you have. When someone does something for you, tell them thank you. Count your blessings. Things can always be worse. Stop complaining. The list goes on, and I'm sure you can probably add your own saying.

What does each phrase have in common? They remind us to be grateful and show gratitude...gratitude to God, gratitude to our family and loved ones, and gratitude to others including those we may not know.

Gratitude has been defined in the following ways: the quality of being thankful; a feeling of being grateful; the act of showing kindness; and a strong feeling of appreciation to someone for doing something for you.

Synonyms for gratitude include grace, graciousness, thanks, honor, praise, recognition, appreciation, acknowledgment, and indebtedness.



Hopefully, as you read the definition and the synonyms you started to feel something warm in your heart. Maybe you started thinking about all the reasons you have to be grateful? Or maybe you are thinking that you are overdue for expressing gratitude to someone you know? Whatever the feeling, I hope you are moved to take action, whether internally by adjusting your attitude or externally by tangibly showing appreciation to someone.

If you still aren't moved, continue reading to learn about some of the health benefits of gratitude that have been proven by research.

#### Managing stress

When life becomes hectic and chaotic, which it sometimes does, practicing gratitude can help you de-stress. It's hard to feel stressed while you are being thankful or showing gratitude to others.

#### Improved physical health

Research has shown in multiple studies that participants who were more grateful had more immune-fighting cells in their bodies, better heart health, less inflammation, and lowered blood pressure. Grateful people have also been shown to practice healthier eating and more regular exercise habits.

#### Lowered risk for mental health challenges

Gratitude is associated with positive emotions including happiness and optimism. There is evidence that people who are generally more grateful have lowered occurrences of mental health challenges and tend to have more positive relationships.

So don't wait to practice gratitude. Now is a great time to start. If you already practice gratitude, be on the lookout for more opportunities to be grateful. They are all around!

## ACTION PLAN

Complete the Gratitude Log found under Therapeutic Exercises and Activities.