



WELL-BEING WEEK IN LAW

MON



STAY STRONG

Physical Well-Being

TUES



ALIGN

Spiritual Well-Being

WEDS



ENGAGE & GROW

Career & Intellectual Well-Being

THURS



CONNECT

Social Well-Being

FRI



FEEL WELL

Emotional Well-Being

WELL-BEING WEEK IN LAW ACTIVITY PLANNING GUIDE

1

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| Activity Title: | Loving-Kindness Meditation |
| Well-Being Dimension: | Social Well-Being |
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Activity Objectives:

To foster connection by directing thoughts of well-being to ourselves and others.

Well-Being Connection (How/Why Does this Work?)

Quality relationships, positive social interactions, and a sense of belonging are powerful determinants of mental and physical health. Our basic human need for connection impacts all aspects of our functioning—including our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This means that nurturing our relationships is a potent well-being strategy—one that we can do everyday.

Engaging in behaviors that benefit others—called “pro-social behaviors”—is one way to help build and sustain high-quality relationships. Loving-kindness meditation is a practice in which we mentally send goodwill, kindness, and warmth towards others, which builds a foundation for pro-social behaviors. Given that it can be challenging to cultivate such feelings toward others if we do not feel them toward ourselves, an important feature of loving-kindness meditation is that it starts with directing to oneself that which we wish to direct to others.

Research has found that loving-kindness meditation affects our emotions, motivation, and behaviors in ways that promote positive feelings and kindness toward ourselves and others. It bolsters both our experience of social connectedness as well as self-compassion. It does so by boosting our positive focus on others and reducing our tendency toward self-defensiveness, self-enhancement, and autopilot responding that can create barriers to social bonding. Loving-kindness meditation is also linked to many psychological benefits, including greater positive emotions and reduced depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness.

Procedure

Find a comfortable seated position. Roll your shoulders up, back, and down to open your chest, making it easier to breathe. If you are in a chair, bring your feet to the floor beneath you, if possible. You may want to close your eyes, or simply take gentle gaze at something representing nature or something that is rooted into the floor that you share (e.g., the legs of a table or chair; a box on the floor, etc.).

Take a slow breath in through your nose, and at the end of your inhale, exhale slowly out of the mouth. Repeat once or twice more, and then let your breath return to its regular pace.

Mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following or similar phrases:

- **May I be loved. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.**

While you say these phrases, you might hold an image of yourself in your mind. This helps reinforce the intentions expressed in the phrases. Repeat the phrases once more.

Now, bring to mind a friend or someone you care for. Then slowly repeat phrases of loving-kindness toward them:

- **May you be loved. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease.**

Repeat.

As you continue the meditation, you can bring to mind others, including people with whom you interact but do not know well, people with whom you have difficulty, and even people in the global community. You can either use the same phrases, repeating them again and again, or make up phrases that better represent the openness you wish to have toward them.

Finally, return to directing the phrases of loving kindness toward yourself:

- **May I be loved. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.**

Conclude the meditation by drawing in another slow breath through your nose, and letting the breath go slowly out of your mouth. If your eyes were closed, open them, and bring little bits of movement back into your body before you move on with your daily activities.

Resources

- [Loving-Kindness Meditation](#), Greater Good in Action: Science-Based Practices for a Meaningful Life
- [What is Loving-Kindness Meditation?](#) PositivePsychology.com.

Author

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