

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WELLNESS SHORTS



**National Gratitude Month** is an initiative started by author Stacey Grewal, who believes gratitude to be an essential ingredient of a happy and fulfilling life.

When we embrace gratitude, we immediately shift our focus from the negative to the positive things in life.

**What is gratitude  
- a thought,  
emotion, or  
action?**

**IT CAN BE ALL 3!**

**GRATITUDE - a state or quality of being appreciative for something or someone; expressing genuine appreciation for the good things in life, no matter how big or small**

**Studies show that we can deliberately cultivate gratitude and that there are important social and personal benefits to doing so....**

Gratitude can help you...

- Build happiness
- Improve your relationships
- Enhance your quality of sleep
- Boost your self-esteem
- Deal with stress
- Decrease mental health problems
- Improve academic and professional performance

... AND MORE!

# The difference between gratitude and toxic positivity.

## TOXIC POSITIVITY

**An obsession with positive thinking. The belief that people should put a positive spin on all experiences, even those that are profoundly tragic.**



## Gratitude acknowledges your struggles...

Having gratitude does not negate other feelings or exist in this toxic positivity space of 'Well at least you have this!' The reality is, two things can coexist at the same time. For example, we can feel both completely shattered by the loss of a relationship or friendship, while also experiencing gratitude for the experience.

## ...while toxic positivity invalidates them.

Toxic positivity is the misinformed belief that a 'positive' attitude is the universal cure for pain and suffering. But it does not account for systemic oppression, privilege, and social conditioning – the external negative factors that we have very little or no control over. Plus it can frequently invalidate mental illness, trauma, and grief.

## Sometimes, the intention is the only difference!

When you are grateful, you truly appreciate things and are genuinely choosing to believe that your cup is half-full. When you are in a state of toxic positivity, you are likely trying to push down negative feelings to feel and appear as though you are choosing to be positive. In reality, you are denying yourself the experience of processing your emotions and coming out the other side stronger.

# DID YOU KNOW...

A recent Forbes article noted that gratitude is a basic human requirement – and since we spend many of our waking hours at work, giving and receiving thanks at work is pretty important.

Some ways to practice gratitude at work:



## SHOW APPRECIATION

Say 'thank you' and give credit where credit is due



## REMEMBER THAT PREFERENCES DIFFER BY PERSON

Not everyone likes to receive gratitude in the same way - some might prefer a private thank you, whereas others would love a shoutout during a group meeting

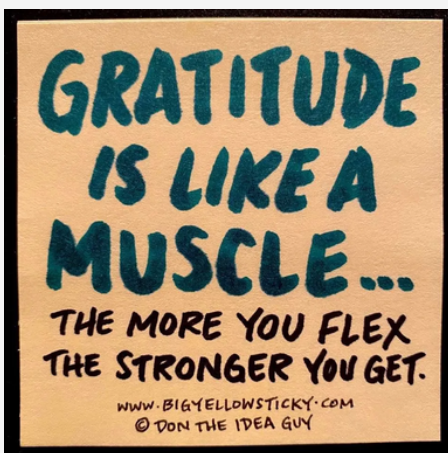


## LET YOUR ACTIONS SPEAK

Sometimes actions speak louder than words - treat people with respect and kindness to help create a culture of mutual gratitude

## QUICK TIP:

RESEARCH SUGGESTS WE CAN TRAIN OURSELVES TO BECOME MORE GRATEFUL.



Here are some exercises to flex your gratitude muscle:

- Write a gratitude list
- Tell someone how much you appreciate them
- Set an intention for the day
- Compliment someone on a strength
- Practice mindful eating
- Focus on the good
- Live in the present
- Appreciate the little things
- Volunteer your time
- Find a gratitude buddy

Brought to you by your Behavioral Health Advocates from Luzerne, Schuylkill, and Allegheny Counties