



# Contribute to Community & Society



Sharing your knowledge, skills, time and/or resources in a way that helps others (eg. "paying it forward", volunteering, caregiving, advocating for others) (1)

*Inspired by true stories...Research shows that helping others is **GOOD** for you!*

**#winterlove:** I shared treats with my neighbours to distract myself from depression and suicidal thoughts. To my surprise, this simple connection was part of my healing process - Lisa (2)

**#senseofpurpose:** As a peer volunteer with chronic pain, I learned not only to help others, but to help myself as well. Seeing them change gave me hope and meaning - Anonymous (3)

## What About You?

What are you currently doing?

How do you feel about it? (Please circle)

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  😟 
  😐 
  😊 
  😄

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What have you done in the past few years?

## Goal Setting

In the next \_\_\_\_\_ months/year, I would like to:

To do this, I will need to:

Remember: What you do everyday matters to your health and well-being!





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## Clinician Guide

**When?** This document can be used to empower clients to think beyond their own problems or limitations to identify strengths and talents that they could share with others.

**Why?** Research shows that altruism and contributing to others has a positive impact on health and well-being (4, 5).

**How?** The worksheet can be used with individuals or groups, to guide reflection on the importance of contributing to society. See below for questions to prompt reflection and goal setting for change.

## What About You? - Reflection Questions

Are you currently doing anything related to helping others or your community?

- Describe (who, what, where, when, why?)
- How satisfied are you with how you are currently contributing?
- Benefits? Challenges?

What have you done in the past few years to contribute to others that was meaningful to you?

- What has changed?
- Is there something from these past experiences that you would like to have in your life now?

## Goal Setting Guide

What could you do differently in your current routine to contribute to or help others?

- How meaningful would this be for you? (7-point Likert scale low to high)
- How much time would you like to commit to this? (Engagement)
- How much choice/control do you have over making this change?
- Could it interfere with other things you want or need to do? (Balance)

What personal or external issues might get in the way of meeting your goal?



## **Contribute to Community and Society**

### **References:**

1. Moll, S. E., Gewurtz, R. E., Krupa, T. M., Law, M. C., Lariviere, N., & Levasseur, M. (2015). "Do-Live-Well": A Canadian framework for promoting occupation, health, and well-being: «Vivez-Bien-Votre Vie»: un cadre de référence canadien pour promouvoir l'occupation, la santé et le bien-être. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 82(1), 9-23.
2. Giraldi, L. (2019, February 22). #winterlove: How baking pulled me out of my depression, and brought me closer to my neighbours. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/first-person/article-winterlove-how-baking-pulled-me-out-of-my-depression-and-lightened/>
3. Arnstein, P., Vidal, M., Wells-Federman, C., Morgan, B., & Caudill, M. (2002). From chronic pain patient to peer: Benefits and risks of volunteering. *Pain Management Nursing*, 3(3), 94-103.
4. Brown, S. L., Nesse, R. M., Vinokur, A. D., & Smith, D. M. (2003). Providing social support may be more beneficial than receiving it: Results from a prospective study of mortality. *Psychological science*, 14(4), 320-327.
5. Poulin, M. J., Brown, S. L., Dillard, A. J., & Smith, D. M. (2013). Giving to others and the association between stress and mortality. *American journal of public health*, 103(9), 1649-1655.

### **Other suggested readings:**

1. Brown, S. L., & Brown, R. M. (2015). Connecting prosocial behavior to improved physical health: Contributions from the neurobiology of parenting. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 55, 1-17.
2. Brown, S. L., Brown, R. M., House, J. S., & Smith, D. M. (2008). Coping with spousal loss: Potential buffering effects of self-reported helping behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34(6), 849-861.
3. Molsher, R., & Townsend, M. (2016). Improving wellbeing and environmental stewardship through volunteering in nature. *EcoHealth*, 13(1), 151-155.
4. Okun, M. A., Yeung, E. W., & Brown, S. (2013). Volunteering by older adults and risk of mortality: A meta-analysis. *Psychology and aging*, 28(2), 564.