

## In our own words

*“As we express our gratitude we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” – John F. Kennedy*

*“Saying thank you in person is okay but a letter is better because they can re-read the letter whenever they are feeling down. I like to include a poem in my thank you notes.” – Patty*

*“It made me feel good to thank my husband for the practical things he does daily, like reminding me to take medications, doing the laundry, taking me to appointments... I feel respected by him.” – Patrizia*

*“I am writing a letter to my grandmother. I think hearing these things will affect her and make her feel loved.” – Angela*

*“I’ve learned that it’s important to be grateful for the little things because they add up to be big things.” – Tara*

*“I am grateful to my family for always supporting me in good times and bad times.” – Jen*

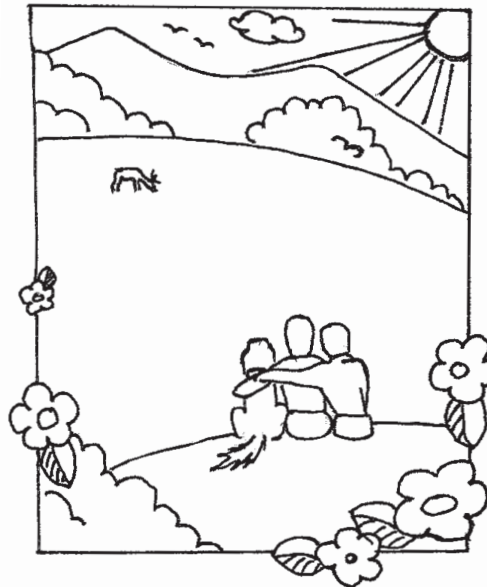


Image: Designed for you to colour by Ivan Duguay

*This brochure was created by Patient and Family Collaborative Support Services (PFCSS) in partnership with the Peer Advisory Council, Mental Health and Addiction Program.*

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# Strategies for Positive Living

*“Gratitude is a sign of a noble soul”  
– Aesop*

Thankful  
Goodness  
Welcoming  
Reflective Clarity  
Appreciation  
**Gratitude**  
Gifts Recognition  
Grateful Spiritual Beauty  
Blessing  
Kindness



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## What is gratitude?

Gratitude, appreciation, or thankfulness is a positive emotion or attitude in acknowledgment of a benefit that one has received or will receive. (Wikipedia).



## Examples of things to be grateful for

- Putting your hands around a steaming mug after spending time outdoors in the snow
- Having an umbrella on a rainy day
- Being surrounded by supportive people
- My pets when they know to comfort me in times of need

**Disclaimer:** We recognize that when living with a mental illness it may be more difficult to appreciate the good things...but try anyway- because it just might lift your mood!

## How to be more grateful

It can be helpful to write down or talk with others about what being grateful means to you. Ask yourself these questions and write/talk about:

### 1. Three Good Things

Each day write down three good things that happened. They can be anything you feel good about or are grateful for. Include why you felt each of the things was really good. Research has shown that this task can get repetitive so resolve to do it three times a week instead of daily.

### 2. Gratitude Letter

Write a letter to someone you never properly thanked and either read this letter out loud or send through the mail. This can benefit both the writer and the recipient.

### 3. Count Your Thank You's

One simple but effective way to be more grateful: Count how many times you say "thank you" in a day and try to beat it regularly.

### 4. Use Visual Reminders

This could mean a sign or poster, a gratitude jar where you collect grateful moments- whatever will remind you to be more grateful in your day.

## Benefits of gratitude

Research shows that there are many benefits to being more grateful. They include:

- Being able to cope more effectively with everyday stress
- Increased resiliency in the face of trauma-induced stress
- More good moods and less depression with an optimistic view of life
- Less feelings of envy and resentment and more prosocial behaviour
- Better social relationships, specifically feeling more connected, loving, and forgiving
- Improved physical health including better sleep and fewer physical symptoms

### References:

Emmons, Robert A. (2007). Thanks! How the new science of gratitude can make you happier. Houghton Mifflin Company. New York: NY.

Emmons, R.A. & McCullough M.E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84 (2),377-389.