



*Bridging Bright
Futures for Families*

**ERICSA
2024**

Grand Rapids

**ERICSA 61ST ANNUAL
TRAINING CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION
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CREATING A CULTURE OF KINDNESS

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**ERICSA
2024**



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CREATING A CULTURE OF KINDNESS

- Benefits of Kindness
- Brain Science Behind Kindness
- Practical Strategies to Promote Kindness

KINDNESS
CHANGES
EVERYTHING

Think about the worst
job/boss you've ever had...

What was so bad about it?



Now, think about the
best job/boss you've
ever had...

What made it so
positive?



WHY KINDNESS?

AND WHY IN THE WORKPLACE?

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Performance
- Outcomes
- Efficiencies
- Customer Service



WHAT THE DATA SAYS...

- 25% of people feel highly engaged at work
- 50% feel “Meh”
- 25% are actively disengaged
- Cost of disengagement is over **\$300 Billion** annually

What the less-engaged lack-

- Feeling cared about
- Having someone who encourages their development
- Opportunities to learn and grow
- Their opinions counting
- Autonomy
- Having a best friend at work

WHAT THE DATA SAYS...

People who are in “kind” workplaces

Increased Productivity & Satisfaction

- 26% more energy
- 36% more job satisfaction
- 44% more commitment

WHAT THE DATA SAYS...

People who feel safe and secure at work

Better Health Outcomes

- Lower heart rates
- Lower blood pressure
- Stronger immune responses
- Lower absenteeism and fewer sick days

WHAT THE DATA SAYS...

Better Overall Outcomes

- Higher quality work
- More creativity
- Increased engagement
- Kindness spreads from the top down & makes everyone happier



INCLUSION MATTERS...

- Promotes a positive learning & working environment
- Encourages interaction
- Higher productivity
- Improved problem solving throughout the organization
- Increased creativity and innovation
- Higher job satisfaction
- Lower turnover



DIVERSITY

Representation - Bringing people of different backgrounds and identities to the table.

EQUITY

Recognizing that the journey to the table is not the same for all - and making sure there is a way for all to make it to the table.

INCLUSION

Everyone's voice is valued at the table.

BELONGING

It is safe for each person at the table to be their authentic selves. All experiences are valued, not just the majority culture.

ACCESSIBILITY

Making it to the table is not enough if your chair prevents you from participating as others can.



INCLUSION MATTERS...

- Diverse teams improve performance up to 30%
- 75% of organizations with diverse teams surpass their financial targets
- More creative/innovative (12.9%)



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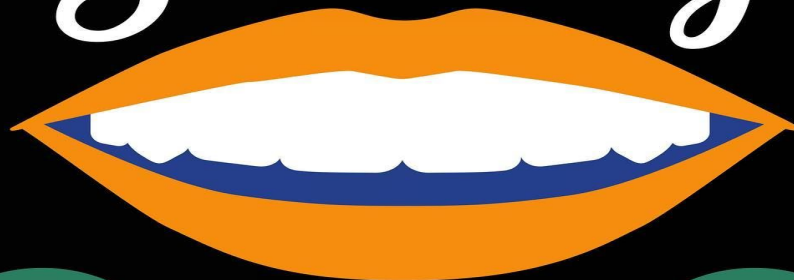
WHAT THE BRAIN SCIENCE SAYS...

Smiling: It's Good for You & It's
Contagious!



make
people
feel
loved
today

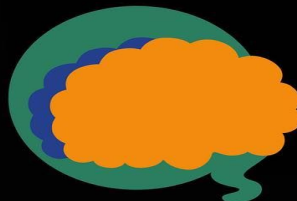
Benefits of Smiling



How it Affects the Body

When you smile, people view you as more **attractive**, **reliable**, and **sincere**.

The **orbifrontal cortex** is activated after seeing a smiling face; this region processes the brain's reward center. Seeing a smiling face literally feels like a **reward**.

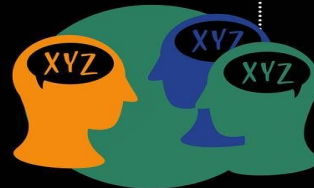


How it Affects the Brain

Neuropeptides activated

Neuropeptides facilitate neuron communication

Dopamine, **Endorphins**, and **Serotonin** get released into the body.



How it Affects Those Around You

Cingulate Cortex Activated

The region of the brain that's concerned with **unconscious** emotional responses.

Meaning that if you smile, the person looking at you is **likely to smile too** and enjoy the chemical reactions that are caused inside the body.

Dopamine lowers the heart rate and your blood pressure

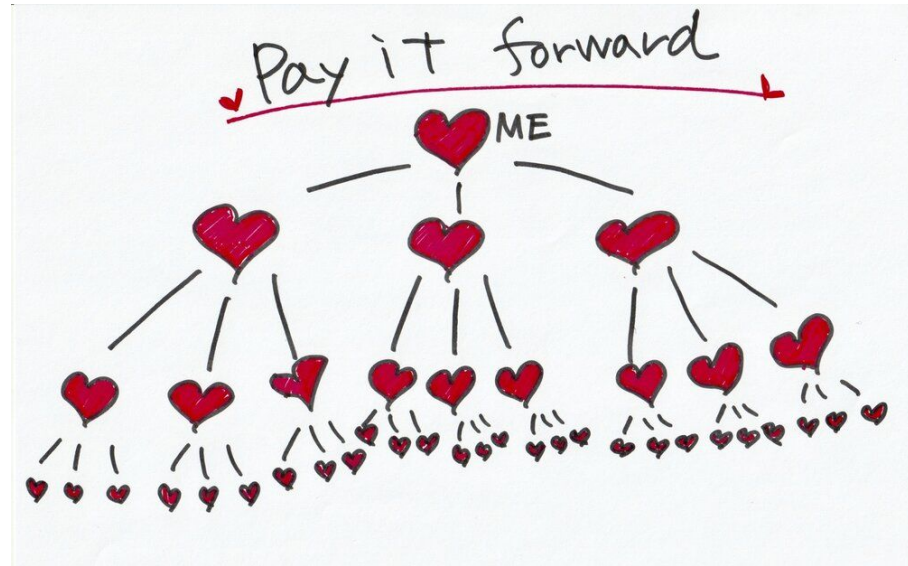
Endorphins are a natural pain reliever

Serotonin is an anti-depressant and mood-lifter.

WHAT THE BRAIN SCIENCE SAYS...

Acts of Kindness are Contagious!

- Studies have shown that when one person performs a kind act, the recipient is more likely to perform a kind act



WHAT THE BRAIN SCIENCE SAYS...

Volunteerism- Helping Others & Yourself!

People who volunteer:

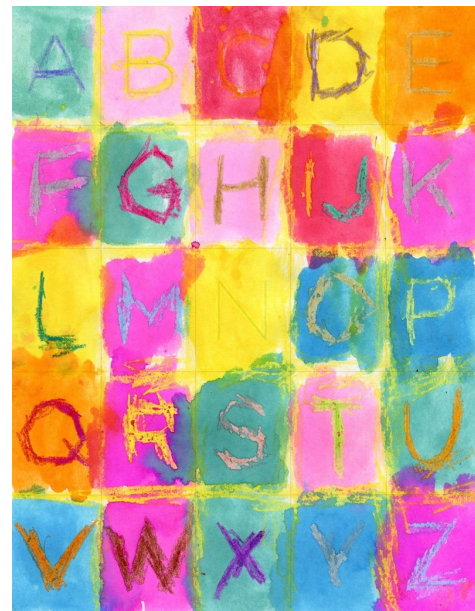
- More satisfied with their lives
- Rated their overall health better
- Warm Glow effect
- Boosts social connection
- Build professional skills and leadership opportunities
- Creates empathy
- Sense of control in times of stress



WHAT THE BRAIN SCIENCE SAYS...

Say My Name! And Pronounce it Correctly.

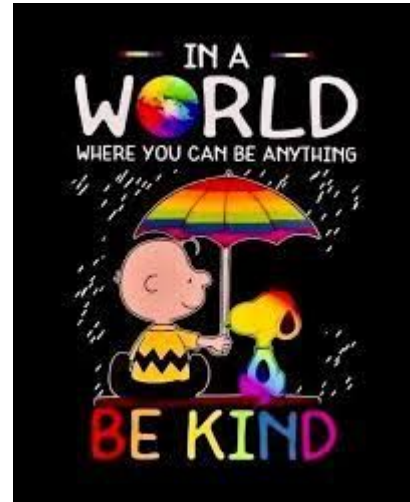
- People's brains activate at the sound of their own name
- Shows respect, value
- Correct pronunciation is important



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Kindness in the virtual, hybrid, & real worlds...

- Be sincere
- Be intentional
- Be strategic
- Crowdfsource it



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

DEIBA

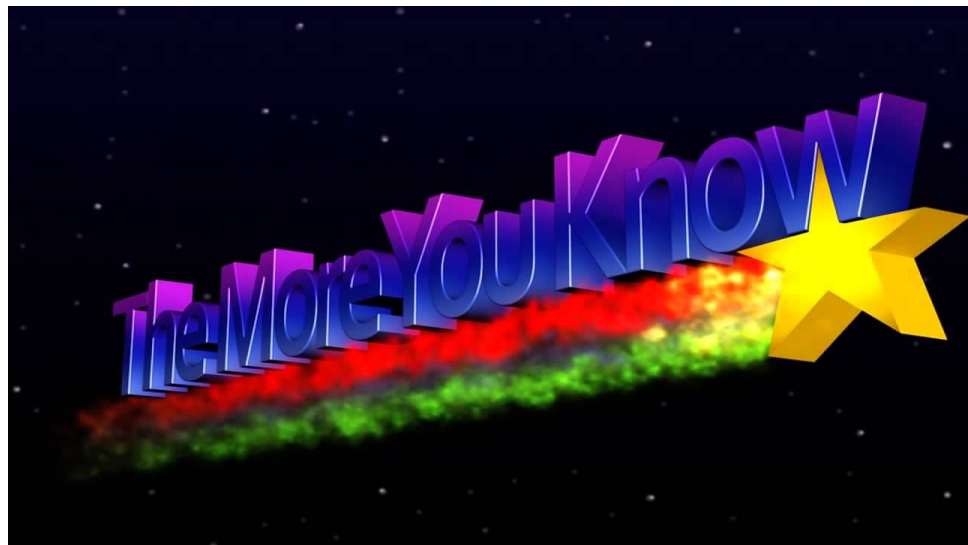
Use email, Teams, Slack, etc. to highlight cultural awareness

- Holidays, Months, Days
- Important moments in history

[DEI Calendar 2023](#)

[This Day in History](#)

- Food!



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Names & Togetherness

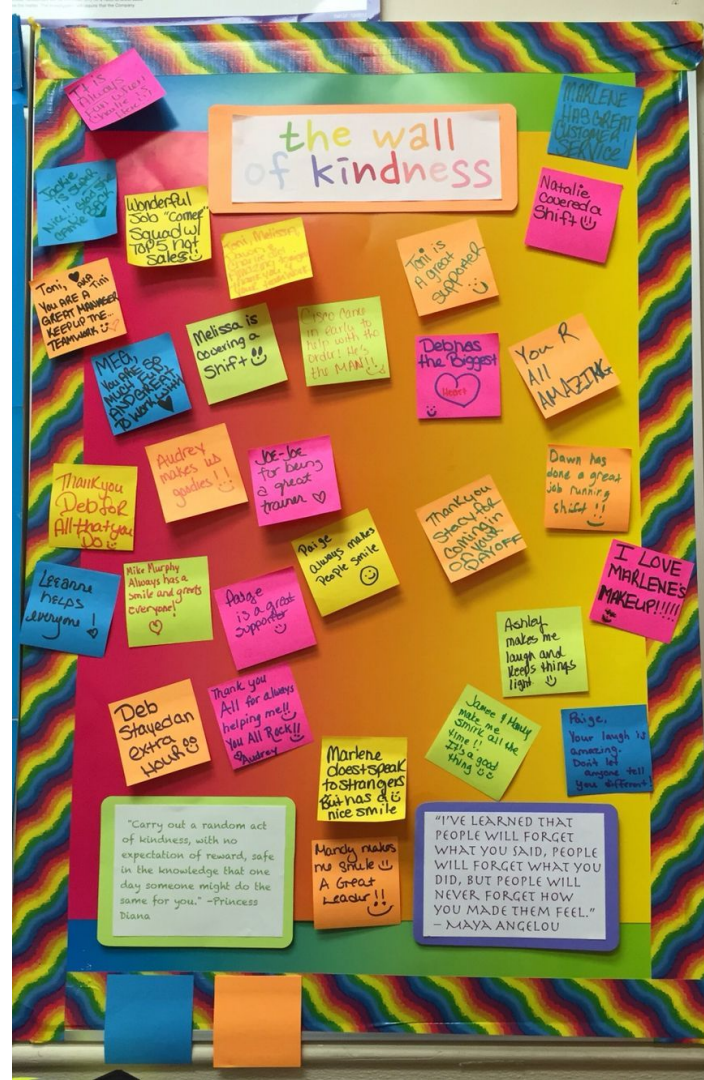
- Names cards on all cubes, Zoom, Teams (cameras on)
- Show an interest in people's lives (cheat sheet)
- Gifts of appreciation
- Meaningful team building
- Set aside time/encourage volunteerism



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Crowdsource it!

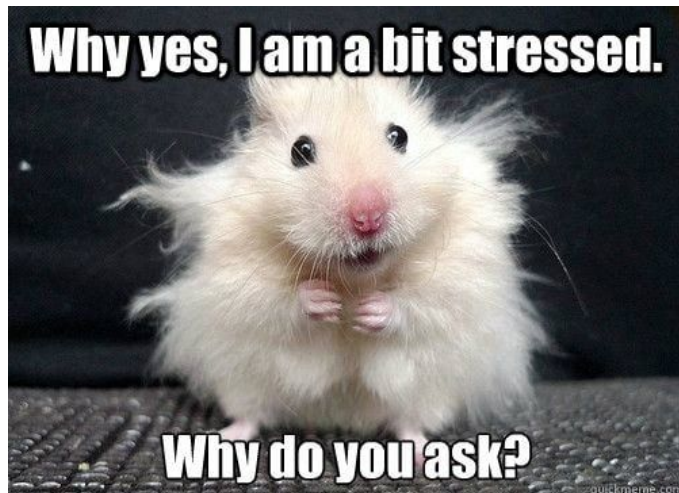
- Ask for input from your staff
- Set aside the first 5 minutes of meetings for Appreciation Bombs, The Three Happies, Gratitude
- Kindness Walls (virtual and in person)
- Circles of Kindness
- Thank you cards with organizational values (Gratitude, Empathy, Service, etc.)



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Model the Way

- Take care of yourself
- Don't wear stress as a badge of honor
- Walking meetings
- Coffee Talk/Brown Bag Q&A
- Reduce judgment- everyone's got a story
- Give the benefit of the doubt
- Treat people like adults (personal live)
- Get rid of hazing rituals
- Acknowledge stressors
- Acknowledge when you need to grieve a loss



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Let's hear from you!



CREATING A CULTURE OF KINDNESS

Reach Out!

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