

Metro North Health CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT



The power of gratitude

A test of teamwork and non-verbal communication

Time: Flexible – Activities range from 5 to 30 minutes and can be used individually or as part of a group wellbeing session.

Materials needed: None.

Participants: Individuals or teams.

Values in Action: Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Teamwork.

Outcomes: Boosts wellbeing, empathy, and mental resilience, strengthens workplace relationships and team connection, and builds emotional intelligence and a habit of appreciation.

Why gratitude matters

Gratitude isn't just about expressing appreciation—it's also a powerful tool for enhancing your own wellbeing. Research shows that regularly practicing gratitude improves brain health, reduces stress, boosts mental clarity, and strengthens personal and professional relationships.

The benefits of gratitude

- **Stronger relationships** - Appreciation builds trust and deeper connection.
- **Better health** - Grateful people are more likely to take care of themselves.
- **Improved mental wellbeing** - It boosts happiness, reduces stress and anxiety.
- **More empathy and compassion** - Gratitude increases kindness and patience.
- **Improved sleep** - Shifting focus from worry to thanks promotes rest.
- **Greater confidence** - It enhances self-worth and self-esteem.
- **Stronger resilience** - Helps people bounce back from adversity with strength.

Activity 1: Gratitude journaling (5–10 mins)

Purpose: Focus on the positive and increase everyday joy.

How to do it:

- Write down 3–5 things you're grateful for today (big or small).
- Reflect on how they've impacted your day or life.
- Try imagining life without them to deepen appreciation.

Tip: Make it a daily or weekly ritual. Even a few minutes makes a difference over time.

Activity 2: The gratitude jar (10 mins setup, ongoing)

Purpose: Collect positive moments to revisit when needed.

How to do it:

- Find a jar, box, or container and decorate it.
- Each day, write 1–3 things you're thankful for on slips of paper.
- Drop them in the jar. When you're feeling low, pull a few out to reflect on.

Variation: Create a shared team gratitude jar in the lunchroom or virtual board.

Activity 3: The gratitude rock (Daily – 2 mins)

Purpose: Use a tangible object as a daily gratitude reminder.

How to do it:

- Find a small rock or object to carry with you.
- Every time you touch it, pause and think of one thing you're grateful for.
- At day's end, reflect on your gratitude moments.

Tip: It's a great pocket-sized mindfulness prompt during a busy workday.

Activity 4: The gratitude walk (10–20 mins)

Purpose: Combine physical activity with mindful gratitude.

How to do it:

- Go for a walk in a calming space (e.g. park, garden, hospital grounds).
- As you walk, focus on things you appreciate—the environment, your health, supportive colleagues.
- Walk slowly and breathe deeply, using each step to focus on the present.

Variation: Try a silent walk in pairs or as a group followed by a short reflection.

Activity 5: Gratitude reflection (5–10 mins)

Purpose: Cultivate presence and emotional resilience.

How to do it:

- Find a quiet space. Sit comfortably and take a few deep breaths.
- Use the mantra: *“For this, I am grateful”* after noticing:
 - Your surroundings
 - People in your life
 - Your own qualities and strengths
 - The big picture of your life

Tip: This is an excellent way to start or end a workday or meeting.

Wrap-up and ongoing ideas

- Keep a gratitude board in the team space.
- Start meetings with a quick *“what are you grateful for today?”* round.
- Pair this with other wellbeing practices like mindfulness or reflection sessions.
- Encourage people to express appreciation to others regularly—verbally, in writing, or during team shout-outs.