

Tip sheet

Helping others

Have you ever reached out to others when you know they might be going through a hard time, cooked dinner for a neighbour, taken someone else's children to sport for them or given some time to a voluntary organisation? Did you know that acts of generosity have lasting physical benefits?

General health benefits

We are all familiar with the feeling of warmth and satisfaction when we do someone a good turn and it has been discovered that something is happening, physiologically, in this process of helping others that makes people not only feel happier but also report greater health.

Studies show that people who volunteer regularly have healthier hearts, less ongoing pain, and bolstered immune systems.

We have also seen that people in recovery from an experience of alcohol addiction are twice as likely to stay sober when they help others going through the same thing, and chronic pain sufferers see their pain lessen when they help someone with a similar condition.

Where this may come from

An evolutionary reason may explain why our reward centres light up when we help someone else. Working in a team, it could very well have helped us survive as a species.

Some even suggest women's innate tendency to 'tend and befriend' rather than fight or fly in times of crisis could, by buffering stress hormones, partially account for why women live longer than men.



Helping others is both rewarding and satisfying. Looking 'outward' and considering others gives us a sense of worth and in so doing promotes a sense of well-being. Maintaining a healthy balance between our own needs and the needs of others can enrich our lives and the lives of those around us.

If you would like further information on any of these areas, please speak with one of our Vitae staff team by phoning 0508 664 981 or emailing assistance@vitae.co.nz or register with workshops@vitae.co.nz and come along to one of our online community development workshops.

Contact

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