**​Mental Health Awareness Week 18th – 24th May 2020 in conjunction with the Alzheimer’s Society**

Aeons ago, lockdown began.

The days where you measured time in minutes and hours rather than coffee and wine intake are a distant memory; those intentions of using this time to get into the best shape of your life have long been tempered by a blossoming appreciation for salami; you spend an increasing amount of time wondering whether Andrex are behind the Coronavirus; and your hair is now a length only Jason Momoa can pull off.

Yet, you are able to seek comfort in the fact that you are not alone, and that despite the unprecedented social distancing measures keeping people physically apart, communities are making a concerted effort to keep people emotionally connected.

**Mental Health Awareness Week**

Next week is Mental Health Awareness week, and the theme is kindness. We are taking this opportunity to encourage people to share a little kindness throughout the week, be that with family, friends or strangers, in a bid to sustain or even grow connectivity amongst people.

For those seeking inspiration, some examples of lockdown-oriented acts of kindness include:

            -donating to foodbanks (<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/donate-food/>)

            -contacting the person you never get around to catching up with

            -donating to charity

            -giving people your time, whether that be to lend an ear over a cup of tea or help with a household chore

             -complimenting that person in the supermarket with shoes that are on point (whilst maintaining social-distancing etiquette)

            -giving praise where it's due

            -donating blood (<https://www.blood.co.uk/>)

            -offering support to neighbours

            -choosing to shop through Amazon Smile to donate to a charity of your choice at no extra cost (<https://org.amazon.co.uk/>)

**The Alzheimer's Society**

Furthermore, we have opened up a new Just Giving page to facilitate donations to AAT's chosen charity – The Alzheimer's Society.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lockdownfundraising>

The Alzheimer's Society are supporting a community of people that require more consideration than ever during this time. With many people who suffer from dementia not being well-connected remotely, the feelings of isolation that may already be present as a result of the illness are magnified. Supporting the Alzheimer's Society will enable them to provide time and services to this community to help them feel as emotionally connected as the rest of us.

In order to raise money we are hopeful that people may consider making a donation or partaking in a lockdown fundraiser to gather donations from friends and family.

Some lockdown fundraising ideas include:

            -homebound 5k

            -cycle your commute

            -yes day (where a person in your household sponsors you to say yes for the day)

            -home haircuts

            -lip sync battles

            -home waxing

We encourage people to take a photo or video of themselves partaking in either their act of kindness or lockdown fundraiser for sharing amongst AAT staff and, if you wish, to post the photo or video on social media alongside a link to the Just Giving page to allow friends and family to donate.

Please post photos and videos to the intranet under "*Upload your challenge pics here*" via the following link: <http://intranet.aat.local/wfh/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

Once we have reached the £50 donation mark, we shall release some entertaining content provided by our very own partners!

As a final note, make sure to treat yourself to a little kindness too during this time. As the saying goes – you can't pour from an empty cup.

We look forward to hearing of your acts of kindness and lockdown fundraising throughout the week!