

Blue Cross® VIRTUAL WELL-BEING

Heart health and gratitude

Gratitude is appreciation for what you receive, both tangible and intangible. It helps you refocus on what you have rather than what you lack. Gratitude helps you feel more positive emotions, appreciate your good experiences, improve your health, deal with hardships and build strong relationships. Gratitude can also help your heart.



A study published by the American Psychological Association of people who already had heart damage found that the more grateful people reported themselves being, the healthier they were. They were less depressed, slept better and had more energy. And, blood tests showed they had lower levels of inflammation. Another study by the Harvard Medical School of patients who had heart attacks found those who reported feelings of

gratitude took their medication regularly, ate a healthier diet and got more exercise than less grateful patients.

A Princeton University study found that showing gratitude can cause a ripple effect. When you show gratitude, your co-workers and employees are likely to be inspired to incorporate it into their own life. Some ways to incorporate gratitude in the the office are:

- Saying thank you to nurture your relationship with the other person. Try making it a habit to show gratitude to someone in the office once a week.
- Encourage your teammates to share something they're grateful for at the start of meetings. It will help your teammates focus on the positive in their life.
- Offering meditation programs that help employees focus on what they're grateful for.
- Giving your team gratitude journals and encouraging them to use them in their personal lives.

The American Heart Association has a simple, five-question prompt to help you and your employees focus on gratitude:

- **H**health: What did your body do for you today?
- **E**eat: What did you feed yourself to nourish your body and mind?
- **A**activity: What did you do today that you really enjoyed?
- **R**relationship: Who do you look forward to seeing?
- **T**ime: What are you doing right now?

Sources: [apa.org](https://www.apa.org)*, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)*, greatergood.berkeley.edu*, [health.harvard.edu](https://www.health.harvard.edu)*, [pnas.org](https://www.pnas.org)*

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