In this month's newsletter:

LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Self-care for unpaid carers

3 simple steps to becoming a better ally

In June we are celebrating Pride Month, a tradition that first began in 1969 after the **Stonewall riots**. Today, Pride is a joyful celebration of LGBTQ+ culture and rights but it's important to remember that it began as a fight for gay liberation.

Since 1969, the world has continued to become a much more accepting place for members of the LGBTQ+ community but that doesn't mean the work is over, and allies should still be playing their part. **Half of LGBTQ+ people have experienced depression, and one in eight LGBTQ+ people aged 18 to 24 have attempted to end their life.** Remember being an ally should be an action rather than a label, so call out the people you know when they tell offensive jokes and be consistent in your allyship. Here are 3 simple steps you can follow to be a better ally to your LGBTQ+ family members, friends, colleagues, and the community in general.

1) Don't assume everyone you know is straight or cisgender. Having to come out over and over again to different people can be both exhausting and anxiety provoking for members of the LGBTQ+ community. By not making assumptions, you allow people to be their authentic selves and open up to you when they feel comfortable.

2) Understand your privilege. Most people, including members of the community, have some type of privilege, such as class, racial, gender, being able-bodied, or straight. This doesn't mean you haven't had your own struggles, just that there are things you personally have never had to think or worry about. Recognising your own privilege can make you more empathetic to marginalised groups.

3) Educate yourself. Whilst listening and learning from your LGBTQ+ loved ones is excellent, and definitely a big part of being a good ally, remember that it's not their responsibility to educate you. Use your own time to learn about LGBTQ+ history and keep up to date with the issues the community still faces today.

Most importantly remember to be empathetic to everyone you meet and spread joy everywhere you go this Pride Month.

5 ways to care for yourself as an unpaid carer

While caring for someone else is often a very rewarding and positive experience, it isn't always easy and can also affect your mental health in a negative way. You might experience stress, anxiety, money worries, isolation, guilt, frustration, anger, or depression, which is why it's so important to take care of yourself as well as the person you're caring for. As a carer it can be so difficult to prioritise yourself, but finding a good balance and taking some time out of your day to focus on you is really important.

When you're caring for someone, it may seem impossible to take time off, but time off doesn't need to be a weekend away. Taking regular short breaks can be just as beneficial as longer but less frequent breaks, and much more achievable. Here are a few different ways you can spend those regular short breaks taking care of yourself:

Engage with something you enjoy

Try picking up a book, learning a new craft, or doing something creative for 20 minutes a day. Doing something that you really enjoy is a great way to reconnect with your sense of self and can also help to calm and distract you from any worries.

Get some exercise

It doesn't have to be anything too full on, but whether it's going on a brisk walk or dancing around your kitchen to music, exercise will clear your mind and boost your mood as it releases endorphins.

Breathe in some fresh air

Get outdoors and go on a walk or sit on a bench and watch the world go by. Taking some time out of your busy schedule to observe the world around you will leave you feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.

Pamper yourself

A pampering session doesn't need to be a trip to the spa, run a long luxurious bath, do a face mask, give yourself a manicure, whatever you are able to make time for. By indulging in this type of self-care, you're really giving yourself the permission you deserve to put yourself first when you need it.

Do absolutely nothing

Sometimes the best thing you can do to unwind and look after yourself is nothing. Taking a short pause from your busy day-to- day life to just sit down, turn off your phone, close your eyes and focus on your breathing- it does wonders for the mind, body, and soul.

Take some time to yourself and try out these tips to make sure you're also getting the care you need and deserve.

If you are struggling with putting yourself first, or any other aspects of being an unpaid carer, both **MIND** and **Carers Trust** have lots of helpful resources you can access for free.