

U GOOD EVENT GUIDE

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START HERE.

U Good events raise awareness of mental health and substance misuse among college students. The objective of U Goods is to engage, educate, and encourage students to adopt healthful skills and behaviors that improve mental wellness. This event programming was created and implemented by Kent State University, Center for Public Policy and Health.

This Microsoft Word document details the U Good event titled:

“Crafting Happiness Through Gratitude”

EVENT DESCRIPTION.

The focus of this event is to educate students on the benefits of gratitude journaling and how it can help reduce anxiety, as well as improve one’s overall mental wellbeing.

The evidence backing reasons for hosting the event:

- Studies have indicated that expressing gratitude even a few times per week can enhance positive emotions, alleviate symptoms of mental illness, strengthen relationships, and improve overall mental well-being (Bono et al., 2023).
- Previous research has shown that journaling may be an effective strategy for mental illness prevention and management (Sohal et al., 2022).
- There are many ways to express gratitude but utilizing a gratitude journal has proven to be an effective method of expressing gratitude, which can continuously provide mental health benefits while gratitude is still being practiced. The study done by O’Connell et al. (2017) found that the participant group that was tasked with reflecting on what they were grateful for experienced stronger benefits than the groups that were not asked to reflect. The instruction handout being given to event participants will include this information and encourage participants to also include reflection into their journaling habits (O’Connell et al., 2017).
- Gratitude journals are an easy and affordable method of practicing gratitude. Some journals can provide guidance on how to practice gratitude, but simply reflecting on what you are grateful for and writing about it is effective too.
- An article written by Jason March (2011) provides tips on making the use gratitude journals more effective, such as including details of the event you are grateful for, focusing on events involving other people, only writing on a few occasions per week rather than every day, as well as considering how your life would be without these events/people. Some of these suggestions were included in the instructions section of the handout.
- Studies have found that programs that encouraged students to speak with their peers about mental health have led to reductions in stigmas and biases surrounding mental health (Hundert et al., 2020; Manago & Krendl, 2022).

Attendees will be provided with a journal in which they can decorate and personalize with markers, gel pens, and stickers. They will also be provided with an informational sheet that will include instructions on how to use a gratitude journal, along with information about the benefits of practicing gratitude. While attendees are decorating their journal, they will be encouraged to speak with the host(s) and

other attendees about mental health as studies have shown that events that encourage these types of dialogues have led to a reduction in stigmas and bias about mental health. Upon completion of the activity, attendees will be asked to complete a short electronic survey on their phone after scanning a QR code or on a provided tablet. The purpose of the post-event survey is to gain a better understanding of participants' prior experience with gratitude journaling, as well as their reception of the U Good event.

The anticipated event attendees were Kent State University students.

The event entailed students approaching the event table, decorating a journal, engaging in conversation about mental health, completing a short electronic survey, and leaving the event with a gratitude journal and informational sheet detailing instructions and information on the benefits of gratitude journaling. This was a free walk-up tabling event located in a common space at the University's campus that is accessible, convenient, comfortable, and easy to navigate for on-campus students. It took an attendee approximately ~10-15 minutes to participate. At least one volunteer was needed to table the event.

EVENT BUDGET

There were costs associated with hosting this event. See event itemized budget below.

Event title:	Crafting Happiness Through Gratitude				
Expected number of event attendees:	~60				
Items on-hand that did <i>not</i> need to be purchased:	Markers				
Event Itemized Budget					
Item	Quantity	Price per unit	Total Cost Web Link	Store	Web Link
Blank Cover Journals of Assorted Colors (12 pack)	5	\$12.99	\$64.95	Amazon Prime	Link to Store
Gel Pen Pack of Assorted Colors	1	\$10.89	\$10.89	Amazon Prime	Link to Store
Mental Health Awareness Stickers Pack (50 stickers)	1	\$7.97	\$7.97	Amazon Prime	Link to Store
Inspirational Stickers Pack (25 stickers)	1	\$11.99	\$11.99	Amazon Prime	Link to Store
Total	8	-	\$95.8	-	-

*Please note that links to items are subject to change. Some items may no longer be available or have fluctuated in price. In those cases, our recommendation is to browse for items to serve as substitutes for items listed above.

EVENT SCHEDULING.

Event was hosted in-person in the Kent State Student Center. The event was held on Monday, March 21st at 11 AM – 2PM and Thursday, March 24th 2 PM-5PM of the same week to allow students with differing schedules to attend the event.

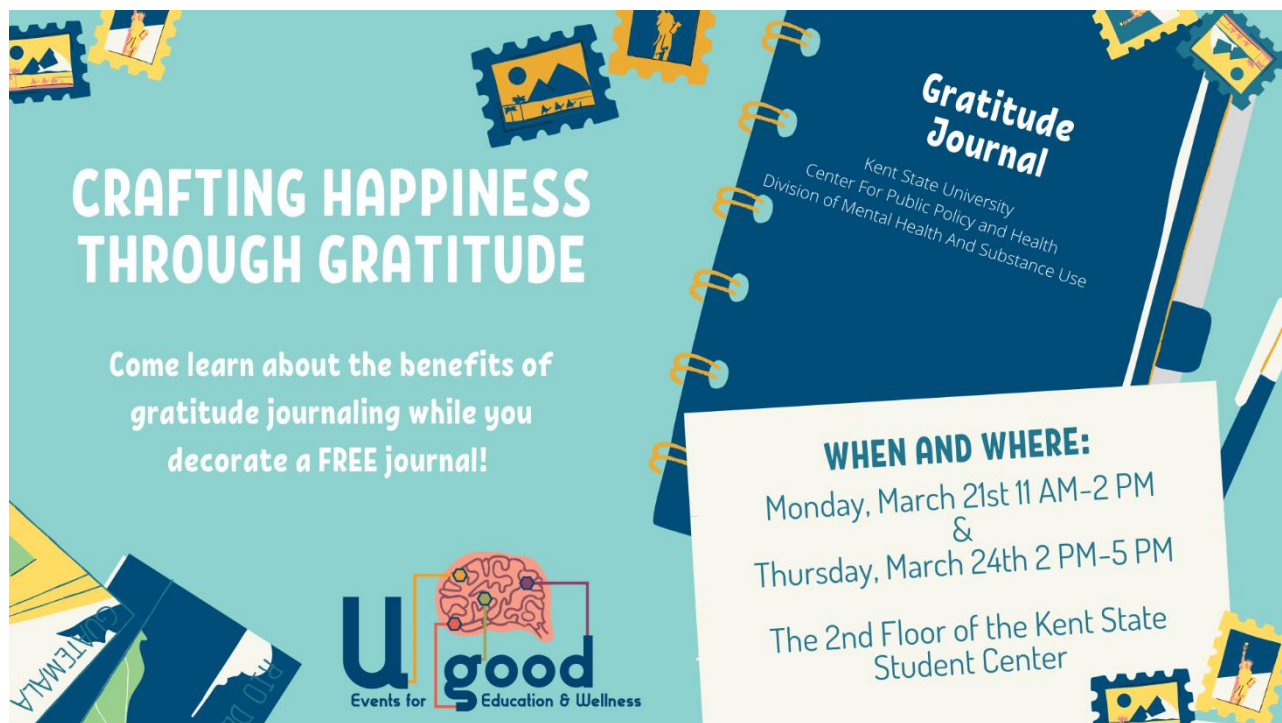
EVENT ADVERTISING.

Event was promoted on Center social media and through student organization email listservs. Posting was also made on the university event calendar. Posters were also put in buildings across the Kent main campus.

EVENT PREPARATION.

Materials and supplies were accrued, and table reservations were made in Kent State Student Center.

EVENT PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



EVENT HANDOUT

Why should I use a gratitude journal?

Good question! Gratitude journals have proven to be effective in improving the mental health of those who use one. Studies have shown that using a gratitude journal can increase positivity, self-esteem, satisfaction in relationships, sleep quality, and overall mental wellbeing. Using a gratitude journal can also reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. Even if you aren't currently experiencing any of these symptoms, utilizing gratitude journals can help prevent them from occurring!

How do I use a gratitude journal?

- Studies have shown that using a gratitude journal at least 3 days per week to be most effective.
- Writing in your journal at the end of your day will give you some calm time for reflection before going to sleep.
- When writing in your journal, spend some time reflecting on your day, and what parts of your day you are grateful for. This can be anything. For example, maybe a friend bought you lunch, or a stranger complimented your shirt. Any positive occurrence that had an impact on your day works.
- Some things to consider when reflecting: How did you feel in the moment? How do you feel now? Why are you grateful for this occurrence? How would your day had been different if this hadn't happened? Did you express your gratitude in the moment? How did the person you expressed gratitude to react? How did seeing their reaction make you feel?
- Try to narrow down your list to 3-6 things you were grateful for per day.
- Truthfully, there is no wrong way to use a gratitude journal. Afterall, it is **your** journal, so do what works best for **you**!

References:

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- Sohal, M., Singh, P., Dhillon, B. S., & Gill, H. S. (2022). Efficacy of journaling in the management of mental illness: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 1, e001154. <https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2021-001154>