You may be aware that January 21st is National Hugging Day. This named day began in the USA in 1986 where people were encouraged to hug everyone. It is noted that hugging has many benefits for our health and some studies note that hugging triggers the release of healthy hormones.

The date for National Hugging Day was said to be selected as it fell between Christmas, New Year and Valentine's Day when people often experience low mood.

According to an online US article (https://ideas.ted.com/we-are-made-to-be-touched-so-what-happens-when-we-arent/) "Our bodies are designed to respond to touch and not just to sense the environment around us. We actually have a network of dedicated nerve fibers in our skin that detect and emotionally respond to the touch of another person – affirming our relationships, our social connections and even our sense of self."

However, we need to reflect what happens when we don't receive that. It is maybe that we don't liked to be hugged or have affection from someone else. It also may be that is not appropriate for us to hug someone due to our professional relationship with them.

The article continues "Even if you don't consider yourself to be a tactile person, touch is – or was – embedded in the social structure of our lives. From meetings a new colleague and evaluating their handshake to giving a friend a long hug when we haven't seen them in a while, it is one of the fundamental ways we have all learned to relate to one another."

Here are a couple of ways that you can experience that warmth of a hug in other ways…
- Walk a pet or ask to look after or walk someone else's
- Check in on someone – this could be a loved one, a friend or a neighbour

For children, physical touch can benefit them in many ways according to the US website Waterford.org https://www.waterford.org/resources/for-national-hugging-day-7-ways-physical-touch-can-help-your-child/
- Improve growth
- Increase intelligence
- Promote health
- Gain emotional intelligence
- Boost happiness
- Improve self-worth
- Reduce stress

I'll leave you with a couple of quotes I found online…
- Sometimes the right hug from the right person at the right time makes everything bad in the world go away
- Sometimes when you don't know what to say, a hug says enough
- Hugs were invented to let someone know you love them without having to say anything