

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING AT CHRISTMAS TIME

Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. For some people, these feelings go away naturally without any long-term challenges, but for others, these negative emotions can become worse over time. This can result in a serious mental health condition, such as anxiety or depression, which can have a negative effect on your wellbeing and quality of life. However, mental health conditions are treatable and it's possible for you to make a full recovery. Christmas can be a very hard time of year for many people, Loneliness



Top Tips For Good Mental Health & Wellbeing During Christmas:

- **Talk About Your Feelings** It's hard to admit that at such an exciting time of year, you don't feel that great. But talking about your feelings can improve your mood and make it easier to deal with the tough times. It's part of taking charge or 'self-managing' your mental wellbeing and doing what you can to stay healthy. It's important to create space for these conversations and worth identifying who you can speak to if you are concerned about your wellbeing. There are many specialists' charities groups who run support lines during the Christmas period.
- **Eat Well** Christmas is typically a time of overindulgence, but what we eat can sometimes impact on how we feel. For example, too much sugar can have a noticeable effect on your mental health and wellbeing in the short and long term. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a little bit of overindulgence, but a good tip is to balance this out over the festive period – everything in moderation i.e., Food, Alcohol.



www.Tefmentalhealthandwellbeing.org
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- **Keep in Touch and Reach Out** When putting the finishing touches on holiday plans, we can often become distracted from the support systems around us and lose our footing. Friends and family can make you feel included and cared for. They can offer different views from whatever's going on inside your own head, keep you grounded and help you solve practical problems – enjoy this time to catch-up. If alone and/or away from family. Sending a text or a Facebook message can make all the difference to someone's day.
- **Keep Active** It's no surprise that cold weather and short days are not the greatest motivation to get you out of bed and on a 5k run! But research shows that doing exercise releases chemicals in your body that can make you feel good. Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and help you to concentrate; sleep and feel better. Exercise also keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy. So, use that Christmas spirit for physical health as well as mental health. Number one rule is do not compare your abilities to others, we all are very different physically.
- **Everything In Moderation** Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is only ever temporary. Christmas parties encourage socializing and it's very easy to get carried away but know your limits - it's important to maintain your personal wellbeing too. There are specialist organizations who can support with addiction i.e., Drink Aware, BAC O'Conner Centre.
- **Ask For Help** Always ask for help if you are struggling, Family, Friends and there are many charities and community groups that are supporting people during the Christmas period i.e., YMCA Burton, Mind, Salvation Army.





Reduce Alcohol Consumption:

- Take your favourite non-alcoholic drinks to any parties or gatherings, for example soda water, ginger beers or lemonade. This will help you to blend in with a glass in your hand, you'll feel less conspicuous, and will likely avoid being asked for a drink every few minutes
- Plan activities that will get you out of a setting in which you would typically find a drink in your hand – for example, winter walks, going to the cinema, family activities at home, etc.
- Be assertive: a lot of people will likely question you on your decision not to drink. Some will be genuinely interested; others may just enjoy poking fun. However, if you ensure you come prepared with a short but effective summary or spiel as to why you're deciding not to drink, this will really help you to avoid peer pressure and take ownership of your decision.

Tips To Reduce Alcohol Consumption At Christmas Time:

It's not always easy to know how much you're going to drink in an evening, but you probably know what feels like enough for you and what feels like too much. Certainly, if you think you've reached your limit, don't let anyone else cajole you into drinking more. If it helps you to plan - for example, "I won't drink more than two glasses of wine and I'll have a glass of water between each or a soft drink of my choice.



Debts During Christmas Period:

By the time you reach Christmas Day, it's no surprise your wallet feels a little worse for wear. Some people end up in debt as a result, suggests new research. A survey of 2,000 people conducted by Yelp and commissioned by One Poll found that 28% had gone into debt during the festive season.

Top Tips To Avoid Debt During Christmas:

1. **Plan your budget** – Individuals should check their bank statements and make a list of what they are spending each month. This will highlight where their money is going and where savings could be made which could be put aside to help pay for Christmas.
2. **Agree a price limit with friends and family** – It is easy to get carried away at Christmas and spend more than you can afford. It is worth suggesting alternatives which other members of the family might be grateful for. Many families agree limits on the amount to be spent on each other in advance, with some agreeing to only buy gifts for the children, making gifts, or choosing to have a 'day out' as a family as an alternative.
3. **Look for discounts** – If you are buying something expensive or are buying lots of things from the same place, it is worth asking for a discount. You may even find discount codes for online purchases. It's worth checking if your workplace offers a discount scheme, as you could get a range of discounts on travel, high street vouchers, gift cards, cinema tickets, days out and leisure activities that you may want to purchase as a gift for someone.
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5. **Avoid Loan sharks**- Loan sharks can target vulnerable people over the festive period - offering high-cost loans which trap people into a cycle of debt and misery.



Support During Christmas:

- YMCA Burton- **01283 547211**
- Mind Burton- **01283 566696**
- NHS Living Life- **0800 328 9655**
- Salvation Army Burton- **01283 563627- 075 146 667 59**
- Burton and Uttoxeter Primary Care Mental Health Team - **0300 303 0923**

Reference List:

- Money Advice Service
- MIND UK
- NHS UK
- GOV.UK
- Stop Loan Sharks UK

