COPING WITH STRESS AT CHRISTMAS

It is difficult to avoid stress at Christmas despite it being a wonderful time of the year! We all get weighed down by the preparation for Christmas, rushing around, making sure the presents are bought and everyone is happy. Well think about yourself too. Christmas is a time when all normal routines disappear and we forget about some of the things that keep us well all year around such as exercise and eating well.

Christmas can also be a sad time for those who have lost loved ones or for those alone. If you are alone why not join one of the local festive lunches being organised locally?

Top tips for coping with stress at Christmas:

1 Take time to prepare for Christmas well in advance so that nothing is panicked – shopping, buying presents, preparing food, getting the house ready. Plan what you need to do and when, well in advance.

2 Don’t overspend at Christmas just to please others – this will cause stress after Christmas.

3 Make homemade presents if money is tight and source new items from Charity Shops at a good price.

4 Don’t take on more than you can handle – family gatherings. Remember to share the load, ask for help and remember to think of yourself. Create lists and share tasks with others.

5 Don’t overindulge, you will regret it later. The average person gains 5 pounds in weight over Christmas.

6 Remember that excessive alcohol can cause issues and will increase the risk of tension and conflict.

7 Try to make time for you, make time to exercise and get fresh air – even if it is only a short walk. This will help with stress levels.

8 Share your Christmas with others. Spend time with family and friends but if they are a challenge and it may be difficult, prepare emotionally ahead of Christmas and set specific times, which you limit for seeing family.

9 When it all gets too much take a break, walk away, take time for you. Practice breathing exercises. Breathe deeply and easily, letting your shoulders, neck, and back relax and let go. You can do this wherever you are.

10 Remember Christmas is about being with people you love and giving – but don’t sacrifice yourself!

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