The Sherwood Buzz

'Where everyone belongs' December 2023

Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter

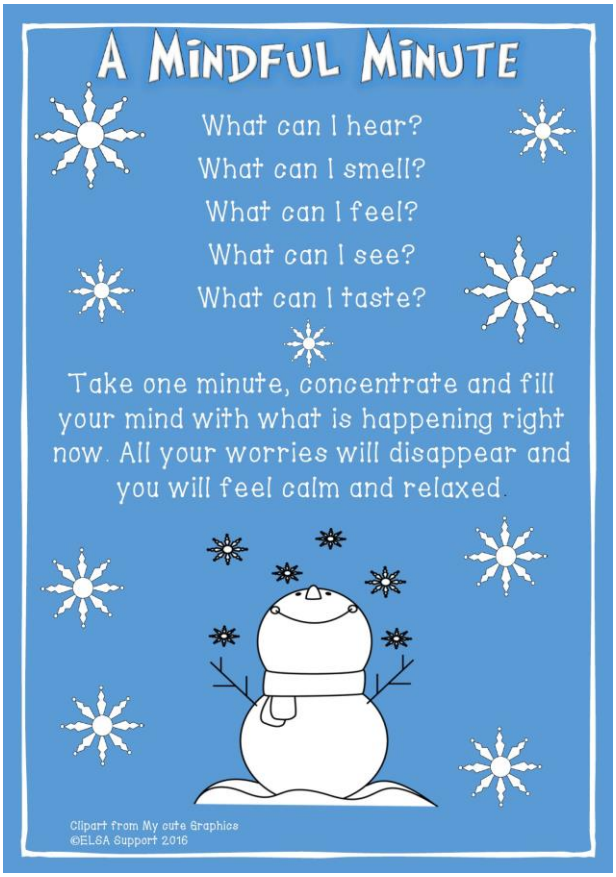
Christmas Holidays

We can't believe it's almost Christmas. Although there's lots to look forward to, we know that it can be a difficult time of year for some. If you need any support check out the Mind website for tips on supporting yourself and others at this time of year.

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/christmas-and-mental-health/christmas-and-mental-health/

On a scale of Christmas Movies, how are you feeling today?







With the extra pressure that the festive season can bring, our worries and fears may seem worse this time of year. It's important you check in on yourself and look after your wellbeing.

No matter how or if you celebrate, it is normal that this time of year can affect your mental health. There are all sorts of reasons you might find this time of year difficult and that's OK. Have a look at these tips from the Samaritans to help at this time of year…

Take time for yourself

- **Try to listen to how you are feeling.** Our self-help web app can help you track your mood and includes practical tips and techniques to help you look after your emotional health.
- **Make time for something you enjoy.** It could be doing something creative, watching a favourite movie, or wrapping up warm and spending time outdoors.
- **Remember it's OK to say no.** Try not to overwhelm yourself, if you're not feeling up to socialising, or aren't in the festive spirit. You don't have to take part in things that might be difficult for you, whether they're online or in person.
- **Be gentle with yourself.** Manage the festive period in a way that works for you. It's not selfish to prioritise your wellbeing – try not to feel guilty about this. Many people are struggling financially, this year particularly. Try not to put pressure on yourself and remember that quality time is the best gift of all. If you find that you're enjoying yourself, know that this is OK and not something you should feel guilty about either.

Manage your social media

- **Try to avoid comparing yourself to others.** Social media can be difficult during the festive period, with advertising and gift sharing impacting many people's self-esteem. Remember that social media is a place where people share their highlights – try not to compare your experiences to what you see others doing online.
- **Take a break.** It's OK to log off. If you're active online, making time for other activities can help you to take a break from the news or social media. If you find it hard to stay offline, try switching off your notifications or leaving your phone in another room for a few hours.
- **Choose what you consume.** There can be a lot of upsetting news during the festive period, and it can feel overwhelming at times. Read our practical tips if you find yourself 'doomscrolling' social media for tips on how to make your social media a more positive space.

Plan ahead

- **Take time to work out what you're feeling.** Think about the things that you might find difficult about this time of year. Are there things you can do that might help you cope? Are there things it would be helpful for you to avoid? Try to identify what you can and cannot change about things that are troubling you. Writing these down or sharing your concerns with someone you trust can be a helpful step.
- **Set boundaries.** If you can, try to have conversations with friends or family about everyone's expectations of any celebrations well in advance. Be honest about how you want to spend the holidays.
- **Structure your days.** Sitting on your sofa, wrapped up in a blanket, watching TV can be comforting, but try to schedule some other activities. Whether it's baking your favourite treat, volunteering at a local charity, or finally crossing that DIY task off your to-do list, give some purpose to your days. If you can, try to get outside at least once a day, even if it's just for a brief walk.
- **Look back with kindness.** Many people find themselves reflecting on the past year during the festive period, focusing on what they haven't achieved. Be kind to yourself. We're all on our own timescales and there's not just one correct path. Focus on what you have achieved, and plan something to look forward to.
- **Be open to possibility.** You don't have to create New Year's resolutions. Try not to put pressure on yourself by setting strict or unrealistic goals. Enter the New Year living in the moment – you don't need to have a big plan for the year ahead. It's OK to live day-to-day and be open to new possibilities.

Reach out

- **Spend time with loved ones when you feel able.** Try not to isolate yourself all season; being around others may be helpful. Surround yourself with people you love and trust but know that it's OK to put yourself first and say no if you're not feeling up to it.
- **Be honest about how you're feeling.** It can be hard to reach out if the people around you seem happy when you don't. We'd encourage you to try talking to a trusted friend or family member. Talking about how you're feeling can help put things into perspective and may help you feel more positive.
- **Remember we're always here.** If you don't have family or friends close by or don't feel like there's anyone you can talk to, you are never alone. Samaritans volunteers are here for you every day of the year, including during the festive period, round the clock.



