

SURVIVING CHRISTMAS



SUICIDE North Lanarkshire
PREVENTION

Feeling snowed under?

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Many people look forward to celebrating the festive season... but not everyone feels the same.

However it is almost impossible to get through Christmas without experiencing some level of stress.

For many it can be a time that brings financial pressure, stress, loneliness and can remind us of sad times in our lives.

There are practical steps which we can take all year round to look after your own and others' mental health. Here are just a few:

- Don't overindulge
- Take time to relax
- Fit in some time for exercise such as a gentle walk
- If you can, try to be around other people

This booklet gives some handy hints and tips for surviving the festive season as well as useful information and telephone numbers in case you need support.



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Take Care of Yourself

Self-care is an important step to help manage difficult feelings.

When things seem a struggle, it's understandable that bigger self-care tasks can be difficult. Below are some tips to help improve things:

- Try activity scheduling and planning out your week, maybe breaking days into manageable sections.
- Try to think of things you should do to take care of yourself that you maybe haven't had time to do recently, and ask yourself which of these are achievable.
- Remember it is okay to start with small objectives and when you feel more able - plan more challenging tasks.
- Be kind to yourself – self compassion is important – we often have high expectations and feel frustrated if we don't meet them.
- Some days you may feel more capable and productive than others, at other times you may feel overwhelmed – this is okay and affects everyone at some point in their lives.
- It is important to show yourself compassion and kindness – be more forgiving of yourself when you feel overwhelmed – that way you can get back to feeling better quicker.

- It can be helpful to write down positive things about yourself when you feel good and then go back to them when you are having a tough day to remember how good you can be.

There is only one you – take care of yourself.

Males are three times more likely to take their life than females.

Suicide devastates lives across the country every day of every week.



Opening hours for public services

Access to health and social work services over the holidays

In Scotland most services will close for the two public holidays at Christmas and New Year.

This year they will be closed from **Saturday 25th December until Wednesday 29th December**. They will reopen again **Thursday 30th December**.

They will close again on **Saturday 1st January** and reopen again on **Wednesday 5th January**.

Although there will be fewer staff in some of the services due to the holiday period, people who require support during this period will receive it through pre-planning. For social work emergency services call **0800 121 4114**.

Remember to contact NHS24 on **111** if your GP surgery is closed for access to any health services.

In emergencies, A&E and 999 services will operate as normal.

To access information on health services over the festive period visit:

www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk/HealthyLiving/Winter or call well informed at **0800 073 0918**.

Tips and hints for during the holiday period

Make sure you have enough medication to last you throughout the holiday period.

For leisure services, check the websites at:
NL Leisure **www.activenl.co.uk**
Culture NL **www.culturenl.co.uk**



Managing stress and expectations

Manage your expectations and have more fun

Top tips to keep Christmas stress to a minimum

- Aim for “enjoyable” not “perfect”. Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Don’t try to make it perfect.
- Recognise that being together 24/7 may cause tensions, and allow for this.
- Minimise “are we nearly there yet?” issues when travelling. It is disappointing to make travel plans in order to promote family togetherness only to get to the destination feeling stressed. Include pre-planned rest stops, drinks and snacks, music and books and lots of activities for the kids in the back. Travel off-peak if possible.
- Find time for yourself. Don’t spend all your time providing activities for your family and friends. If you’re a parent, remember you need to have fun, and aim for a balance of activities that meets everyone’s needs.
- Planning and teamwork: involve the family in plans and in the workload. Children can have some say, and parents’ needs count as well.
- Don’t try to do it all.

Tips and hints for Christmas planning

- Plan out what you need to do over the festive season.
- Make plans with services you are currently receiving such as health and social care workers, support workers or peer supporters.



Staying safe during the festive season

Heading out

- Be prepared – ensure you have enough money for your day/night out and enough to get home if you plan on using public transport or a taxi.
- Carry a mobile phone with credit in it if possible.
- If you are drinking alcohol - know your limits - there is nothing wrong with having a good time but beware of what is going on around you.

Going home

- Try to arrange how you are getting home at the start of the night, either a lift, public transport or a taxi. If necessary pre-book a taxi for later on and tell friends when you are leaving.
- If you are close enough to home to walk then take care. Try to stick to busy, lit areas and not quiet, isolated areas. Also watch for underfoot conditions.
- Be careful with cigarettes in the home after a night out; ensure they are completely out before going to sleep.
- When drinking alcohol on a night out always have a way of getting home organised – never drink and drive, it takes very little to be over the limit.



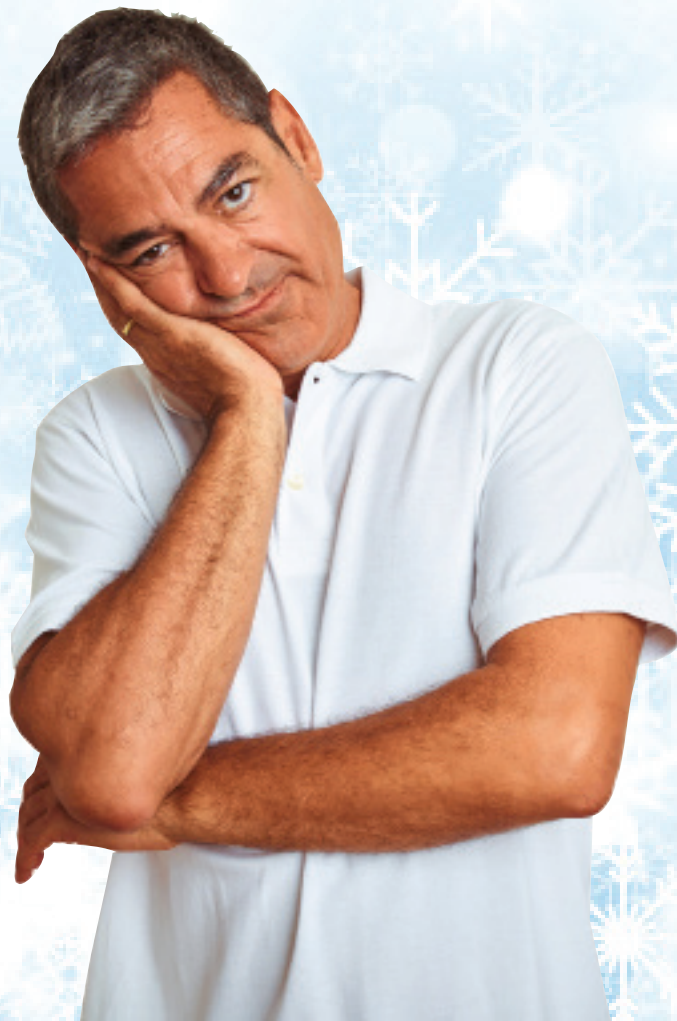
Do you feel lonely or isolated?

Everyone can feel lonely sometimes. Experiencing loneliness can be very different for each individual. People may choose to be alone and enjoy living that way, while others may find this a lonely experience. Some people may socialise a lot or be in a relationship but still feel lonely.

Loneliness can happen to anyone at any time but certain experiences may increase the chances of feeling lonely such as bereavement, retirement, growing older, losing your job, a relationship break-up or at particular times of year like Christmas.

Some people are more susceptible to loneliness. If you're living in poverty, you may feel socially isolated due to money concerns. You may not have a support network of friends and family around you, or if you are a carer, you may find it more difficult to commit to socialising or if you have a long-term health issue. Feeling lonely is different for everyone and there is not always a reason for it.

If you are worried about loneliness: contact well-informed **0800 073 0918**.



Useful Numbers

Local Support

Well Informed mental health and wellbeing information service **0800 073 0918**

Stress Control Classes **0300 303 0447**

Occupational Therapy Community Clinics
0800 073 0918

Benefits, Welfare & Debt Advice **01698 403170**

Elament Lanarkshire's online mental health and wellbeing information website
www.elament.org.uk

Other numbers

Samaritans **116 123**

Breathing Space **0800 838 587**

There is also advice and support through the website **www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk**

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous **0845 769 7555**
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous National Helpline
0300 999 1212, www.ukna.org

ParentLine **0800 800 2222**

NHS 24 **111**

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
0800 027 1234

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