

Looking after your mental health during the festive season

Top tips for supporting others during this season

Do

- **Let them know they're not alone:** and that you're there to listen if they need you. Sometimes this might be all they need.
- **Understand that Christmas and the festive season mean different things to everyone.** Their views may not align with yours, especially if they have experienced trauma or loss. It is important to respect and understand them.
- **Listen to what they say.** It is important for everyone to feel heard and to have their feelings acknowledged.
- **Ask what you can do to support them.** Everyone has different ways of coping, so ask them what would support them at this time.
- **Look after yourself.** Supporting someone else can be difficult. You will experience a range of emotions yourself and it is okay to reach out for support yourself and share how this might be affecting you. Your wellbeing matters too.

Don't

- **Don't make assumptions.** It can be tempting to assume you know why the festive period is difficult for others, but none of us know how others really feel on the inside.
- **Don't belittle or dismiss anyone's feelings.** Avoid saying statements like: "be happy," "everyone else is enjoying themselves" or "count yourself lucky, lots have it much worse." However well intended you might be, you could invalidate the feelings of the other person and make them feel worse.
- **Don't force people to take part in festive activities.** You might think the person would eventually enjoy themselves but it's important to respect their decision. Try not to take it personally if they don't join in. There are many different reasons, including cultural and religious ones, why people might not take part.

Get Support

The Mental Health UK website has a wealth of information and resources you can use to manage your own mental health and support others with theirs.

www.mentalhealth-uk.org

Visit Clic, our online community where you can speak safely and openly about how you're feeling and get mutual support from people who understand.

www.clic-uk.org

If you or someone you know is in urgent need of lifesaving help, please call **999** or go to your nearest **Accident & Emergency (A&E)** department. For non-emergency medical help call **111**.