

Why our mental health suffers at over the New Year period – and how to look after it.



For many of us, Christmas and New Year is a time of fun and celebration, but it can also bring stress and anxiety.

Whether you live with mental illness or not, this extended festive period can intensify feelings of loneliness, increase financial worries and put pressure on people to have the “perfect” time.

These feelings then spill over into the New Year and statistics show that one in ten people feel unable to cope with all the changes that a New Year may bring.

Our mental wellbeing can take a hit over this period and beyond for a number of reasons. Overspending at Christmas is common and 41% of people surveyed by Mind in 2015 reported getting into debt – which in turn can increase strain and stress as they try and find a way to make repayments. We all tend to overindulge and probably drink more alcohol, while overexerting ourselves socially, which in turn leaves us tired and anxious.

Routines will have been disrupted and some people struggle to regain those routines as we go back to work.

Remember not everyone will be going back to the same job, some may have retired, others may be commencing a new job and some may have been made redundant. All this adds further to the stresses and strains already put upon us.

There are several steps that we can all take as the holiday season closes and we start the New Year.

Do something you love

If you find this time of year particularly difficult to manage your mental health, try to take time out to do something you enjoy, whether it's reading a book, painting, phoning a friend, relaxing or doing physical exercise.



Plan ahead

If normal routines have been disrupted then start to plan ahead to save you stress and time whilst making things manageable. Make lists of jobs to do and use a calendar to keep track of meetings to prevent you forgetting things.

Try a new activity

Trying a new hobby or activity is a good way to meet other people as well as giving you new skills to use and explore.

Why our mental health suffers at over the New Year period – and how to look after it.



Staying in touch

It is also important to keep in touch with people. Even if you don't feel after a long and difficult day that you want to see someone face to face, contact by phone, text, email or other social media can make a big difference.



Within Scouting we are all one big family. We look after each other and there will always be someone who will listen, support and if needed signpost you to further help.

As a reminder, you can find a list of our trained Mental Health First Aiders [here](#)