

*A little more sparkle,
A little less stress!*



THE CURNIE

1

2

DAYS OF CARE
A Festive Survival Guide

#FifeCurnieClubs #BeatingIsolation #TransformingLives

Yay... Christmas! Or Bah... Humbug!

Christmas is around the corner and for many of us, it isn't filled with joyful anticipation and heart-warming memories. Instead, there's a sense of dread and anxious thoughts we can't seem to quieten. There are painful memories, dysfunctional family members, drama, and walking on eggshells trying to keep the peace. And if that's not bad enough, there's the added COVID crisis to worry about. Christmas is supposed to be a celebration and a season of good will to all, but it often turns into a nightmare as expectations and pressures mount. If you love all things Christmas, this guide is probably not for you, but if this is the time you start wishing you could hibernate, you might want to read on...

Is your Capacity Cup overflowing with Christmas Struggles?



We all have limited capacity, and when we're struggling, our cup begins to fill. When it's nearly full there's a risk it will overflow – this is when we have big reactions to the smallest things, feel overwhelmed, irritable, and exhausted. Sound familiar?

If Christmas is a time of pressure, obligations, and demand for you, you may have noticed your capacity cup filling up, and it's probably fuller than usual because of COVID. This means you have even less capacity, and your cup might be close to spilling over.

So, what can you do to manage your capacity? It's about working out what's in your cup, chucking out what you don't need and trying not to allow excessive stuff in. This creates space, leaving you with more capacity to give to the stuff still in there.

12 Days of Care

We asked Curnie Club members what we'd find in their cups this time of year and identified 12 Christmas Struggles – we think you'll recognise many of them. We've put together tips and advice for each struggle and called it "12 Days of Care". We hope it offers you a few ideas to help survive the forthcoming weeks and keep your cup from overflowing.

We all have struggles but they all affect us differently, so why not try the [Capacity Cup exercise](#) at the back of the guide and identify what fills your cup.



Pressure to be sociable & jolly!

As soon as the shops clear the shelves of Halloween goodies the Christmas cards and decorations start to appear – the moment of dread for some. Bah! Humbug! Boo! You're expected to love Christmas and embrace all things about it, and when you don't, you're shamed into keeping your views to yourself, just so you don't ruin it for others. But how reasonable is this? Why should you have to keep the pretence of 'being like everyone else' around this time of the year?

Many people feel they'll be pitied, judged a Scrooge, or labelled a Grinch, if they admit they don't enjoy Christmas. You know what... it's OK not to buy into Christmas cheer. It's OK to be less than



brimming with Christmas spirit at the thought of all the forthcoming merriment. You don't have to paste on a fake smile and struggle through it. It's OK to treat this time of year like you would any other day if that's what you want to do.

*Embrace
your inner
Grinch*

If you have negative associations with Christmas, try reframing it to avoid or prevent triggering terms or dates. For example, you might choose a different day to celebrate and focus on, such as Yule or Winter Solstice (December 21st). You could even try inventing your own name for a Winter celebration.

If you're not celebrating Christmas, celebrate yourself instead. Learn to love your inner Grinch and be open about it. Encouraging others to respect your viewpoint prevents the pressure of joining festivities you'd rather avoid.

Try and find ways to shorten or drop events that put you in a bad, anxious, or depressed mood.

Learning the power of how to be politely assertive and just saying 'no' when faced with obligations over Christmas can greatly alleviate stress.

Being assertive means being direct, non-blaming, and respectful.

Learn to use this 4-step Process to make your point: I understand, I feel, I want, Is that OK?

*"I'm not a big
fan of
Christmas, so
I'll be keeping
it low key"*

1. I understand you enjoy coming to mine at Christmas, so do I, and I know we've not seen one another for a while
2. But I don't feel safe having anyone in my home right now because of Covid, even with the restrictions lifted for the week
3. I want us all to be safe, so I am cancelling this year's dinner
4. Is that OK?

If the person isn't OK with it and tries to talk you round, stay firm. Acknowledge you've understood why they're not OK but remind them you feel strongly on this matter and your mind is made up.

"I statements" are a common form of assertive communication. They follow a simple formula:

*I feel _____ when you _____.
And I would like (or I need) _____.*

Example: "I feel frustrated when you make plans with your family without consulting me. I'd like for you to talk to me before committing to plans that involve me."

It may help to realise you're not alone; others find Christmas challenging or downright miserable too. Have the courage to share your true feelings about the season - you may find others open-up with similar experiences of their own. Finding people who have similar experiences to you offers instant recognition and a level of understanding. You can say what you really think, and be who you really are, without fear of upset. So, another solution is to find fellow grinchers - perhaps with the help of social media - among whom you can stay true to yourself.

*You are
not alone*

Whatever approach you adopt, Christmas can be a particularly draining time, so it's important to be kind to yourself. Choose events that are least triggering, don't feel overwhelming, help reduce your stress, and help you reconnect with what's important to you. Make sure you schedule meaningful and soothing activities too. If you do this, you'll find you're better able to cope with the other Christmas struggles filling your cup.





Financial Strain

Dr Suess' *The Grinch* perfectly sums up society's fixation with buying gifts upon gifts, while teaching children that Christmas should not be about how many parcels in pretty paper are under the tree.

Unfortunately, as adults, we often feel pressured to buy gifts for any person that is in our lives (whether we like them or not).

This year there are many out there who are feeling the pinch more than normal courtesy of COVID. During the lockdown thousands of people were furloughed and for some this has happened again on the run up to the festive season. Others have lost jobs through the impact of COVID on businesses. Less money means tighter budgets. It's extremely easy to start piling on the pressure and guilt because you haven't bought everyone a gift; frankly, you just don't have the budget for it. For some the money is barely there to keep the lights on and the cupboards stocked, never mind Christmas dinner!

If you find yourself in this situation, please get in touch with Cosy Kingdom and with your local foodbank. There is no shame in having to ask for help; this year has challenged people beyond what most of us have ever imagined.

COSY KINGDOM
Helping people stay warm and manage their energy bills during this difficult period

Contact us for free advice:
Call - 01592 807930
Text - COSY then YOUR NAME to 88440
Email - info@cosykingdom.org.uk

The pressure for parents is even greater. You may have overheard another parent talking about how they just bought their 6 year old the latest gaming console with games, or you saw photos of mountains of gifts on social media and felt guilty, or like a failure. The idea of struggling through December and spending January trying to get back on your feet after clearing out the bank is not doing you (or anyone else) any favours. Focus on the experiences you can have and on those who matter to you most rather than the number of gifts under the tree. We know this is easier said than done but we have included a budget template to help you think about the money and a cheap and cheerful gift idea for if you really must give a gift.

Budgeting

Let's start with the Christmas dinner. First you need to think about who is all coming to dinner, or are you going to someone else's? If people are coming to you why not ask them if they can bring along a dessert, a starter or something to drink? Afterall, they're eating the food too.

When it comes to the menu try to keep it simple and keep in mind how many are going to be eating it. If there are only three of you why not buy a turkey breast, instead of a whole bird? Bulk up the meal with cheaper aspects such as Yorkshire puddings, potatoes, and vegetables. Frozen veg is just as good as fresh and is often pre-prepped. For starters, simple soups are an ideal way to keep the cost down and you can prepare them in advance. The best way to keep the cost of Christmas dinner down is to plan what you want, buy only what you need and, where possible, split the cost.



Gifts are another big worry for many. The pressure to buy for people or to take part in the Secret Santa when you don't want to – or feel you can't afford to – is ever present thanks to society and media. Start by writing a list of those you absolutely want to give to. Secondly, have a look at your budget and be *very* strict with yourself and your limit for people. You do not need to spend a fortune, set yourself a limit per person and get a bit creative.

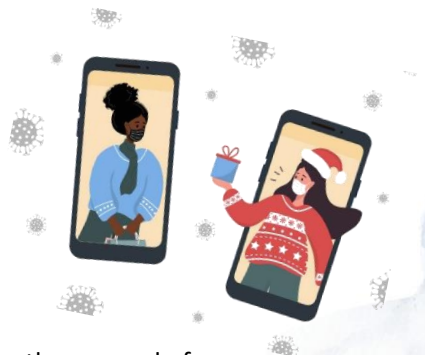
We have included a [couple of templates](#) at the end of this guide to help you budget for your Christmas.

And remember, if they think the present isn't good enough, that is on them not you; they should not get to make you feel small.

“A wee minding”

“It's just a wee minding” was a commonly used phrase with the idea being you would gift someone with something small to let them know you haven't forgotten what they've done throughout the year for you. If your budget is particularly tight for gifts you can save a bit of money by putting together a mini gift set.

One way to save a bit of money when putting together several of these is to buy multipacks and split them down.



Hot Drinks Set

This is a simple set and for about £13 you can make 8 of these. Your local supermarket should have plain white mugs for around 50p which are ideal for this, but if you're able to push your budget a little, you can pick up some fancier ones (or even the hot chocolate and latte glass ones) for £1.

To make 8 you will need:

- ❖ 8 mugs
- ❖ 1 tin sweets (e.g. Roses)
- ❖ 1 box of Latte Sachets (or 8 hot chocolate sachets)
- ❖ Cellophane or wrapping paper
- ❖ Ribbon



Make your own cookies in a jar

This one really depends on how many empty jars you have lying around the house. The cost of ingredients to make 5 of these is around £4.50.

To make 5 you will need:

- ❖ 5 Empty coffee (or jam) jars
- ❖ 500g Soft light brown sugar
- ❖ 500g Self Raising Flour
- ❖ 500g Chocolate chips
- ❖ Ribbon
- ❖ Recipe cards (you can find [printable ones](#) at the end of this booklet)



Layer 100g flour, 100g sugar and 100g of chocolate chips into one of the jars.*

*If you don't have scales handy, 4 heaped tablespoons of flour and 4 level tablespoons of sugar.



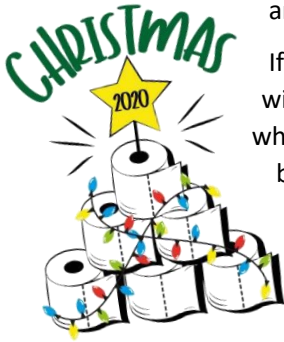
Busy Shops & Crowds



Christmas shopping can be tough for people with anxiety. The crowds, noise, heat, and inescapability of the shops can be intensely triggering whether you have generalised anxiety, a panic disorder, or social anxieties.

The pressures of time combined with budget worries can exacerbate symptoms further, and if that's not enough, this year there is the added pressure of COVID, social distancing and the wearing of masks. Shoppers seem to be even more irritable than usual, especially when others don't seem to be following the social distancing guidelines in store. No wonder the thought of facing the shops this Christmas is leaving you a trembling, sweating mess!

Perhaps just buy a few presents from the shops? Save yourself the inconvenience, the horrors of Christmas traffic and parking, or public transport, by doing the bulk of your shopping online. Many people are favouring internet shopping this year to avoid the queues, crowds, bad lighting, and the whole anxious experience of COVID.



If you really must face the shops, go when you know it will be quiet, pick somewhere that feels familiar, know where the toilets and food stations are if you need a break, and have your exit route planned out.

Be organised - have a list and a budget and stick to them.

Preferably go with a friend so you can support each other amid the chaos.

Wear layers of clothes as there's nothing worse than being stuck in a queue in an over-heated store with a big winter coat and scarf making you so hot you feel at risk of fainting or passing out.

Carry items with you that can help engage your senses to help ground you. Take a mini calming tool with you such as a pocket-sized fidget toy or a pull and stretch ball. Things like essential oils (try lavender or peppermint) can help bring you back into your body, so add a few drops to a soft, fuzzy piece of fabric and carry it with you.



If you are prone to panic attacks, write down on an index card or on your phone “Panic attacks are not life-threatening,” and maybe add the note “You have survived panic attacks before. You will survive this one.” Keep this easily accessible while you’re shopping.



What to do if you have a panic attack in a shop

Put your shopping basket down and head for the exit.

Get outside and breathe deeply and slowly.

When you’re in a panic your breathing becomes shallower so focus on regulating your breath and that will help you to feel grounded and less panicky.

Give yourself time and if you’re able to resume your shopping then do so.

Equally, if you need to go home, you should do just that.

Sometimes no amount of deep breathing is going to keep you shopping for longer than needs be. If you feel that happening, it’s OK to step away from the situation and go home.

You might think you’re the only person who has to abandon their shopping like this but being triggered in an over-crowded store is pretty common, so give yourself a break and leave out any harsh judgments you might be making about yourself.

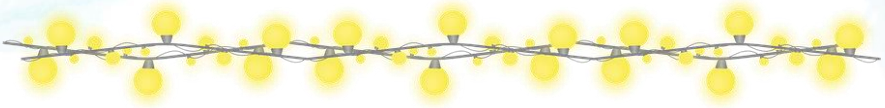
It’s tough out there. Be kind to yourself and try another day.

It’s not just shopping which can be an attack on our senses, the season comes with the risk of sensory overload. From Christmas music, the scent of mince pies, shiny tinsel, flashing fairy lights, and Santa Claus smiling at you from cards, the TV, and a few real-life ones popping up in unexpected places at the wrong time, it can be overwhelming, more so for those who experience sensory processing issues. The next section looks at this further and offers a handy list of coping strategies.



Sensory Overload

During the festive season, the number of people in shops usually increases and there are annoying toys playing cheesy Christmas songs as well as all the extra flashy Christmas lights which adorn the shelves and window displays of trees and colourfully wrapped gifts and hundreds of Christmassy scented candles and... Phew that was exhausting!



Sometimes there is just too much going on around us and it makes it difficult to think clearly. We become anxious and upset then start beating ourselves up because all those other people can do it just fine so why can't you? Stop!

Sensory overload can affect anyone. Although it's commonly associated with some medical and mental health conditions anyone can be affected by it. Sensory overload is when your brain is getting too much information from all your senses. It becomes confused and struggles to process and sort through the information properly. When the brain stops processing the information it can try to protect you from potential "danger" by triggering your flight reaction. If your capacity cup is close to overflowing already you may find that singing, dancing Santa decoration just pushed you over the edge and you need to get out of there for some air.

The shops at Christmas are probably at their busiest, and we don't just mean the volume of shoppers. There's so much sensory information all around you it's very easy to become tired, irritable, and even panicked. Here are a few tips to help you if you struggle with sensory overload at Christmas.

Triggers

The first thing to mention is thinking about your triggers, more specifically, what triggers you and what it feels like when you are starting to become overloaded. Learning to recognise when things might become difficult for you will help you notice when you might need to start using your coping strategies.

Coping Strategies

You'll need to decide which strategies work for you and which ones don't. If you find a strategy stops working, try a new one.

Take some time to psych yourself up. Shopping (or even going to your Christmas enthusiast friend's house) can be a draining experience so it might be helpful to spend some time preparing yourself mentally.

Take a mini calm tool. We mentioned in the previous section about this little box of tricks. It can be used for when you feel overloaded as well. Fidget toys you can focus on or a scarf (or in COVID times, your mask) with a scent on it that makes you feel calm are great tools that are super subtle and won't get in your way.

Wear earplugs or headphones. If noise is a trigger for you, wearing earplugs may be helpful. When talking to someone you can partially remove one or both so you can have a conversation.

Ask to have the lights or music turned down. Obviously, this doesn't really work when you go into a shop but if you're at a friend's house and they have the Christmas hits blaring and every inch of their living room is covered in fairy lights, ask them if they can turn some of it off while you're there.

Avoid the busy times. This is easier said than done in December. You might find it quieter first thing in the morning and during the week. Some shops will have certain times where they turn off the music and dim the lights a little to make it a more comfortable experience for those who can feel overwhelmed by it all.

Take a list to focus on. Do a bit of "speed shopping". Make a list before you head out and concentrate on that. By focussing on the list your brain can filter out more of the information it is being bombarded with from your other senses.

Eat the elephant one bite at a time. Not literally of course. If your list is very long and could take longer than you think you can handle, aim to do just a few bits on it then come back another day to do a few more.

Take someone with you for support. Sometimes having a friend by your side can make the experience more bearable as you can focus on them.

Avoid the situations entirely. If you really struggle you can always shop online and avoid much of the sensory triggers you would find out and about. If you need something locally you cannot buy online, ask a friend or family member if they can pick it up for you.

Allow yourself time to recover. This is especially important. Do not beat yourself up because you feel drained after experiencing a sensory overload. Be kind and factor time into your day when you know you'll be going into a situation that can trigger an overload.

Not all strategies will work for everyone; you may even have some already that aren't on our list. The main thing is to find what works for you and don't be ashamed to use them. Living with sensory overload is not easy but we can try and make it more comfortable by making small adjustments in our lives and being kind and considerate to ourselves.



Enforced Traditions

“Aw you have to put the tree up... Oh but it’s tradition...” I’m sure we have all heard something along these lines at this time of year when we say we don’t feel like doing something.



Traditions all started somewhere. In fact, the traditions of having a Christmas tree indoors (in Scotland) and giving large gifts only started with Queen Victoria. Before that Scots mostly celebrated at new year and attended mass on Christmas. Be honest now, how many of you went to midnight mass last Christmas? I’m sure some of you might have but there are others who didn’t and that’s OK. The point is, that *was* a tradition most people adhered to, but it has started to fall out of favour as fewer people feel it has a place among their Christmas traditions. In short, traditions can be changed and created by anyone at any time and are personal to you.

If the Christmas traditions we know which flood the media (thank you, Charles Dickens) are less than 200 years old, what’s stopping you from getting rid of what you don’t like and creating some new traditions you do like? Marie Kondo put it best: “Does it spark joy?” If it doesn’t, toss it out. Sometimes traditions work very well for a while but then they begin to suck the joy out rather than creating it. When this starts to happen, it might be a good time to have a quick declutter.



Christmas Tradition Declutter

We have included a [template](#) to help you with this, but you can just as easily do this on a piece of blank paper with a pen.

Step 1:- Write down all the Christmas traditions in your life; you can even include traditions your family had when you were young that you maybe don’t use anymore.

Step 2:- Draw 2 boxes on your paper and label them “Keep” and “Let it go”.

Step 3:- Take each tradition one at a time and think about it; really think about it. Picture doing it and notice how you feel about it. If it makes you feel happy and it brings a sparkle to your Christmas, write it in the “Keep” box. If it makes you feel

anxious or upset perhaps it has lost its shine and you need to “let it go” so put it in this box.

Step 4:- Once you have gone through your list and sorted it out, think about what sort of things you might want to do at Christmas that will bring you joy. Write one down under your boxes. This is your new Christmas tradition.

Create your own holiday traditions.



The most important thing is being assertive. If someone says “you must do it” politely tell them you think it is great that particular tradition works for them, but you have traditions of your own you prefer to celebrate with.

Sometimes the traditions are about where you go for Christmas dinner. Maybe you “always go to your mum’s” for dinner but really you just want to have a quiet dinner in the house just the two of you. This one is a bit tougher and needs you to really look after yourself and your boundaries.

If this is something you feel brings down your Christmas, have a look at the tips in our pressure to be with family section and our [boundaries exercise](#) (which you can find in the back of the guide). We also have a list of [coping mantras](#) and [Christmas rights](#) you can use to help create a list of your own assertive affirmations.





Pressure to be with Family

Christmas is touted as a time to be with family and for some people that is the best thing in the world. For others though, seeing family can be a significant drain of mental energy and result in a great deal of anxiety.

Unfortunately, we don't have a quick or easy fix for this one. Quite simply this comes down to your boundaries and sometimes it just takes practice to be able to keep them. Sometimes it feels easier to just agree with what everyone else wants to do but this means ignoring your own needs. When this happens, it takes a toll on your mental health and capacity which creates an opportunity for resentment to creep in.

This year we have the added pressure to decide who to include in our family bubble. The first thing to say about this is, it will be hard for so many people and will likely be a logistical disaster in the making. It is important to try and be understanding of other people's decisions when it comes to this. Often people are apprehensive about spending time with family because of the potential arguments which Christmas often brings to the fore.

The power of acceptance

Having a 'rejecting reality' mindset will hold you back, this is when you long for a reality that isn't true and unlikely to happen.

"If only my dad didn't drink too much," "I wish my mum would accept how I choose to live my life," "I need my sister to stop picking on me all the time."

If you have a 'rejecting reality' mindset you are likely to be attending Christmas dinner full of hope that this year will be different – mum won't focus on your weight the minute you walk through the door, dad will express affection for once, and your sister will stop taking her own issues out on you – heads up, you're likely to be disappointed for another year.

This experience usually leaves us feeling hurt or angry, so what do we do? We lash out and continue the cycle of conflict. This cycle continues and we expect it each year and wait for it to happen.

What's the alternative then? Change your mindset. You can't change everyone else, but you can change the way you view the situation. Begin to cultivate an



'acceptance mindset.' This mindset involves dealing with exactly what is true, factual and in front of you rather than what you wish was there. Such a mindset involves opening yourself to fully realising your life is less-than-ideal. If you go into the room knowing full well your sister is going to wind you up, or your mum is going to comment on your appearance you are already setting yourself up to break the cycle. Going in with this reality makes you less reactive and more capable of choosing how you deal with this dynamic.

To change or let go

I am sure we are all familiar with that one Disney song, from the snowy themed movie. Time to take a leaf out of her book and let it go using the 'Letting Go Process'. It involves three steps:

1. Notice and just let an experience be there.
2. Decide if that experience is useful or not.
3. If it's useful, do something about it. If not, let it go.

You can use this process when you are confronted with experiences and personalities at Christmas who you would normally avoid in your day-to-day life.

So, how does this look in practice?

If someone says something to you which hurts and frustrates you – notice your reaction and adopt the attitude of being OK having these feelings in the moment.

Consider the usefulness of the feelings.

Decide on whether to go a "change" route or a "let go" route.

The "change" route will involve engaging in a behaviour to address the experience you are having, namely the comment. You could take an assertive stance and respond with an "I statement" such as "I feel really upset when you comment on I would appreciate if you didn't mention it anymore while I'm here"

Now clearly you have no idea how the person will react, but this process is not about focusing on the outcome, it's about being in control. The person may get defensive or angry, but you can feel good because you have just stood up for yourself.

Alternatively, you can choose the "letting go" route. By being able to notice your hurt and frustration in the moment, you can become less reactive and better able to not engage in an argument like has happened in the past. You can respond in a different way, acknowledge what has been said but remain calmer, or possibly not at all, change the subject entirely, and ask the person how they are doing.

This may seem overly simplistic, but with practice you can better let go of things that used to catch you and trap you into acting in unproductive ways.

Putting it into practice

Before you head into your Christmas activities and events, take a minute, and notice what thoughts, feelings and urges are present for you. This is information we can use to prepare and plan.

Having this information available to you beforehand gives you time to consider which route you want to go. Does the experience need you to go a “change route” by addressing an issue, or do you need to “let it go” as something you can’t control? You will now be better equipped to travel whichever route you choose.

And just because something doesn’t go well the first time you did it doesn’t mean it won’t go well the next time, so keep at it.

We have included a couple of meditations in the guide. You can find these at the end. One is for [dealing with difficult people](#), and the other concerns general [Christmas stress](#).

Meditation for Dealing with Difficult People

As I encounter difficult people this Christmas, I will stay calm and centred.

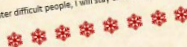
I will protect my emotional energy by not letting others push my buttons. It's easy to get pulled into conflicts and to feel like I need to defend myself. But instead of engaging in arguments with difficult people, I will pick my battles and choose to let some things go. I know that some people will never be satisfied no matter what I say or do. Instead of trying to please them, I will do what's right for me without needing to justify my choices.

I will protect my emotional energy by focusing on what I can control. I recognise that sometimes I want to try to fix, change or control other people and situations. This usually makes me frustrated and resentful. So, this year I'll choose to focus on what I can control. I will set others make their own choices and deal with the consequences. Allowing others to make mistakes and experiences consequences is a kind thing to do as it allows them to learn and make meaningful changes in their own time.

I will protect my emotional energy by setting boundaries. I don't have to tolerate disrespect. I can walk away if someone is verbally assaulting me. I don't have to feel guilty for taking care of myself. Just because it's Christmas, I don't have to put up with abusive behaviour.

I will protect my emotional energy by staying focused on the positives in my life. I can't control the negative or difficult people around me, but I can control my thoughts. I will notice the good things in my life. When I do this, I'll cultivate a positive, hopeful outlook that will help buffer the negative effects of difficult people. I can choose to feel grateful for what I have.

When I encounter difficult people, I will stay calm and centred.



Meditation for Coping with Christmas Stress

Christmas brings extra stress—for me and those around me.

This year I will try not to snap and lose my temper.

I will try to express my feelings and ask for what I need—so resentments don't build.

I will try to be flexible and remember things probably won't go as planned.

This year, I will take care of myself and use healthy coping strategies. I will try not to rely on overeating or drinking to deal with stress.

I will be mindful of the commitments I accept and remember it's okay to say "no".

I'll remind myself I don't have to do it all. And I don't have to do it perfectly.

I will pay attention to my thoughts, feelings, and body for signs of stress.

And when I notice my stress level is increasing, I will take a slow deep breath and quiet my mind.

I will focus on the here and now, on what's right in front of me rather than on my to-do list or problems.

I will pause and breathe deeply again and let the stress release from my mind and body.

With every breath, my body relaxes.

And as I relax, I can think more clearly, put things in perspective and focus on what really matters. When I notice my stress level increasing, I will take steps to release my stress in healthy ways.

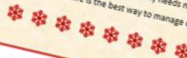
I will remember to give myself grace when I don't handle things as I'd like.

I will also try to extend grace to others and remember they are also experiencing extra stress.

I will do my best and that will be enough.

This year I will take care of myself and remember my needs matter.

This year I will remember self-care is the best way to manage my stress.





Trying to please everyone

There are a lot of demands on our time during Christmas and if we don't check our calendars and energy levels closely, it's easy to take on too much. You can't make everyone happy, so you might as well focus on what makes you feel happy and safe. Ask yourself if you really enjoy doing everything you have said yes to, or are you doing these things out of obligation, to avoid upsetting or disappointing someone? As uncomfortable as it may sound, you're allowed to say no. You're allowed to disappoint people.

Many people who have issues with self-love tend to be people-pleasers and this is because it's a way to get love from others. It involves praise, and praise makes us feel good, and it can help fill that emptiness inside us. But when you say "yes" to everyone else, you're often saying "no" to yourself, and this can lead to you being taken advantage of, creating a real danger of resentment, as well as having health problems and getting burnt out. Some people find they are stretched so thin trying to please everyone, they start to crumble under the strain.

What are Boundaries?

Let's start at the beginning! A boundary is a limit on what you will accept from another person's words, actions, and needs. It is an invisible line that says this is where my responsibility to you ends.

Healthy boundaries help you have healthy relationships with yourself and other people!

Emotional space between you and someone else

Where you end and another person begins

Physical space between you and someone else

A line you will not allow others to cross

Ways you expect others to respect you

Beliefs and values that you won't budge on

Knowing what actions and behaviors negatively impact you

The space that you need to be the real you

How you allow yourself to be independent

Balance between what is given and taken

Respecting your authenticity and who you are

Boundaries are one of the building blocks to self-love and are always important, but it can be harder to enforce them during this time of year.

Healthy boundaries don't drain us, and they allow us to make connections free from resentment – relationships feel good and feel safe. Unhealthy boundaries do the opposite, they lead to only one person benefiting from a situation or both people ending up unhappy. Setting healthy boundaries takes practice, especially if you're used to putting other people first, but there's no better time to start practising than now!

Don't give in to pressure to be and do everything. You're allowed to save your energy and not spend it on cooking

large dinners, spending hours shopping, driving yourself crazy trying to find the perfect gift, or decking the halls with boughs of holly.

This is about learning to say “no” and not feel guilty. If there are things you don’t want to do, don’t do them. This is your chance to define your priorities and redraw your boundaries. Setting your own boundaries or limits can help you have a happier Christmas. These changes don’t always have to be all-or-nothing. Often, just cutting back or making some modifications can help relieve the stress of doing too much, feeling like it needs to be perfect, and putting other people’s opinions and needs before your own.

Keep your stress levels in check. It's okay to step back or delegate.



Boundary Setting

If you’re ready to be more selective about your commitments and activities, we have the perfect exercise for you. There is a blank boundary setting [worksheet](#) at the back of the guide, as well as a completed sheet which can serve as an example. You can use this process for each of your Christmas activities.



Begin with looking at how you typically spend the holidays.

What events or get-togethers are you going to receive an invite to? What are your family expectations?

Next, consider how you feel about each of these activities. Try to name at least three feelings. If you're not sure how you feel, sit quietly, and pay

attention to how your body feels. Sometimes muscle tension, a rapid heartbeat, or sweating are signs of stress. If you have mixed feelings (both hopeful and anxious), that's completely normal.

The third step is to list the pros and cons of attending the event. At this point, your interest in attending the event should be getting clearer. Choose a number from 1 to 10 to reflect whether you want to attend.

With this information in mind, list all your options. It's important not to pre-select options or only write down the options you like. The aim is to list all possible things you can do. Write down at least three. Ask yourself: Which option feels right? Which one supports my authentic self and meets my needs?

When you've decided on the best option (none may be ideal), create a plan. Will you attend as planned? Will you decline the invitation? What will you say or do? The more detailed your plan is, the more helpful it will be.

And finally, write an affirmation or mantra that supports your decision and plan. We've supplied a [list of coping mantras](#) at the back of the guide which might help you.

If your boundaries aren't respected, evaluate your options, and take action. When people don't respect your boundaries, you still have choices. They may not be your ideal choices, but you can take stock of them and choose the next best option.

Once you put yourself first and set your own terms, people may accuse you of being selfish or find fault in what you do. These are opinions you can do without and says a lot more about them than it does you.

Here's one final tip as you work toward setting your boundaries and becoming more assertive. If you can remember this, you'll be far less likely to fall back into old



Learn to say
no without
feeling guilty.

habits – being guilt tripped and feeling guilty isn't the same thing as being guilty.

Many of us – especially those of us with a more passive style – have a hard time being assertive because we worry about

how guilty we'll feel because of not going along with what other people want.

This is a classic trap many people who struggle to be assertive fall into—they have a challenging time distinguishing true guilt from fake guilt.

Imagine a pushy family member giving you a tough time about the decision not to visit them this Christmas. Imagine how you might feel as they describe how everyone else will be there and how important it is to keep the family together and how hurt they'll be if you "let them down."

This is guilt-tripping. Your pushy family member is doing it because they know on some level the discomfort you feel as a result may be so strong, you'll end up going just to avoid having to feel the fake guilt they've so generously heaped upon you. The key is to recognise this guilt is not legitimate.

Guilt is the emotion we experience when we've done something wrong, not when someone else says (or implies) we've done something wrong. Try to get better at recognising these two versions of guilt. When you find yourself feeling guilty, ask yourself, "Have I actually done something wrong?" Then, practice tolerating the discomfort of that fake guilt and building up resilience to it.



Unexpected Illnesses



This Christmas is going to be enormously different than previous Christmases. There's a lot of disagreement about how to get together for Christmas. A lot of people have different thoughts and feelings about COVID, and what kind of safety precautions can be taken.

While household visits have been relaxed to allow up to three households to meet from 23 to 27 December, within families there are a lot of different opinions on how dangerous the virus is and what it means to be safe during this time. Health officials are still suggesting Christmas get-togethers be postponed until next Christmas, so many of us will be trying to navigate how to celebrate with family in safety – if we feel safe to meet up at all. This time more than any other is the time for you to be assertive because you must protect your own health, your family, and your loved ones.



COVID aside, being struck down with an illness can ruin Christmas. Taking a few simple steps now will help you cope better if you do become ill.

- Make sure your repeat prescriptions are up to date
- Check when your GP and pharmacy are open over the festive season
- Get the flu vaccine if you're eligible
- Make sure you have some over-the counter remedies for common seasonal illnesses including pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, cold and flu remedies, antihistamines, diarrhoea relief, indigestion remedies, mild laxatives
- Keep a small first aid kit for cuts and scrapes (plasters, bandages, and antiseptic wipes)
- Medicines specifically for children



The way we access urgent care has changed. To protect us and the NHS, it's important you know how to get the right care, in the right place.

- If you think you need to visit A&E but it's not life threatening, you can now phone NHS 24 on 111, day or night.

Mental health problems don't take a break at Christmas and can often be exacerbated at this time of year. The NHS 24 Mental Health Hub is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on 111.



Mental illness doesn't
stop for Christmas



Memories of Grief & Loss



Christmas time can of course feel very lonely for many people, particularly when it serves as a stark reminder of grieved losses or hurts inflicted. If you're feeling alone, grieving, separating, or struggling in other ways personally, then this time of year can intensify those difficulties. Christmas places an extreme emphasis on family unity and meaningful relationships, so this time of year can increase self-reflection about what you feel is missing in your life, which can lead to rumination and a build-up of difficult feelings.

***Talk about your grief.
Don't worry about
bringing anyone down.
You're allowed to grieve,
and you're allowed to
talk about it.***

People remember and mourn in different ways. Conflict within a family can sometimes arise when we have expectations of how others should grieve, so try to be sensitive to others' needs, and talk openly about what will be best for you.

Some bereaved people find they don't want to celebrate Christmas at all, whilst others find keeping their routine and celebrating as normal is the best tribute, they can pay their loved one. It may feel important to make a special effort to remember the person who has died. This can be as simple as 'speaking' to the person, silently or out loud, or it may involve visiting their grave, or a place that was special to them. Here are some other ways to remember someone at Christmas:

♥ Remember them in your home

Light a special candle near a picture of your loved one. Hang something of theirs on the Christmas tree, or hang up a decoration including their name or picture. If you look online there's lots of places offering personalised decorations to buy, or you could have a go at making one yourself, such as a clothing keepsake or memorial bauble.

We've provided a DIY sheet at the back of the guide for making a [memorial bauble](#).

***Find a way to honour
lost loved ones. Start a
new tradition that
celebrates their memory.***

♥ Include them in the giving



There's no reason why you shouldn't buy a present or write a card to someone who has died if it feels right for you. Or buy a gift on their behalf for a cause or charity they supported.

You're important too – it's fine to buy yourself something you know they would want you to have. If you've lost a partner and have young children, they might need help to buy a present for you, so you might want to ask a friend or other relation to help them

♥ Do something they would have enjoyed

Do something you know they would have enjoyed. You might like to get together with friends or family (taking into account current social distancing rules) and watch their favourite film or listen to some Christmas music you know they liked. You could go on a walk to somewhere that has meaning for you all.

♥ Share your memories

You may have photos or memories which you treasure; sharing these with others may be something that brings you together. Talking about someone who has died can be comforting. If you're meeting with friends and family at Christmas it can be a really nice time to take it in turns to share a memory or story about the person you've lost.

Create boundaries with your time. If you need to take time for yourself, do it.

♥ Take some time out

It can be a busy and frantic time at Christmas so it's fine to take some time out for yourself. If you can, get away from everything for an hour or so to just be with your own thoughts of the people you are missing. It's fine to distract yourself with a book, film, or exercise - it can give you a boost of strength before returning to the frenzy.

Practice self-care. Check-in with yourself on a regular basis and meet those needs.

Perhaps you're on your own and being bombarded by an endless stream of happy family pictures on TV, the radio, and social media, and this can be tough. If it's getting too

much, take a break and do something completely different, get some fresh air and maybe take a walk.

♥ Leave a yellow heart to remember

Cruse Bereavement are inviting people to leave a personalised message in a sea of yellow hearts to remember a loved one. [Click here to leave a dedication](#)

There are Yellow Hearts to Remember – Covid 19 Facebook Groups, public and private, which have been set up for people who have lost loved ones to COVID.

If you're struggling alone with thoughts of someone who has died you can call Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland free on 0808 802 6161, they're open 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 1pm to 4pm over the weekend.

Allow yourself to feel all your feelings. Resentment and anger are normal emotions.

If you're newly separated or divorced, Christmas may remind you of happier times and heighten your grief. If you're estranged from family, and not speaking to a relative, Christmas can usher in feelings of sadness, guilt, resentment, or inner conflict about whether to communicate. Even many years after someone dies Christmas can be a difficult, intensely emotional time, when we need to look after ourselves and those around us.



We can all drink more on festive occasions, but it's important to remember using alcohol to escape the pain of loss provides only very temporary relief. If you find you're relying heavily on drinking alcohol, consider taking some drink free days.

Set realistic expectations. You will probably be sad, angry, or upset and that's okay.

When you want to control your emotions, the first piece of advice is always to control your breathing. When things start to get stressful, try and bring your attention to your breath. This simple trick can help slow you down and soothe you when thoughts are threatening to be too heavy to handle. We've included a few [breathing exercises](#) at the back of the guide, each one for different situations.

Check out the **Anahata Breathing Technique** for when your heart is hurting. Sometimes when you feel emotionally distressed it can be hard to think of coping skills and it's not always easy to stop and switch your attention to a breathing technique. This is when a [Hug-in-a-Box](#) can be useful – look at the back of the guide to find out more.



Loneliness

Loneliness affects millions of people every year, particularly at Christmas. People become lonely because of many varied reasons but often the feeling is amplified at Christmas due to the portrayal in films and media of the need to be around people. This year we are expecting that number to increase due to the COVID restrictions, so we encourage you to start thinking about how you want to spend your day. We're not saying you must be around other people – maybe that's just not your thing – but we're suggesting you have an idea of what you'd like to do.

Maybe someone already invited you to come over for a while on Christmas day, but you politely declined then afterwards you regretted it. It's OK to change your mind and accept that invitation.



In March this year the entire country went into lockdown. We didn't really see many people face-to-face meaning we had to get creative about how we interacted. This has meant a massive surge in virtual meetups during the year and although not quite the same, it has filled a void. Just because it's Christmas doesn't mean the internet has taken a

day off. You can arrange with family to drop in and out of a virtual room all day so that everyone can still be included in the festivities. Facebook is a good platform to do this on. You can form a room and invite your family and you can leave it open all day. This gives you the ability to join in when you want, but when you want that bit of quiet time all you have to do is leave the room.

Another way of dealing with loneliness at Christmas is to plan a special day for yourself. At Curnie we encourage you to be kind to yourself everyday, but this is the perfect opportunity to really treat yourself. Think about all the things you enjoy and make you happy then embrace the solitude and plan a day all about you. The day doesn't even have to be Christmas themed. Perhaps you really fancy a curry with rice and a naan bread? A mini pamper day might be right up your street. Put together a mini pamper hamper for yourself with all the things you like and maybe don't buy for yourself very often.

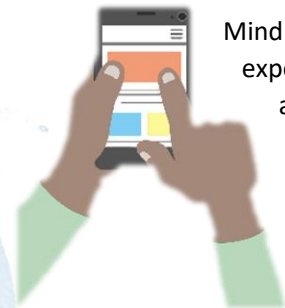


This could be the perfect opportunity to learn something new. If it requires some tools or equipment which you don't have on hand, gift them to yourself and settle in for the day to tackle your chosen project. You could maybe get yourself a subscription to a learning platform like SkillShare and choose something from there. Make this day all about celebrating you. Have a look in our Me Time & Self-Care section for some more ideas.

Volunteering is another way you can spend Christmas. This can often let you get out and interact with people who also want to help-out others during the festive period. If this is more up your alley than sitting around at home you can try getting in touch with the Salvation Army, your local Churches or Fife Voluntary Action to see what opportunities might be open to you. We would suggest doing this as early as possible so organisations have time to get things arranged.



As the year draws to a close there is usually a great deal of reflection going on. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but we know for some, times of reflection can come at a cost leading you to unhelpful thoughts and coping strategies. You're not alone. It is very easy to justify our unhelpful coping strategies at this time of year – "one more mince pie won't hurt" and "I'll just have one, it is Christmas after all". These might feel good at the time but afterwards there are a myriad of other feelings that begin to set in which continue the cycle of negativity. Breaking the cycle by changing the coping strategies you use can help you deal with the emotions. Our **Hug-in-a-Box** is an ideal way for you to find alternative coping strategies to help you veer away from unhelpful thoughts. You can find out how to create your own box at the end of this guide.



Mind have an online platform available for people with experience of mental health problems where they can connect and be heard. [Side by Side | A community platform by Mind](#) is the newer version of Elefriends from Mind and is currently in its final beta stages and open to the public. All you need to do is sign up for an account and get connecting.

You've tried all the strategies and you've tried all the tips but sometimes there is just no substitute to having someone to talk to and offer support. Keep a list of numbers on hand of people you trust in your life that you can talk to when you feel low. If you are struggling, reach out and call someone.

If you don't want to talk to your friends or family, you can call Breathing Space or the Samaritans. These services are available 365 days a year, including Christmas day and New Year's, ready to lend an ear without judgement. Remember, even when you feel lonely, someone is there to listen.



TALK TO US
If things are getting to you

 **116 123** FREE
This number is FREE to call round the clock.

 jo@samaritans.org

 samaritans.org

SAMARITANS
A registered charity




Brighter Days
Practising positivity for better mental health in Scotland



For a positive first step if you're feeling low call
0800 83 85 87
Open up when you're feeling down


BREATHING SPACE

 #365BrighterDays

www.breathingspace.scot



 **FASS**
ADAPT Substance Recovery

Call: 01592 321 321

- Drop in clinics
- Support work
- Counselling
- Family support

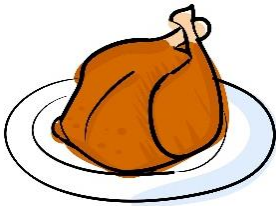
Problems with drugs or alcohol? We are here to listen and help...



Utter Chaos

Screaming children and wailing smoke detectors can leave you feeling stressed and tearful. The key to beating the Christmas day chaos is planning and preparation but remember it's not about perfection. If things don't go to plan it is not the end of the world even if it might feel that way.

COVID regulations mean we may not be celebrating Christmas the same as normal, but we can form family bubbles and that will take a bit of planning too. Have an honest conversation with your family about the COVID Christmas bubbles and make plans with those in your bubble arranging when you will be visiting them (or what time they will arrive at yours). This will help you to decide when to start getting the dinner sorted and feel more settled.



Christmas dinner is one of the big stressors on Christmas day. There is a lot of pressure on the idea that it must be perfect (we're looking at you TV ads!). First things first, perfection is overrated. Secondly, make your day a bit more stress free by prepping the Christmas dinner the day before. The amount of prep you do will depend how much you are wanting to cook from scratch.

If you're using fresh veg you can cut it and leave it in water over night. If you are making your own roast potatoes part boil them ahead of time, cover, and store in the fridge. Now all you have to do is heat the oil on Christmas day and roast them while you cook your kilted sausages. Again, if you wrap your own sausages these can be done on Christmas eve and stored (covered) in the fridge until you are ready to cook them. Now for the centre piece of the meal. If you have a slow cooker, you can prepare your turkey breast or crown the night before then leave it in the fridge. In the morning you stick it in the slow cooker and let it cook while you deal with other bits and pieces. You can also pre-cook your turkey the day before and heat it through on Christmas day but if you are doing this, check it is piping hot.

If you have kids, particularly young ones, you have likely experienced the hurried hunt for the scissors to cut toys from packaging or the last minutes search for the correct screwdriver and batteries. Why not make yourself a Christmas morning box?

This is a mini toolkit with all the bits and pieces in it you might need. We're talking batteries of all sizes - because you just know someone bought the kids a toy that takes 20 size C batteries – screwdrivers in a few assorted sizes, a few allen keys,

scissors, and some black bags. Having the tools on hand you usually have to go searching for will help reduce the upset from all parties as you desperately hunt through the toolbox.

The to-do list for Christmas day always seems endless. You are not a one-man-band, you don't need to do it all yourself. If you have other adults in the house, put them to work. This serves a dual purpose of keeping other people out from under your feet while also getting another task ticked off your list.



If your kids are old enough, ask them to help set the table. If you're not thrilled about this idea, chances are there is a film on BBC One they can sit down and watch with a "no parent required" activity.

If, despite your best efforts, you're struggling and feeling overwhelmed turn down the oven and hob and take time out for yourself. Your capacity cup is likely already very full on Christmas day so you need to accept that and appreciate you will need time to yourself to re-centre and come at things refreshed. The more frazzled you are the more catastrophic a small hiccup will seem.

Mindful Minute

ON YOUR MIND



Research shows that multitasking on the job diminishes both our efficiency and the quality of our work. Even worse, multitasking releases the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline, which can lead to all kinds of health problems. —**Mark Coleman**

Mindful Minute

ON YOUR MIND



Spending time in nature has healing and restorative power. Being outdoors increases well-being, helps alleviate stress and anxiety, promotes creativity, assists with recovery from mental fatigue, helps restore attention, boosts the brain's ability to think, and engages the senses. —**Catherine Morey-Nase**



"Me" Time & Self-Care



This Christmas if the build-up with the present buying, cleaning, planning, and cooking are becoming overwhelming and stressful, don't ask for permission to have a break, just take it! Stress at Christmas can sometimes arise just because there is a house full of people with little opportunity for "me" time. Try your best to find that much needed "time out", go for a brisk walk, have a bath, tidy up the kitchen listening to the radio or favourite music.

Keep your self-care routine or begin a new one.



When you're going through a stressful time, you need to increase your self-care. Self-care isn't a luxury – it's a necessity! When you take care of yourself, you're more likely to stay healthy, happy, and be able to do the

things you want during the holiday season. If you neglect yourself, you may compromise your immune system, get irritable, and feel exhausted.

What helps you stay healthy physically, emotionally, and mentally? Self-care needs to be personalised to match your needs, interests, and personality. We've provided some ideas:

- Getting enough sleep, physical activity, and healthy eating
- Taking your medication
- Staying home if you're ill instead of pushing yourself to go to work or visit people
- Not taking on any new commitments or projects
- Seeing a counsellor
- Meditating or praying
- Going to a religious service
- Spending time alone
- Listening to music you enjoy
- Spending time around positive people
- Enjoying a Christmas activity or tradition (not an obligation) that sparks joy
- Declining an invitation or going home early because you're tired
- Spending time in nature

Self-care tends to get neglected during Christmas because we're busy and our normal routines get disrupted. To make sure self-care doesn't end up on the bottom

of your to-do list (or not on it at all), you need to do some planning. Take a few minutes right now to commit yourself, to some self-care activities over the next few weeks. And remember, self-care sometimes means removing things from your planned activities that aren't restorative.

Self-compassion is a form of emotional self-care. It's being kind to yourself when you're struggling. Everyone has struggles – sometimes more, sometimes less – but everyone deserves compassion during challenging times.

Most people are excellent at giving compassion to others which means you already have the skills to be self-compassionate; you probably just need to practice it. Self-compassion is giving yourself the same kindness, grace, and acceptance you'd give to a dear friend when they're struggling.

The first step in practicing more self-compassion is recognising you're struggling. Many of us are quick to dismiss our struggles as "normal" or "not that bad". Sometimes we're just not in touch with our feelings, perhaps pushing them away because they're uncomfortable or overwhelming, so we don't notice how much we're suffering.

You can do loving things for yourself. A loving action can be:

- Giving yourself a neck rub
- Treating yourself to lunch or a fancy cup of coffee
- Calling in sick to work
- Scheduling self-care
- Taking a break
- Listening to a guided meditation
- Exercising
- Soaking in a hot bath
- Writing yourself a note of support and encouragement



Self-care and self-compassion will support your efforts to stay calm and confident in the face of Christmas Struggles. If you notice you're in (or will be in) a high-stress situation or experiencing a difficult emotion (like anger, fear, or sadness), ask yourself: How can I take care of myself during this difficult time? What can I do to give myself comfort?

Focusing on self-care and self-compassion is empowering because they're completely in your control; you can take care of yourself regardless of what drama or chaos is going on around you. And when you take care of your physical and emotional wellbeing, you're saying to yourself and others, "I matter". Remember - the best self-care is the kind that makes you happy!

Curnie Clubs has been welcoming people out of isolation since 2016. We are a friendly community of local clubs who link up with each other across Fife.

If you're interested in finding out more information or joining us, our contact details are at the bottom of the page.

We will be running a reduced service from Monday 21 December 2020. There will be a staff member on call for emergencies, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. They can be reached on 07748 631417.

Normal service will resume Monday 4 January 2021.

We hope you have a peaceful time as we move into the new year.



Fife Curnie Clubs
17 Tolbooth Street
Kirkcaldy
KY1 1RW
Tel: 07807 011951
Email: curnieclubsinfife@gmail.com



@FifeCurnieClubs



@FifeCurnie



@FifeCurnie



What's filling your Capacity Cup?

(Exercise from "A Toolkit For Modern Life" by Dr Emma Hepburn)

Draw your own capacity cup on a piece of paper and then write down what's in your cup, i.e. what's using up your emotional capacity right now.

Each time you put something in the cup, draw a line to indicate the level your cup is at. This is subjective, as what might use minimal space for one person can use more for another. Also, the same thing can use different amounts of capacity at different times. For example, if you're more anxious than usual about going shopping because of COVID, shopping will take up more capacity than it normally does.

Now you've added everything in, how full is your cup? How much space do you have left? It can be surprising to see what is taking up most of your emotional capacity. Give yourself time to think about it or talk things through with a friend. Being aware of your capacity cup, understanding what is filling it and how full it is, can help you manage your capacity proactively, helping you to act before reaching the point of being overwhelmed.

Spotting the signs you are reaching red

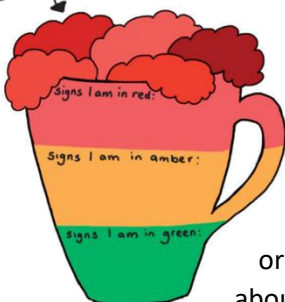
When our capacity cup is near the brim, we tend to react less rationally, our thinking is more rigid, we can be irritable, and our emotions tend to be bigger and more reactive. The trick to dealing with this is to notice the warning signs that your capacity is getting fuller. Ideally, you want to spot it in the amber zone before you hit the top, so you can stop your cup spilling over.

Use the larger diagram below to identify and write down your personal signs when you are in the red (at risk of overflowing), and the bubbles to spot what happens when you do overflow. Identify your own clues that you are in the green or amber zone and fast approaching red. The amber zone is a sign you need to think about your capacity and how you can manage it before your cup spills over the edge.

Knowing your capacity level can also help make sense of emotions. It can be confusing, and distressing, to behave in a way that you didn't expect or that is out of character. But when you step back and see where your capacity level was at the time, sometimes it all becomes clear. You were at full capacity because of a stressful day – teetering at the brim, well into the red zone. As a result, that seemingly harmless thing you would normally have dealt with pushed your capacity over the edge. It doesn't change what happened, but by noticing your capacity, you can understand what happened. You will also be more likely to spot the signs and deal with the situation differently next time.



Write in the bubbles what happens when your cup overflows



Everyone has individual signs their cup is near capacity. As you get nearer the top, you may notice your shoulders tightening or have difficulty breathing. Often you can feel stressed, overwhelmed, out of control, or find things difficult to deal with. Noticing these signs can be helpful in the quest to understand how your capacity cup is, so you can take action.

Time to take action

You're grumpy, stressed, overloaded. Well done – you've noticed your amber zone signs. It looks like you're reaching full capacity. Time to take action. There are three ways to manage your capacity before your cup overflows and you reach the point of being overwhelmed:

1. Shake it real good

Chuck some things out of your cup. Is there anything in there that can be binned? Are there less challenging alternatives you can do instead? Can you ask someone to help? Sometimes we are reluctant to throw things out as we feel we should be able to manage it all and are failing if we don't. However, chucking things out of your cup is a form of active coping, enabling you to dedicate more resources to the important things.

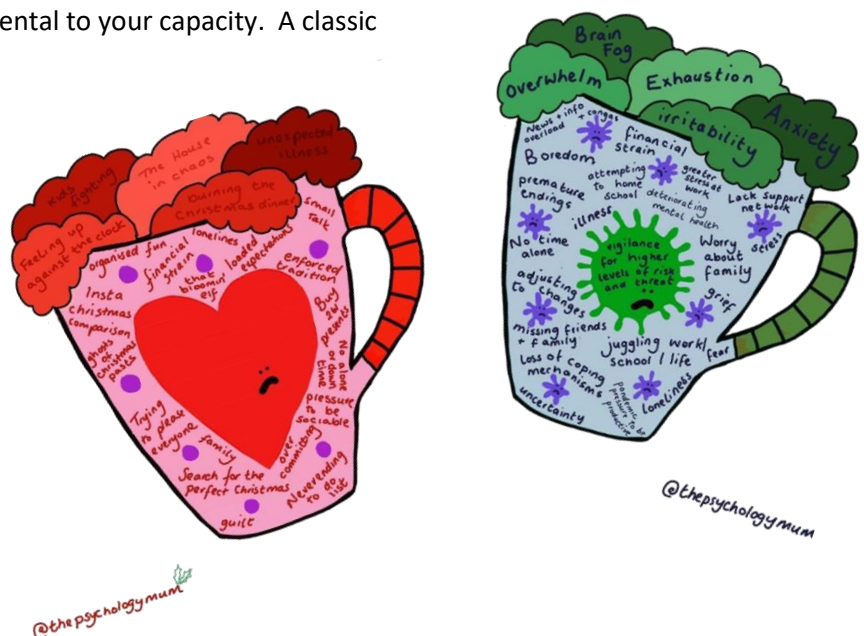
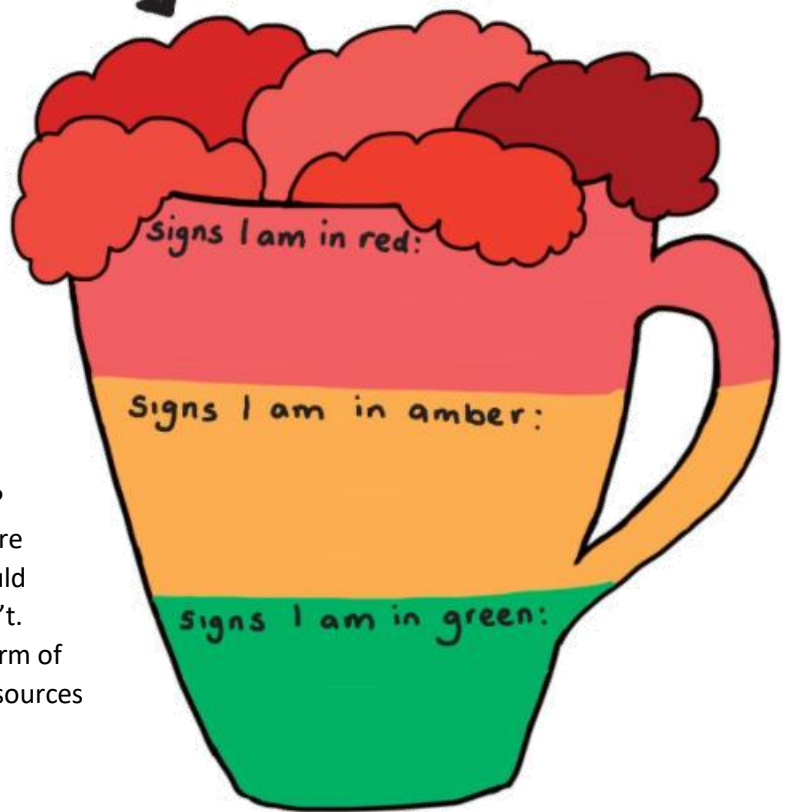
2. Enough is enough

It's time to say NO. if you're near capacity, try to keep things out of your cup when you can. Before you take on something new, ask yourself if it will push your cup over capacity. If the answer is YES, then the answer is NO to the new thing. Of course, this isn't always possible, and saying no can be hard. But it's an important skill to learn.

3. Doing it for yourself

Taking time for yourself can seem like a waste of precious resources, and you may mistakenly think this will be detrimental to your capacity. A classic example is missing lunch because you have too much on. However, looking after yourself actually increases your capacity, because it lowers your stress and gives you more brain space. Try to take time to encourage good sleeping habits and diet, take regular breaks and do something that makes you feel good, in the knowledge it will better equip you to deal with everything else in your cup and reduce your stress levels.

write in the bubbles what happens when your cup overflows



Is it a Happy Event or an Obligation?

A Boundary Setting Worksheet

Event or Activity

Going to mum's to bake cookies

When you think about this event, what feelings come up?

*Dread
Annoyance
Anger*

Pros and Cons of attending

*Kids enjoy going
I'll be exhausted and irritable
Mum always makes passive-aggressive comments
I end up eating too many cookies
Fun to see my niece*

Interest in attending
(rate 1- 10)

5

Options

*Go
Go late
Drop off kids and feign illness
None of us go
Bake cookies with kids at home*

Which option feels right?

Go late

Plan

My plan is to go late and only be there for about half the time. I'll tell mum ahead of time we can only attend from 3-5 to do the decorating, not the baking. If she complains, I'll firmly repeat this boundary and not waiver. If she makes passive-aggressive comments, I'll ignore them. If I get frustrated, I'll retreat to the bathroom or garage for a break. I can text sis for support.

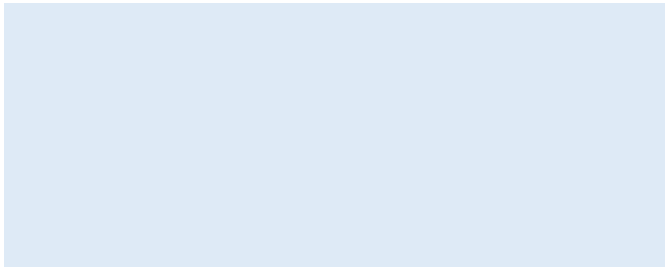
Affirmation

I am allowed to spend the holidays in whatever way works best for me. It's not my job to make my mother happy.

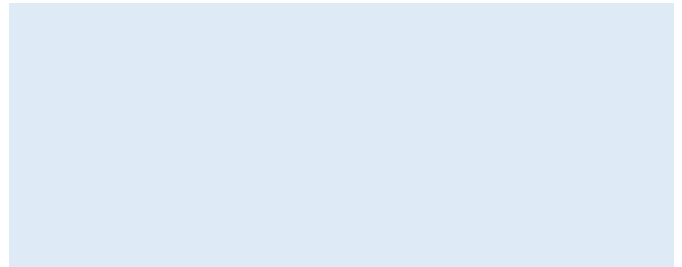
Is it a Happy Event or an Obligation?

A Boundary Setting Worksheet

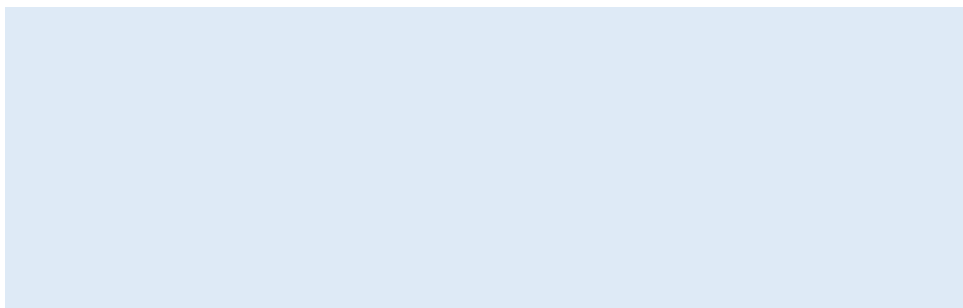
Event or Activity



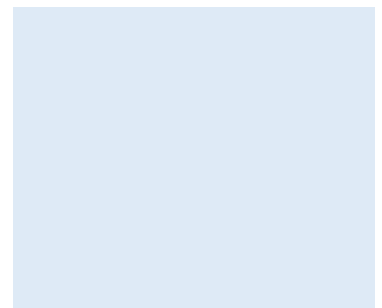
When you think about this event, what feelings come up?



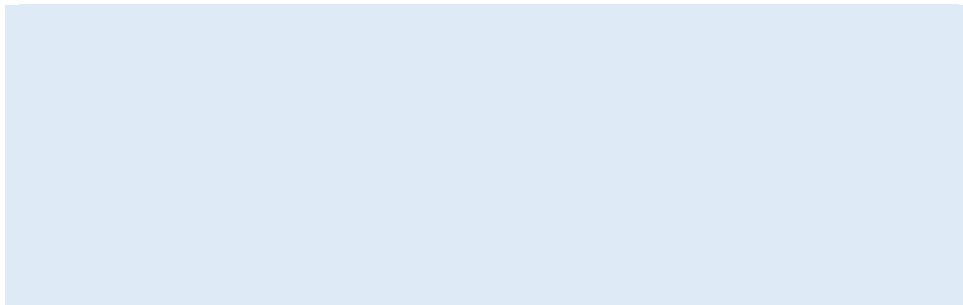
Pros and Cons of attending



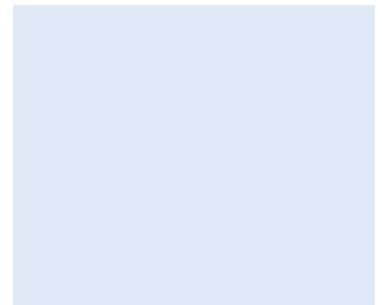
Interest in attending
(rate 1- 10)



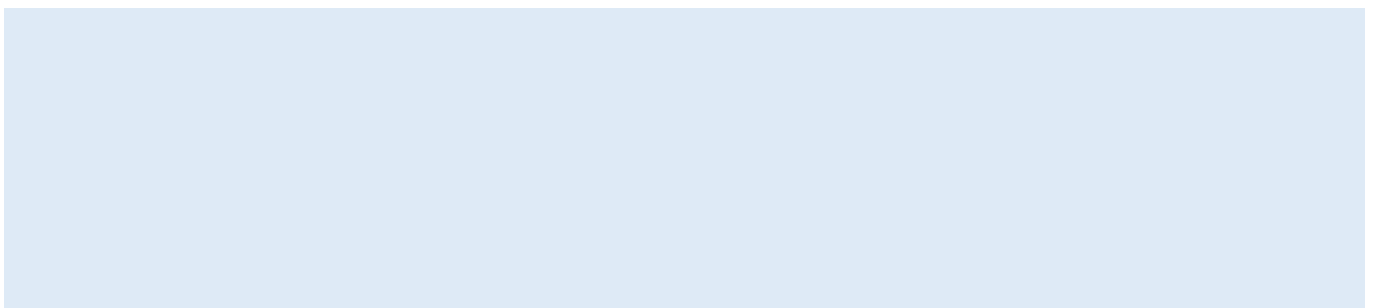
Options



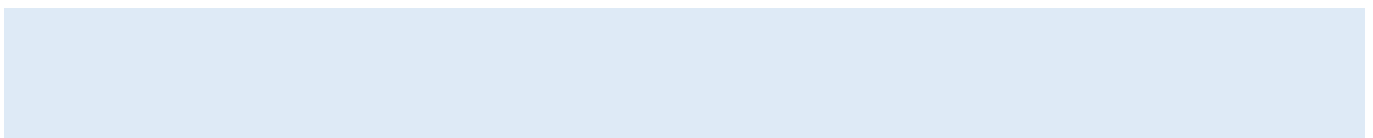
Which option feels right?



Plan



Affirmation



DIY Affirmation Cards

AFFIRMATION CARDS DIY IDEA #1 (QUICK & EASY)

This is the simplest method of creating your own affirmation cards and most likely the right one for you if you're short on time and function is your priority.

Tools & Supplies

List of positive affirmations
Lined index cards
Pen or Marker
Hole punch
O-Ring

Steps

1. Write one positive affirmation on each index card.
2. Punch a hole in the top left corner of the index card.
3. Slide an O-ring into the hole and attach all your affirmation cards.

*Optional Supplies: coloured pens, pencils, or markers; stickers; fancy index cards; different shaped hole punchers

AFFIRMATION CARDS DIY IDEA #2 (MAKE YOUR OWN FROM SCRATCH)

This is the one to use if you want your affirmation cards to have more colour and character. It also gives you more flexibility to choose the size of your DIY affirmation cards. This is still a quick and easy option, but it is more pleasing to the eye!

Tools & Supplies

List of your own affirmation
Cardstock (Bright White or Colored)
Pencil
Ruler
Scissors
Colorful Pens, Pencils, or Markers

Steps

1. Use the pencil and the ruler to draw the border of the affirmation card.
2. Use scissors to cut out the affirmation card. (For a more creative look, make one side of the affirmation card white and cut out and glue a colored cardstock to the back.
3. Write your affirmation on each card. Decorate using pens, pencils, or markers.
4. You can keep your DIY affirmation cards separate or punch a hole in each of them and connect with an O-ring.

*Optional Supplies: different shape hole punches, and O-Ring, decorative stamps, embellishments.

Coping Mantras

to help you cope with difficult people and stressful Christmas events

- I've got this.
- Don't take it personally.
- I don't have to participate in family drama.
- I can only control me.
- I'll focus on what I can control.
- This will pass.
- I can choose to be (or act) different this year.
- I'm allowed to say "no".
- Breathe through it.
- I don't have to be a victim.
- I have choices.
- Just keep swimming.
- If this gets out of hand, I can leave.
- I'm looking for the positives.
- I'm strong and capable.
- This isn't about me.
- I've got through lots of Christmases before, I can do it again.
- Progress not perfection.
- My self-worth doesn't hinge on their approval.
- Inhale peace. Exhale stress.
- I'm relaxed and at ease.
- I will not absorb negative energy.
- When they go low, I'll go high.
- I didn't cause this family dysfunction.
- I will love myself through this

My Rights at Christmas

1. I have the right to ask for what I want.
2. I have the right to say no to request or demands I cannot or choose not to meet.
3. I have the right to say no without feeling guilty or needing to explain my reasons.
4. I have the right to express all my feelings, positive or negative.
5. I have the right to change my mind.
6. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
7. I have the right to ask for help.
8. I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
9. I have the right to do things others don't approve of.
10. I have the right to say no to anything if it's unsafe or it violates my values.
11. I have the right to decide my own priorities.
12. I have the right not to take responsibility for others' behaviours, actions, feelings, or problems.
13. I have the right to expect honesty from others.
14. I have the right to be angry at someone I love.
15. I have the right to say, "I don't know."
16. I have the right not to give excuses or reasons for my behaviour.
17. I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings.
18. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
19. I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
20. I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
21. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
22. I have the right to be happy and feel safe.

Breathing Exercises

If you're feeling worried or anxious – The Soothing Breath

Involves the whole body, helps draw the attention away from mental anxiety, helps people focus on their body and the movement of their body.

1. Lie down on your back in a comfortable position.
2. Bend your knees up towards your body and gently hug your legs, relaxing your feet and ankles. Soften and release your shoulders to the floor, relax your back and lower your chin to lengthen the back of your neck. Let your eyes close.
3. As you hug your legs to your body, bring attention to your breath. Notice its natural to rise and fall – your energy softly rising when you inhale and gently falling when you exhale. When you inhale, allow your belly and ribs to rise up towards your thighs, then sink back down when you exhale. Settle here for a few moments.
4. Slowly and gently roll your body a little to the right and then to the left, using the floor to massage your back. Keep the motion relaxed, soft and rhythmical.
5. Now begin to coordinate the rocking motion with your breath. As you inhale, gently roll to the right, and as you exhale, roll back to centre. Slowly inhale as you rock to the left, and exhale as you rock back to centre.
6. Continue rolling for 5-10 minutes, until you feel a quiet calm flowing through your body and mind. Take time to breathe and move slowly and smoothly.

For getting rid of negative emotion - The Qigong Practice

A gentle but powerful technique that can help you release negativity and welcome positivity.

1. Stand and plant your feet into the ground, a little wider than hip-width apart, with your legs and feet parallel and your toes pointing forwards. Relax your belly and bring your arms by your sides.
2. On your next inhalation, breathe length into your spine and release your arms and shoulders down, with your palms turned up. Take a few steady breaths.
3. On the next inhalation, slowly raise your arms. Gather the negative thoughts, feelings, emotions, and beliefs that are holding you back.
4. On the next exhalation, turn your palms down, lowering your arms in front of you and softly bending your knees. Consciously release these gathered feelings down and into the earth.
5. Repeat two more times.
6. On your next inhalation, raise your arms and gather positive feelings, emotions, and beliefs.
7. On your next exhalation, lower your arms and let those qualities flow into you. Feel the sensation of these qualities deep in your core.
8. Repeat three more times.
9. To close, breathe and stand quietly for a few moments.

If you're feeling angry

The 'hissing' and 'haaing' sounds that come with this exercise are a fantastic way to direct your anger and frustration.

1. Lie down on your back in a comfortable position.
2. When you feel comfortable, close your eyes and settle. Become aware of your body and breath.
3. On your next inhalation, breathe in slowly and fully through your nose, filling your lungs from the bottom to the top. When you sense you are full, pause and keep the breath for a moment or two.
4. Slowly and completely exhale through your mouth, sighing your breath away and letting the weight of your body soften and release into the floor.
5. On your next inhalation, breathe in slowly and fully again, and pause. This time hold on to the breath for a little longer but do not strain.
6. Now relax and exhale through your mouth with a long steady haaaa sigh, releasing your tensions.
7. On your next inhalation, breathe in fully and deeply through your nose, feeling your belly rising, your lungs expanding and your chest opening.
8. Slowly and completely exhale through your mouth, sighing your breath away and letting the weight of your body melt to the ground, releasing any tension.
9. Repeat three more times but instead of sighing out, softly purse your lips and blow out through your mouth as if you are blowing dust from the surface of your mind. Feel your body sink into the ground with each exhalation.
10. Repeat three more times and this time hissss out through your mouth like an angry snake, consciously breathing out any irritation, frustration, or anger that you may be feeling.
11. Feel free to repeat any part of this practice a few more times to release any further tension.
12. Once you feel a sense of release through your body, heart, and mind, let your breathing relax back to its natural and spontaneous flow.

If you're having trouble sleeping

Inspired by yoga's pranayama practice, a breathing technique that can help to soothe the nervous system, inducing sleep within minutes. Ensure you're tucked up in your favourite pyjamas for this exercise as you could be dozing off before you know it.

1. Lying on your back, rest the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth, on the ridge just behind your upper teeth.
2. Exhale completely and let your body relax and sink into the bed.
3. Slowly inhale through your nose for 4 counts and then hold the breath for 7 counts.
4. On a count of 8, softly whoosh the breath out through your mouth, resting your tongue on the floor of your mouth.
5. Continue like this until sleep prevails.

After an argument

A balancing breath exercise can help you to return to the right mindset.

1. Lie down on the floor in a comfortable position.
2. Take time to settle, breathe softly and fully, relaxing into the natural flow of your breath.
3. As you breathe, sense the cool air entering your nostrils. Gently guide the breath equally in through the right and left nostril and evenly back out again. Take 5 more breaths, being aware of the flow of air through your nose on the inhalation and exhalation.
4. Now focus on balancing the length of your in and out breaths, letting them be easy, relaxed, and equal.
5. Next, bring attention to balancing the strength of the in and out breaths, so that one is not more dominant than the other. Take a few breaths, levelling the length and strength of each inhalation and exhalation.
6. Now gently breathe evenly into the bottom and then the top of your lungs and back out again. Take a few more breaths, feeling the depth and height of your lungs.
7. Bring awareness to the sides of your torso, breathing evenly into the side of your lungs. Breathe in and out slowly and gently.
8. Widen your attention to the front and back of your body and breathe evenly into the front and back of your lungs. Breathe here, feeling the floor beneath you and the space above you.
9. Finally, cultivate an even smoothness at the beginning and ending of each inhalation and each exhalation.
10. Take a few more breaths here, enjoying the sense of balance and space in your body, mind, and breath.

For when your heart is hurting - The Anahata Breathing Technique

Helps to reopen and heal our hearts so we can regain a sense of warmth and understanding.

1. Sit comfortably on a chair or cushion placed on the ground and feel your pelvis rooting to the ground. Softly lengthen up through your spine and gently ease your shoulders back and down to help open your chest.
2. Become aware of your breath and allow it to flow slowly and fully, deep into your body, softly expanding and opening as you inhale, and gently releasing and relaxing as you exhale.
3. As your breath becomes steady and easy, direct your awareness to your heart. Have a sense of its shape, weight and feeling. Breathe in, to your heart, and listen. Breathe out from your heart and soften. Take a few breaths here.
4. Now, with deepened awareness, send your breath to your heart and let it open and expand as you inhale. As you exhale allow your heart to soften and yield, letting the hard edges melt away and any hurt, pain, grudge, or resentment to dissolve and release.
5. To enhance this practice, bring your hands into a Hridaya Mudra (heart gesture) by softly curling your index finger under your thumb, placing the tips of the middle and ring fingers on the tip of your thumb, and extending your little finger. This directs the flow of energy from the hands to the heart, to open, unburden, fortify, and strengthen its physical and emotional state.

Meditation for Dealing with Difficult People

As I encounter difficult people this Christmas, I will stay calm and centred.

I will protect my emotional energy by not letting others push my buttons.

It's easy to get pulled into conflicts and to feel like I need to defend myself. But instead of engaging in arguments with difficult people, I will pick my battles and choose to let some things go. I know that some people will never be satisfied no matter what I say or do. Instead of trying to please them, I will do what's right for me without needing to justify my choices.

I will protect my emotional energy by focusing on what I can control.

I recognise that sometimes I want to try to fix, change or control other people and situations. This usually makes me frustrated and resentful. So, this year I'll choose to focus on what I can control. I will let others make their own choices and deal with the consequences. Allowing others to make mistakes and experiences consequences is a kind thing to do as it allows them to learn and make meaningful changes in their own time.

I will protect my emotional energy by setting boundaries.

I don't have to tolerate disrespect. I can walk away if someone is verbally assaulting me. I don't have to feel guilty for taking care of myself. Just because it's Christmas, I don't have to put up with abusive behaviour.

I will protect my emotional energy by staying focused on the positives in my life.

I can't control the negative or difficult people around me, but I can control my thoughts. I will notice the good things in my life. When I do this, I'll cultivate a positive, hopeful outlook that will help buffer the negative effects of difficult people. I can choose to feel grateful for what I have.

When I encounter difficult people, I will stay calm and centred.



Meditation for Coping with Christmas Stress

Christmas brings extra stress – for me and those around me.

This year I will try not to snap and lose my temper.

I will try to express my feelings and ask for what I need – so resentments don't build.

I will try to be flexible and remember things probably won't go as planned.

This year, I will take care of myself and use healthy coping strategies. I will try not to rely on overeating or drinking to deal with stress.

I will be mindful of the commitments I accept and remember it's okay to say "no".

I'll remind myself I don't have to do it all. And I don't have to do it perfectly.

I will pay attention to my thoughts, feelings, and body for signs of stress.

And when I notice my stress level is increasing, I will take a slow deep breath and quiet my mind.

I will focus on the here and now, on what's right in front of me rather than on my to-do list or problems.

I will pause and breathe deeply again and let the stress release from my mind and body.

With every breath, my body relaxes.

And as I relax, I can think more clearly, put things in perspective and focus on what really matters. When I notice my stress level increasing, I will take steps to release my stress in healthy ways.

I will remember to give myself grace when I don't handle things as I'd like.

I will also try to extend grace to others and remember they are also experiencing extra stress.

I will do my best and that will be enough.

This year I will take care of myself and remember my needs matter.

This year I will remember self-care is the best way to manage my stress.



DIY Memorial Bauble

This is perfect if you still have items of clothing you couldn't bear to part with after the death of a loved one.

Tools and Supplies

- Clear glass or plastic bauble
- Fabric scissors (regular fabric shears or pinking shears)
- Printable card stock
- Scanner/copier/smartphone
- Hole punch
- Christmas ribbon or string

Steps

Gather the garments you want to use. Tops such as shirts and blouses are ideal for this.

Cut them into strips about 2.5cm wide and about 10-12cm long.



Next, put the strips of fabric into the clear glass or plastic bauble.

Alternate the patterns or colours as you place them inside, so you get a good variety.

If you have a card or note from your loved one, this step will help make the ornament even more special - scan it into your computer as a photo, or take a photo of it with your smartphone.



On your computer or phone, use photo editing software to crop the photo so it focuses on the person's signature (most computers and phones have pre-installed photo editing software). Save the signature as a new photo.



Print the photo onto the card stock. If you don't have a printer, ask a friend or family member who has one to do help you with this step. If you made the photo on your phone and don't have the ability to print from phone, you'll need to send the photo to your computer (by email or a messaging platform you can access on your computer).

Cut out your loved one's note, punch a hole in it, and tie it onto the bauble with pretty ribbon or string.

And there you have it - a beautiful and personalised memorial bauble to honour your loved one at Christmas and always.

If you don't have a note from your loved one to include their handwriting on the tag, you can make a tag of your own with their name or something else that is meaningful to them and you.





Hug-In-A-Box

Our Hug-in-a-Box holds items which will bring you back to the present and help ground you when you are feeling emotionally distressed.

The items are also intended to make you feel good, help de-stress, find calm, feel pampered, relax, get creative, or simply have fun. So even when you're not feeling anxious or distraught but just want to savour a little alone time, it's ideal because we always benefit from a boost, or a pick-me-up, or a big dollop of self-care.

All you need is a box – an empty shoe box, a wooden box or maybe a box from something you ordered online. Make sure it's not too small that it barely holds anything, and not too large that you have difficulty carrying it.

Personalise it if you want – decorate it – draw on it - paint it – put stickers on it – wrapping paper – fabric - add some kind of personal touch to the box to identify it as your Hug-in-a-Box or just leave it plain. You decide.

The items to go in your box are ones which will stimulate all your senses, to help bring you back to the here and now. We've put together some suggestions for you:

- ♥ Journal and pens - Great for when you need to write out your thoughts and feelings when you're going through something difficult. Bullet journals seem to be popular right now.
- ♥ Stuffed toy - Sounds silly right? But sometimes all you need is a little comfort, and a wee cuddly toy to hold can be calming. Add a few drops of your favourite essential oil. This makes it great for sensory regulation and gives you an olfactory and tactile experience when you feel overwhelmed.
- ♥ Acupressure Ring - An acupressure ring is designed to apply pressure to sensitive spots on your fingers, which some people find provides relief from anxiety and tension.
- ♥ Essential Oils / Incense - Essential oils make a great addition. Calming scents, like lavender, can help you relax in times of emotional stress. More intense scents, like peppermint, are good for grounding if you find yourself dissociating. Incense sticks/cones or scented candles are great items to include too.
- ♥ Fidget Toys or Grounding Objects - Fidget toys or other small objects you play with in your hands can be grounding. Not only do they keep you distracted, but they also engage your sense of touch to bring you back to the present moment. There are lots of different types of fidgets you may want to add, so have some fun picking out a few you really like.
- ♥ Silly Putty - Another product that can keep your hands busy, silly putty is great for grounding sensory regulation and a safe outlet to work out physical tension. Whether you're squishing the dough or just noticing the way it feels in your hand, it can be a fab addition to your box.
- ♥ Hot Chocolate/Tea - Having a warm, delicious drink in your hands can be a wonderful way to self-soothe. Herbal teas can be very calming. Pack a couple of your favourite flavour teabags in your box, or sachets of hot chocolate or hot chocolate stirrers.
- ♥ Favourite Snack - Sometimes all you want is your favourite snack. Find a few non-perishable options to keep in your box when you need a little comfort nourishment.

♥ Colouring Book / Dot-to-Dot / Colouring Pens or Pencils - Adult colouring and dot-to-dot can be a great distraction. It can be grounding because you must focus on the work in front of you. Colouring in can also be soothing.

♥ Tissues - Your hug-in-a-box can also be practical. Include tissues to prepare for those times you need an emotional release and need to cry. Crying is a healthy way to express emotions, whether it's grief, sadness, or frustration. Having tissues on hand are a great way to take care of yourself in those moments.

♥ Eye Mask - Pamper yourself and give yourself a little sensory relief in difficult moments with an eye mask. Many masks allow you to heat or chill them, which can be soothing when you're facing an intense emotion or chronic pain.

♥ Fuzzy Socks - Adding some fuzzy socks to your box will keep your feet cosy and often helps people feel just a little bit safer.

♥ Lotion - Lotion gives you a double sensory experience — the touch sensation of rubbing it on your hands or body plus a scented experience depending on your lotion. The act of using lotion can be soothing and comforting as well as grounding, which makes it a terrific addition.

♥ Bubbles (not for the bath but the ones you blow) - Blowing bubbles is an activity you can never outgrow. Not only is it fun, but bubbles can be a breathing exercise in disguise. If you're breathing too fast or shallow, you won't be able to blow the bubbles, so you'll need to breath slower and deeper.

♥ Positive Notes from Yourself or Others - Positive affirmations or "thinking positively" won't fix everything. But that doesn't mean leaving yourself a little encouragement is a bad idea either. Leave yourself a few notes for when things get tough that help you remember you're resilient, loved and valued. Put some blank cards in and doodle your own positive affirmations.

♥ Other items to consider include noise-cancelling earbuds, a favourite book, DVD or CD. The list can go on but it's about adding items which will work for you.

If you don't have everything on your list at home, you might have to pick some items up from shops or online. Ask friends and family as well, you never know, they might just have an item on your list they'd be willing to give you. It makes that item extra special because it's been given to you by someone you know.

From time to time you'll likely stumble across something you think would be perfect to add to your box – you can add or remove items anytime you want to.

Remember, this is your box and it's about filling it with items which will work for you. What works for one person may not work for another. There's no right or wrong item. But we do recommend you fill it with items that help distract you as well as make you smile. Avoid putting items in that can trigger upsetting memories or make you feel worse.

Why not think about making one for someone you care about? It can make a fab Christmas gift, especially if you've taken the time to decorate the box – just fill it with a few items to help get them started and let them know what types of items to put in. You can always turn this into a new Christmas tradition – by finding a new item for you or your friend's box, or even exchanging items for one another's boxes each year.



Make Your Own Cookies

Print and cut out this tag and add it to your jar so the person you're gifting it to can make their own cookies this Christmas.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

You will need

100g Self raising flour • 100g soft light brown sugar • pinch of salt • 100g chocolate chips • 1 egg, beaten (not included) • 75g Butter (or margarine) (not included)

13. Set oven to 190°C (GM5) and line a baking tray.
14. Beat together the butter and sugar until creamed.
15. Mix in the flour and the egg.
16. Fold in the chocolate chips.
17. Place a teaspoonful of mix on the baking tray ensuring there is enough space between the cookies so they can expand.
18. Bake for around 10-15 minutes or until golden.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

You will need

100g Self raising flour • 100g soft light brown sugar • pinch of salt • 100g chocolate chips • 1 egg, beaten (not included) • 75g Butter (or margarine) (not included)

25. Set oven to 190°C (GM5) and line a baking tray.
26. Beat together the butter and sugar until creamed.
27. Mix in the flour and the egg.
28. Fold in the chocolate chips.
29. Place a teaspoonful of mix on the baking tray ensuring there is enough space between the cookies so they can expand.
30. Bake for around 10-15 minutes or until golden.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

You will need

100g Self raising flour • 100g soft light brown sugar • pinch of salt • 100g chocolate chips • 1 egg, beaten (not included) • 75g Butter (or margarine) (not included)

1. Set oven to 190°C (GM5) and line a baking tray.
2. Beat together the butter and sugar until creamed.
3. Mix in the flour and the egg.
4. Fold in the chocolate chips.
5. Place a teaspoonful of mix on the baking tray ensuring there is enough space between the cookies so they can expand.
6. Bake for around 10-15 minutes or until golden.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

You will need

100g Self raising flour • 100g soft light brown sugar • pinch of salt • 100g chocolate chips • 1 egg, beaten (not included) • 75g Butter (or margarine) (not included)

7. Set oven to 190°C (GM5) and line a baking tray.
8. Beat together the butter and sugar until creamed.
9. Mix in the flour and the egg.
10. Fold in the chocolate chips.
11. Place a teaspoonful of mix on the baking tray ensuring there is enough space between the cookies so they can expand.
12. Bake for around 10-15 minutes or until golden.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

You will need

100g Self raising flour • 100g soft light brown sugar • pinch of salt • 100g chocolate chips • 1 egg, beaten (not included) • 75g Butter (or margarine) (not included)

19. Set oven to 190°C (GM5) and line a baking tray.
20. Beat together the butter and sugar until creamed.
21. Mix in the flour and the egg.
22. Fold in the chocolate chips.
23. Place a teaspoonful of mix on the baking tray ensuring there is enough space between the cookies so they can expand.
24. Bake for around 10-15 minutes or until golden.

Christmas Meal Planner

Planning your Christmas meal will help you reduce your stress on the day but also the stress on your wallet. Use this template to get your menu sorted for the big day.

Starter	Shopping list
Main	
Sides	
Dessert	
Drinks	

Christmas Budget

Use this template to make a list of all the things you need to buy for Christmas time. This will help you see where your money is going and where you can reel it back a bit.

Category	What I plan to spend	What I spent
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£

Family Gifts • Friend gifts • Decorations •
Groceries • Activities • Treats • Travel
Expenses

Total £ _____

Christmas Tradition Declutter

Make a list of all the traditions you and your family have at Christmas in the box below, even if you don't like them. Write the ones you don't like into the "let it go" box so you can give these ones away. On the gift tag think of at least one tradition you would like to start for yourself and gift it to yourself.

All the traditions.

Let it go

Keep it

New tradition