

Keeping Well this Christmas

What a year it's been

The year of 2021 has been like no other and heading towards the end of the year, Christmastime is likely to be no less challenging than the months that have led up to it. The demands of adjusting to a global pandemic have undoubtedly required us all to adapt the way we live in order to stay safe. This Christmas, much will be asked of us all again to follow the rules and protect one another from the spread of Coronavirus so that we can transition as safely as we can into 2022.

We want to take this opportunity to say thank you for your patience with our service this past year as we too sought to adapt our ways of working in response to the pandemic. We have introduced new virtual support, many new wellbeing workshops have emerged and we now have weekly drop-in services available for anyone seeking quick access to information or advice, all of which have developed as a result of working remotely and which we will continue to provide into the new year as best we can.

We wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas, and send this pack to you in the hope it provides a little encouragement and support throughout the months ahead.

Best wishes from all our team,

The Bromley Well Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk



Please note, our service will not be open on the following days this Christmas:

- Christmas Day Bank Holiday – 27th Dec
- Boxing Day Bank Holiday – 28th Dec
- New Years Day Bank Holiday – 3rd Jan

Coping with Christmas 2021

The experience of Christmas is different for everyone. You may be someone who greatly enjoys the season, or you may find that Christmas is a less favourable time of year for you, whichever camp you fall into, both are perfectly okay. This year though we might all share one thing in common: worries about how Coronavirus is going to affect our Christmas. Whether for you that is concern around trying to continue working, stress related to money, or juggling things at home, the next few weeks are bound to have a little extra pressure added compared to normal.



National Mind have developed a toolkit to help people take better care this Christmas of their mental health and wellbeing, the highlights we have put below for you.



Make a plan

What do you want to happen, when and who with? Stick with your plan as best you can to keep stress levels down.



Part ways with things you don't enjoy

A COVID Christmas may bring relief as contact with others is limited. If a quieter Christmas feels more comfortable for you, reassure yourself that's ok and you can do the same next year too.



Be mindful of others

Find ways to be sensitive to others this Christmas, it's been a difficult year. A little kindness can go a long way.



Make room for your own traditions

The things that make you feel good at Christmas are worth sticking to, especially if they bring you comfort and joy – after all, isn't that what the season is all about?

Overall, the message remains clear: be kind and patient with yourself this Christmas season, focus on what matters most to you, find small ways to plan ahead and connect with people if you can so that you do not feel alone. For more support, visit www.mind.org.uk, call their Infoline on 0300 123 3393 or join their online community group Side by Side, visit <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/side-by-side-our-online-community/> for more information.

Source: "Christmas and Coronavirus", Mind (2020)

Mental
Health
UK

Mental Health UK are doing lots this Christmas to help people keep on top of their wellbeing, including offering mental health resources to your email inbox daily, supporting you to work well from home over the holidays, giving advice on how to support children and much more. They even have an online advent calendar available as part of their on-going efforts to keeping communities connected online. Visit: <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/coronavirus-information-support/> for more information. Need information in another language? Doctors of the World have an online wellness toolkit available in more than 27 languages. Download yours for free [here](#).



A reminder of what we know about Coronavirus

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness in humans. The most recently discovered coronavirus is called COVID-19. COVID-19 is the name of the illness caused by this new form of coronavirus, and can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks. These droplets are relatively heavy, do not travel far and quickly sink to the ground. People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in these droplets from a person infected with the virus, or if they touch a surface containing droplets e.g. tables, doorknobs and handrails, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.



Help to control the spread of infection

We all have a responsibility to ensure we are keeping on top of hygiene to prevent further spread of the virus. There are some tips outlined here that are important to keep in mind:

1. **Keep on top of hand washing** – each time you go outdoors, pick up the post, receive a parcel, see someone, do the shopping, make a cup of tea, think first about washing your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
2. **Avoid touching your face** – we are creatures of habit and face-touching for many people is a source of comfort. Try to minimise face touching, use disposable tissues to catch sneezes and use hand sanitiser to reduce further germ spreading.
3. **Keep your masks clean** – if you are using the same mask repeatedly, that can spread germs too. Wash them regularly, or get disposable ones to keep germs at bay.
4. **Create space** – remember to keep physical distance of 2 metres from others where you can, and 1 metre if you both have a face covering.

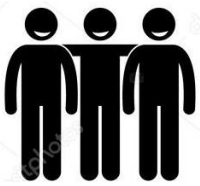


NHS and HM Government (2020)



10 Tips on How to Stay Well this Christmas

Christmas can be a nice time of year. The season of Christmas can provide an opportunity to do something for yourself, or for others, and to reflect on the year you've just journeyed through. It is important to allow yourself the space to enjoy the season by making time to relax, have fun, spend time with others that matter and do things that make you feel good to help you wind down and plan positively for the New Year. The following tips have been developed by the Mental Health Foundation (2019) to highlight the difference small steps can take to supporting your mental health at Christmas. Take a look at this list, and pick one or two that you might focus on this season.



1. Talk about your feelings

Learning to self-manage your wellbeing is a key step in living well, and connecting with others on the challenges you face and the successes you have is an important part of supporting your mental health. Talking with people you trust, or to someone impartial can help to offload things that are on your mind and help you problem solve safely. Visit Mind's online Information Hub for more support at www.mind.org.uk.



2. Do something you are good at

Finding something you love to do, however small, helps to lift spirits and beat stress. Try sticking to the things that give you joy and sharing it with others. Want to meet others who like doing what you do? Check out the **Bromley Recovery College** for more ideas on free groups or classes you can join, visit: www.blgmind.org.uk for more information.



3. Ask for help

Remember there are always services there to help you, and no problem is too small. Especially at Christmas we can feel overwhelmed with the pressure of the season, there is always help out there. Visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/> for an A-Z of UK services that could help you.



4. Keep in touch

Find people you trust and connect with them this Christmas, visit www.campaigntoendloneliness.org for more support and lots of resources on how to end loneliness this Christmas.



5. Accept who you are

You don't have to do anything more than what suits you this Christmas, we are all different and Christmas is a time to embrace that. Psychologists who study happiness have developed an app using Acceptance Commitment Therapy principles that might help inspire you, visit <http://www.actcompanion.com/> for more information.

10 Tips on How to Stay Well this Christmas, continued



6. **Drink sensibly** – know your limits and stay safe. Visit: www.downyourdrink.org.uk for more advice. Concerned about how much you are drinking? Change Grow Live is a local charity that helps adults struggling with mild and severe addictions to alcohol and other substances, find out more by visiting: <https://www.changegrowlive.org/bromley-drug-alcohol-service> or by calling 0208 289 1999.



7. **Eat well** – it is a time when we are able to overindulge and spoil ourselves, but remember too much sugar can be detrimental to our mental health in the long run, try things in moderation. For some of us though, sourcing food or eating well is not always possible. Bromley has foodbanks across the borough set up to help you and your family still access vital goods like food, home essentials and clothing that could see you through the winter period, visit: www.bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk or call 0300 330 9039 to speak to someone about a referral to the foodbank.



8. **Keep active** – regular mental activity and physical movement can boost mood, elevate self-esteem and improve your ability to sleep later in the day, consider opportunities to be more active indoors and outdoors this winter. Try gathering up friends to walk outdoors, or encouraging someone to call you while you walk on the phone together. Not sure you can go outside? Moving indoors can be simple too – put on your favourite song and dance around, or look at safe online classes you can do at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>. Keep your mind active with interests such as reading, writing, crafts, photography, crosswords, painting, or singing, visit the Bromley Recovery College for more ideas on local groups you can join safely too.



9. **Take a break** – Christmas is a good time of year to find time to pause from your lifestyle and take a moment to reflect back on your year, and the year ahead. Remember, this has been an usual year and many things you had planned may have had to change. Take some time to be grateful for the things you achieved this year, and set some goals in mind for the year ahead. When you can, truly rest from those thoughts by doing something quiet and restorative just for you. If you can, replicate that self-care time a little bit every day over the Christmas season, and when you do, reward yourself with self-praise and self-compassion.



10. **Show care for others** – doing a little for another person can go a long way to boosting their wellbeing, and yours in turn. Think of someone you know, or on your street you can reach out to this Christmas. If you are caring for someone with a mental health problem this Christmas and need more support, please contact 0300 3309 039 to be referred into the Bromley Well Mental Health Carers Service. For more support as a carer this period, text “CARING2021” to 07718403574 to receive our carers support pack, and get booked free onto our Coping with Caring during COVID-19 online course starting in January 2022.



Beat the New Year blues


Research into the psychological impact of the New Year, has suggested that the third Monday in January is for most people, the most depressing day of the year and as such has been affectionately named, Blue Monday. For most people, the struggles of a whole new year can begin to feel very real: financially, emotionally, socially, and despite our immediate best efforts to have a great start to the year we can begin to feel low, fed up and cynical about the year ahead. These feelings are all completely normal, and this new year, we want to make sure you have some tips to help you get on top of that Blue Monday feeling and do something supportive for yourself in order to feel good and hopeful for the year ahead.



Quick Tips


- **Keep on top of stress** – keep a to-do list for the week and take three things off that list to achieve each day to help pace yourself and prioritise tasks.
- **Take 30 minutes a day just for you** – dedicate time to yourself each day, even if it is only a shower use this time to focus completely on yourself.
- **Talk to someone** – it's ok not to be ok, let someone know how you are feeling and get it off your chest.

A quick exercise: “A new year marks a chance to try something new”



For all of us 2020 has put much of our plans on hold. We know that despite the promise of a new year, things will not kick off to an entirely fresh start as we continue to remain in our tiers awaiting a vaccine. Despite that, it does not mean that you have to carry the energy, worry or distress of 2021 into the new year with you, it is an opportunity for you to draw a line under this year and enter into 2022 with a fresh outlook. Find 15 minutes this winter to help yourself set some small, but smart goals to help you focus heading into 2022 so that you have a plan in mind to see you through the year – you'll be amazed what comes to you once you put pen to paper. Think of 1-3 things you want to achieve, make them specific and measurable, make sure they are achievable and relevant to your life today, then put a time-frame around those goals. Think if you can of one for 3 month's time, 6 month's and then 12 month's time – exactly one year from now. Stay motivated by telling others of your goals, reaching out for help to achieve them, and putting them up somewhere visible to remind you what you're working towards.

Why not try joining the Bromley Recovery College?



If you like the sound of starting something new in 2022, and would like the opportunity to meet new people along the way, there are a range of opportunities available for you to get involved in at the Recovery College. They provide a regular prospectus of peer and professional led courses and groups that inform and explore ways to manage mental health problems, to help people improve wellbeing, skills and achieve personal goals and ambitions. For more information contact the Recovery College at 01689 603577 or visit: www.blgmind.org.uk.



Build resilience for 2022

Resilience is a term used to describe how successfully a person might “bounce back” from adverse or stressful experiences. Resilience is not something a person is born with, but it is something you develop through your early childhood experiences e.g. how you are parented, how you learn to cope in social, academic and domestic situations, and how you are supported when things appear difficult or challenging. This means that levels of resilience although learned, can be changed if you feel the way you cope in these situations is unhelpful or leaves you feeling out of control, frustrated or helpless. Here are some ideas that help to increase personal resilience:

Manage worry

You have the answers within yourself, often when we feel stressed we turn to others for the answer which can often add to our confusion or sense of being “stuck”. Next time you feel overwhelmed, pause and write a list of what is worrying you. Then highlight or underline the biggest worry from the list. Take this worry and on a new piece of paper ask yourself how likely this worry is to happen out of 100%, then ask yourself out of 100% how likely do you feel about to control what happens. Now think about what is within your control. Write a list of actions for yourself that might help you work through what is in your control to feel more on top of what you have going on.

Practice patience

Often when we feel low or burnt out we choose to avoid things that we think will leave us feeling worse. Next time this happens, find a quiet space to calmly reflect on what is happening – what can you learn, what would you like to happen?

Make room for your hopes and dreams

Life can be busy and there can often be little room for things that make you feel like a complete person, totally fulfilled and happy. Take time to plan long-term goals – this year, next 2-5 years, next 10 years. Set a few and think about what might help you work towards them e.g. volunteering, hobbies, education, or something else. Be brave, and take risks – you might just surprise yourself.

Want some help to build your resilience?

Email **RESILIENCE** to wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk to receive a free workbook produced by our team today, to help you work towards a more resilient version of you for 2022 and beyond.

Do you need help to cope with anxiety, stress or depression? We're here to help.

The Bromley Well Mental Health and Wellbeing Service are coming together in January 2022 to offer free wellbeing workshops for local people needing more support on ways to cope with common mental health problems. **Booking is essential.** Workshops are free and include:

Coping with Low Mood and Other Emotions
Coping with Stress and Poor Sleep
Coping with Worry and Panic

If you are interested in hearing more about the workshops, or to book your place please email: wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk where our team will reply to you within 48 hours.



What else is on in the New Year

Bromley Well hosts a variety of workshops, drop-in's and related events throughout the year to support adult living, working or caring for others across the London Borough of Bromley. You can keep up to date with all events on our website at www.bromleywell.org.uk/events/, but we've taken some of the highlights for January and popped them here for you.

Coping with Life Workshops

Delivered in partnership with the Recovery College, access free sessions to help you understand and manage common mental health problems, including anxiety, stress and depression. To register email wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk today.

Mental Health Training for Professionals

Do you work in Health or Social Care? Our team provides free Mental Health Awareness Training to professionals in Bromley. You can access this yourself, or recommend it to clients who may also work in the borough. Register by emailing our team today at wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk.

Support for Carers

Our Carers Service is dedicated to supporting all adults who are providing care for others. Endorsed by the Carers Trust, this service is completely free and there to support you.

Mental Health Carers Drop-In

Our team are here to listen, and give you up to date information, advice and guidance to help you address any concerns about caring. Simply text "CARERDROPIN" to 07718 403 574 and you will be booked in for the next available session, with our mental health carers support advisor.

Carer Workshops

From mindfulness to walking there are so many free activities our colleagues in the Adult Carer Pathway provide each month. If you are interested in receiving their regular newsletter and accessing more information on their groups, simply email carers@bromleywell.org.uk for more details.

Wednesday Tea & Talk Groups for Carers

Are you caring for another adult with a mental health or physical health problem? We have regular support groups set up to provide you with a safe and confidential space to connect with other carers and talk over a cup of tea or coffee. All taking place via Zoom until further notice. Click [here](#) for the January sessions.

Coping with Caring During COVID-19

If you have found caring for another person difficult throughout 2021, you're not alone. The pandemic has brought with it many challenges for people trying to give care to others. This two-part programme is free, online, and there just for carers. To book, please email wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk.

Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich Mind have produced a booklet to support carers throughout the pandemic. To receive a free copy by post simply email "BOOKLET" followed by your postal address to wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk.



Knowing what to do in a crisis

Step One: Let someone know how you are feeling

If you are feeling unsafe, scared, or alone, it may be important to let someone know how you are feeling so that they can support you. Often when we feel this way, talking, or being listened to by someone we know, or even a neighbour, can help remind us that we are not alone. Think of two or three people that you could really connect with over the holidays. Write down their names and numbers on a piece of paper and keep it somewhere you can see it to remind you they are there when you need them. It may help to also let them know they are one of your key contacts so that they can be prepared to receive that call, or knock at the door and can also manage your expectations safely if they cannot speak straight away. Not sure who to ring? The Samaritans are there for you on 116 123, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, or text "SHOUT" to 85258 to be connected to a crisis counsellor immediately by text messenger.

Step Two: Consider if NHS-111 might be able to help you



Use the following steps if you require professional support regarding your mental or physical health in non-emergency situations. **Step A:** Visit your local pharmacist. Pharmacists are experts in medicines who can help you with minor health concerns including coughs, colds, tummy aches and other pains. **Step B: Call NHS-111.** If you feel like you have an urgent but non-life threatening issue, instead of worrying, self-diagnosing or second guessing, call 111. They can give you appropriate advice, connect you with a clinician, and direct you to the relevant service if necessary. **Step C:** If steps A and B do not meet your needs, and if advised, visit your GP.

Step Three: Remember there is always support in an emergency

In the event of an emergency, please use the following steps to access help quickly:

Step A: If you feel at risk of harm to yourself or others contact the Oxleas Mental Health Urgent Advice Line for immediate support on: 0800 330 8590, if you need support out of office hours call: 0845 608 0525. Alternatively contact, Support Line UK on: 01708 765 200 or visit their website for more practical support and advice: www.supportline.org.uk.

Step B: If you have harmed yourself, feel actively suicidal or if you feel unstable in any other way, please contact 999-Ambulance. Or, if you feel able or someone can assist you, access A&E at the Princess Royal Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, [BR6 8ND](#). There is a Mental Health Team on duty here and they will be able to assist you.

Step C: If you feel at risk due to the behaviours of others, contact 999-Police, or if you need social support contact Adult Early Intervention Team Bromley on: 020 8461 7777 or 07908715749 (9am to 5pm) or call the Emergency Duty Team out of office hours on: 0250 8464 4848.



Christmas helplines

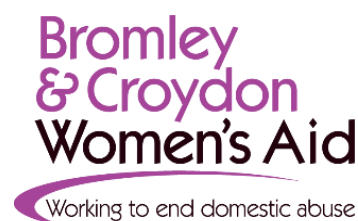
The Samaritans

This is a national charity providing emotional, listening support to any person, at any age, who feels alone, down or in crisis at any time of day or night. You can reach them 24/7, including Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. You are not alone. **Freephone:** 116 123 to talk to someone right now **Website:** www.samaritans.org.uk.



Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid

This is a charity established to provide emotional support, information, advice and advocacy for any woman at risk of harm or victimisation as a result of domestic abuse, assault or harassment. The service will be open throughout the Christmas season. **Domestic Abuse Helpline (24/7):** 0808 2000 247 (Freephone). **Website:** <http://www.bcwa.org.uk/>. If you are experiencing any symptoms of post-traumatic stress relating to an abusive relationship, consider reaching out to PTSD UK for more support on how experiences such as flashbacks or dissociations.



The Silver Line

This is a listening service set up to provide emotional information, advice and support to any person over 55 who needs to talk to someone. The service is available 24/7 all 365 days of the year. **Freephone:** 0800 4 70 80 90. **Website:** www.thesilverline.org.uk. If you are seeking practical support or advice and are over the age of 60, consider contacting Age UK Bromley and Greenwich for more support on 0208 315 1850.



The Mix

This is a charity providing emotional support and advice to any young person up to the age of 25. They offer online counselling, telephone counselling, web chats and forums, as well as support and advice resources on their website. **Freephone:** 0808 808 4994. **Website:** www.themix.org.uk. **Text:** 'THEMIX' to 85258. If you are aged 35 or under and feel suicidal, the charity Papyrus may be able to help you. Contact their HOPELINE for support today on: 0800 068 4141.



Shelter

If you or someone you know is at risk of homelessness this winter, we urge you to get some advice through Shelter. Their helpline can provide you with confidential, expert advice, call freephone 0808 800 4444. Alternatively, Crisis can provide support to access housing and employment, visit www.crisis.org.uk. Or to report someone homeless right now, call 999, visit Streetlink for urgent help www.streetlink.org.uk or contact the Bromley Homeless Shelter on 07806 602 347.





Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2021 Christmas Wellbeing Pack.

We are a small team and we write, design and print this pack in-house. Our team make every effort to ensure that all of the information enclosed is as accurate as possible at the time of printing. We understand that sometimes there may be information that we have missed that might have been useful. If you would like to provide any feedback to the team on this support pack, or register for our quarterly newsletter editions we welcome you to contact our team directly on: wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk.

How to contact us

Bromley Well

The Bromley Well Mental Health and Wellbeing Service provides free support to people living in Bromley who may be experiencing mild concerns relating to their emotional and mental wellbeing, which may be contributing to feelings of stress, anxiety and low mood. We offer emotional support and practical information on how to manage wellbeing, by exploring approaches to self-care, health and lifestyle. We also help people to develop links and activities in the community, build social networks, and access appropriate services.

If you live, work or care for another person living in Bromley you can access our service. You can make a self-referral, or a professional can refer you to our service.

 0808 278 7898

 @bromleywell

 wellbeing@bromleywell.org.uk

 www.bromleywell.org.uk

Finally, from all the team at the Bromley Well Mental Health and Wellbeing Service...



We wish you a safe, healthy and happy Christmas.

Bromley Well is delivered by:



Bromley Well is funded by:

