Coping with Christmas

Thursday 6 November, 2014

For many of us Christmas is a joyous time of year where we reconnect with friends and family members and enjoy time off from school or work. It can, however, also prove to be a very stressful time. Adding to the usual pressures of day-to-day life and work, the expectations of Christmas can take its toll. Increased stress levels can lead to anxiety, anger issues, sleep problems and can cause relationship difficulties.

Thankfully, there are some simple, practical steps that we can put in place to deal with such issues during the festive period.

Dr Sherylin Thompson, a Registered Member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, gives the following advice:

"**Make sure to socialise**. Put effort into seeing those you care about the most while limiting time at events that drain you. Whether it be a hike in the countryside or a day trip out somewhere, participating in fun activities with people you enjoy spending time with will help boost your mood and is also a great way to de-stress.

"**Exercise is vitally important**. It is easy to forget to exercise during the Christmas period, and with the weather so temperamental, it can give you a valid excuse to miss out on your recommended 30 minutes a day. However, staying fit is an excellent way to reduce stress levels, and even if you're unable to exercise outside, there are still plenty of ways you can keep active indoors, such as by joining a gym or doing yoga.

"**Get creative**. Christmas is the perfect time of year to let your creative side shine through, so spend time on the little things that come with the time of year like decorating the tree, writing Christmas cards and baking lots of delicious treats. Spending time doing something enjoyable will help keep your mind active, your mood high and those stress levels down.

"**Be prepared**. If you are someone that finds most Christmases get you stressed out, it may be important to take some preventative action before the holidays begin. Counselling and psychotherapy are successful methods in dealing with stress-related issues. Find a BACP Registered therapist who has an interest in stress reduction and management to make sure that you have some skills to draw on when the pressure mounts."

Therapy offers you a safe, confidential place to talk with someone who is trained to listen attentively and to help you improve things. You can access therapy through your GP for free. You may also be able to access therapy through your workplace or, if you are in education, through your school, college or university.

If you decide to access counselling privately, BACP's public website www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk contains a wealth of information for anyone considering therapy including information sheets, videos, links to recent research, and a 'find a therapist' directory which helps you find a private therapist in your local area.

Notes to editors

Dr Sherylin Thompson is available for follow-up comment. For any enquiries related to this press release, call our media team on 01455 883 342, or email media@bacp.co.uk. For non-media enquiries please call our main switchboard on 01455 883 300.

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