

Coping with the festive season

The festive season can be fun and happy. But it can also feel busy, stressful and hard. Busy shops, money worries, family plans and social events can feel like too much.

If you find this time of year difficult, that is okay.

You might be feeling:

- worried about money
- pressured to drink alcohol
- worried about food or your body
- lonely or struggling with relationships



Talking helps. You could reach out to:

- a friend
- a family member
- a work colleague
- a support service



Small things that can help:

- Rest when you need to
- Spend only what you can afford
- It is okay to say no
- Be kind to yourself
- Try not to put too much pressure on yourself



Ways to cope:

Money worries

- Make a simple budget
- It is okay to spend less
- Try low-cost or free gift ideas
- Ask for help early if bills feel hard
- Try not to compare yourself to others



Alcohol and social pressure

- It is okay to say no
- You can leave early
- You can choose alcohol-free drinks
- Take your time between drinks
- If alcohol affects your mood, it is okay to avoid it



Food, body and expectations

- Eat in the way that feels right for you
- There is no "right" way to eat
- Try not to call food "good" or "bad"
- Step away from talk about weight if it upsets you
- Ask for help if food feels overwhelming



Loneliness and relationships

- Many people feel lonely at this time of year
- Spend time with people who make you feel safe
- Limit time in stressful places
- It is okay to step back from hard relationships



Where to find help in Kent and Medway



Urgent mental health support:

- Call **0800 107 0160** for the Release the Pressure Helpline
- Call **111** and choose the option for mental health
- Call **999** if there is risk to life

Local walk-in support:

Safe Havens - free, private, no appointment needed
Web address: www.mhm.org.uk/kent-safe-havens

Money and practical support:

Citizens Advice Kent and Medway - help with debt, benefits, housing and cost of living.
Web address: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Porchlight - Help with housing and homelessness concerns.
Web address: www.porchlight.org.uk

Talking and emotional support:

NHS Talking Therapies (self-referral)
Web address: www.nhs.uk/talkingtherapies
Samaritans (24/7) - call **116 123**
Web address: www.samaritans.org

Supporting someone else:

- Send a message or make a call
- Listen without trying to fix everything
- Encourage them to get support
- Remember to look after yourself too

You matter this festive season and always.

You deserve care and support. Let's be kind to ourselves and each other.