

Useful Contacts:

Breathing Space

Tel: 0800 838 587

Line open Mon-Thurs 6pm-2am, Fri-Mon 6pm-6am

Samaritans

Tel: 116 123

Line open 24/7 365 days a year

Silver Line Scotland

Tel: 0800 4 70 80 90



***Isolation and Loneliness
During the Festive season***

***A booklet for those who are alone or
isolated at Christmas***

'Surviving Christmas' is a seasonal campaign run by PLUS Perth, a local mental health campaigning charity. To access our 'Surviving Christmas' pocket guide and other helpful resources, please visit www.mentalwealthperthshire.co.uk or call PLUS Perth on 01738 626242.

Christmas is typically a time to be spent with family and friends but many of us can't due to isolation, living too far away or having no immediate family. Some of us may choose to spend Christmas day alone but for those who don't, this booklet is made up to offer some suggestions on how to reduce isolation and tips to help you cope with any loneliness that you may experience over the festive period.

If you have no family or close friends

You can sometimes feel quite isolated and lonely at Christmas if you don't have anyone close to you. Many of us don't and struggle in a similar way. For those who don't have a place to go to for Christmas, and are starting to feel tension, it may be useful to remember that the family Christmas is rarely as perfect as we imagine. Family dysfunction is much more widespread than we realise, and for many, this is not the most wonderful time of the year but a difficult time of expectations and awkward explanations.

Age Scotland has said that approximately 500,000 older people spend Christmas day alone, with a percentage of them saying it was a difficult time that reminded them of those who are no longer with them.

If this is you and you are looking for something to fill your time over the Christmas period and would benefit from a human connection or purpose to your day, **volunteering** during the holidays can be good. It is way you can connect with others, boost your self-esteem, and bring joy to people who may be struggling.

Some people may not like the idea of volunteering in a large group or project but by visiting a neighbour or someone you know that might be alone this Christmas, can be an effective way to feel connected and can

benefit yourself and the community. The right type of volunteering, can help you find friends, reach out to the community and learn new skills. It can also help protect your mental and physical health by increasing your self-esteem, self-confidence and life satisfaction.

To find out more about how you could volunteer this Christmas in Perth and Kinross by contacting Voluntary Action Perthshire at www.vaperthshire.org or by calling them on 01738 567076.

If you happen to live too far away from your family and friends

It can be very difficult to spend Christmas away from those you love and can make it an upsetting and lonely time but it's also a great time to try new things and start new traditions.

Although it may not initially help, it is good to try and remember that you're not the only one who's separated from their family or feeling lonely at this time of year. If you are not always away from your family at Christmas, you could try focus on the happy memories of the past years to bring you comfort. Regularly calling, emailing or writing to your family and friends, can keep the feeling of being connected to them. You could also look for presents for your relatives and friends, this can make you feel connected to them even if you are a hundred miles away.

It can also be good to try and take part in local events. Trying to participate in as many activities as you can is it a great way to meet new people, and can help make your new home feel more like home.

No one can deny the pain experienced at times like these but there are ways to try think and act positively, hopefully some of the suggestions in this booklet will help you get through any difficulty you experience.