Us Plus
Mental Health and Wellbeing Bulletin 8

Hello everyone,

Among all the fun and festivities, Christmas can be an overwhelming time. Calli from the amazing support network 'Young Minds', gives her advice on how to look after your mental health over the holidays. Have a read of her advice below.

I hope you all have a lovely holiday from school and take time out to look after yourselves!

Mrs Taylor

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!" is what I hear constantly at Christmas. Whether it's on the radio, the telly or out in public, we are constantly told that Christmas is a time to be happy.

But what if you're not happy?

The reality for many of us, including myself, is that when Christmas comes around, there's constant pressure on those with mental health problems to be happy all the time. But of course, that's easier said than done.

Here's my advice on things you can do to ensure you still enjoy the festive period this year, but also look after your mental health:

Take time out: It's so important to take time out every day, not just in the festive period. If you feel yourself getting a bit overwhelmed, or upset, take five to ten minutes away from everyone on Christmas Day to just have a bit of time to yourself. Usually I will go into my bedroom to watch something on television, and this year I started running, so will absolutely take some time out on Christmas Day to go for a run. Christmas Day can be quite an overwhelming day, so by taking time out you can allow yourself time to recharge.

Sleep: A good night's sleep is so important when it comes to looking after your mental health. It's said that teenagers need an average of nine-and-a-half hours' sleep each night. When it comes to the festive period, ensuring you get enough sleep can become difficult due to things like late nights at home and parties. To make sure you get back into your normal sleeping routine easily, try going to bed at normal times as the festive period draws to a close. This'll make getting up for school a lot easier and, in turn, will help your mental health a lot.

Exercise: Physical activity releases a chemical called endorphins, which makes you feel good, so if you're feeling a bit overwhelmed or low at Christmas, why not go out for a walk? You could go on your own or with someone else, or go for a bike ride or even a run.

Try to relax: It's easy for me to say "Christmas is fun - just relax", but the reality is that relaxing can be tricky. Try doing things like yoga, breathing exercises or meditation to help you calm down if you're feeling a bit stressed over the festive period.

Just because it's Christmas, it doesn't mean caring for your mental health has to be put on hold. You're allowed to take breaks, and do things that perhaps don't involve the whole family. Mental health and physical health are as equally important, if you fell over and grazed your knee on Christmas Day, you'd put a plaster on it. So if you're mental health needs a plaster, you're allowed to do something about it.

Remember that you can contact the TIS team at Penrice if you need to discuss any worries or anxieties you might be feeling. You can do this by emailing me at ktaylor@penrice.org.uk