



SELF CARE DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

Christmas and the holiday season can be overwhelming for some. While one hopes for this time of year to be all that you dreamed, just like the adverts showing perfect families in their perfect homes, this is rarely the reality and for some it can be a stressful nightmare. Self care is often talked about as a way to get through, but what does self care involve and how can it help? Below are some suggestions that you might find helpful.

Give yourself some time out

Give yourself some time out so that the pressure of Christmas does not become relentless. Allocate some free time in your diary to relax. Everyone finds different ways to relax but when we are stressed we often forget how important this is. It might help to remind yourself to read a book or listen to podcasts, listen to some music, spend five minutes or more doing some breathing exercises, go for a walk or ride, do something creative, or watch a comedy or something uplifting. Make sure you are allowing enough time to sleep.

Spread out the celebrations and commitments

We can often busy ourselves socially with too many events and functions to the extent that we are not caring for our own needs. One way to prevent this is to be selective about which invitations you accept and spread the Christmas festivities over several days so there is not too much pressure. Pace yourself. You could also arrange a few events for January, you might find that others appreciate it too.

Don't strive for impossible perfection

Perfection is only ever someone's perspective. No one alive has attained perfection! Adjust your expectations and be kind to yourself. Avoid blaming yourself if your Christmas is not perfect.

Set boundaries

Many of us have a problem with setting clear boundaries, especially when we just want everyone else to have a good time. Setting clear boundaries with people is about letting them know what you need and what you can and can't do. It takes a bit of practice and sometimes if you can't say 'no', just saying 'I just need a bit of time to think about it' can give you the space you need. Remind yourself that it is impossible to keep everyone happy and it's your Christmas too.

Give

There is good evidence that we feel better when we focus on kindness and giving to others, it is good for the soul. It can help to offer some of your time or lend a helping hand to a friend, neighbour, relative or by volunteering, or even just giving a compliment or a seasonal greeting to a stranger.

Receive

Some of us feel uncomfortable receiving. If this is you, try to open yourself up to receiving, whether it is a gift, a compliment or just some good cheer, delight in the little things, or write down all the things people do for you or give you.

Self Compassion

Being compassionate with yourself can feel strange but it can also work wonders. Feeling compassion towards yourself about the things that have happened to you or that you have done or not done is a powerful antidote to self blame.

Connect with others

If you are on your own this Christmas, which many of us are, seek out ways to connect with others, even for short periods of time. Look for local activities or volunteering opportunities, visit or make a phone call to someone you care about, or write a letter.

