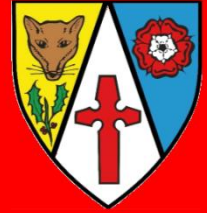


# Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter

[www.deanery.bham.sch.uk](http://www.deanery.bham.sch.uk)

December 2023



We hope that you all have a happy and restful Christmas holiday, however we recognise that the Christmas period can be a tough time for some children and families. Changes in structure and routine can be tricky for some children, but we can help them by creating an environment where they feel supported and cared for, and by teaching them how to handle difficult emotions like sadness or anger in a healthy way.

Here are some tips for managing mental health over the festive season taken from a variety of mental health professionals:



**1. Plan ahead:** If someone is already struggling with their mental health, Christmas time can prove even more challenging. Try to encourage them to plan for situations that they think might be difficult over the Christmas period.

**2. Communication:** It's important to talk about feelings – especially if your child is upset or worried about what's happening at home or school. Consider doing something fun together such as watching a film or going for a walk.

Let them know it's okay not to be festive all the time, and that you value their emotions.

**3. Consider a code word:** Agree on a code word that your child can use to let you know they need time away.

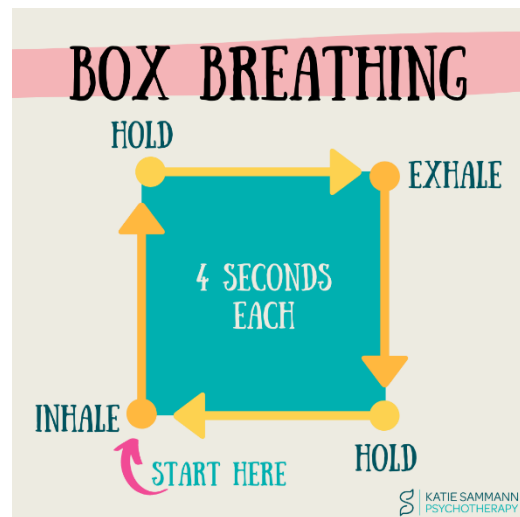
**4. Take a break together:** If you notice that your child might be feeling anxious or low, ask them to help you with a job or activity, like stacking the dishwasher or walking the dog. This allows them to move into a different and possibly less intense environment for a while.



**5. Self-Care for All:** Prioritise self-care for both yourself and your children. Ensure everyone gets adequate rest, engages in enjoyable activities, and practices relaxation techniques when needed. Show them that self-care is a valuable skill for managing stress.

(Box Breathing is a useful technique to use with your child to help them relax if they are feeling stressed or anxious.

Allow yourself and your children to say no if it all gets too much, it's ok to have a pyjama day!



**6. Prioritise Quality Time:** Allocate specific times for quality family time; movie nights, playing board games, or going for a walk allows families to connect without the pressure of elaborate plans.

**7. Limit Screen Time:** While screens can be entertaining, excessive screen time can lead to stress and a lack of meaningful interactions. Encourage your children to take breaks from screens and engage in real-world activities.

Try baking Christmas cookies, have Christmas jigsaw puzzle set up in the corner or have a Christmas dance party as alternative activities

Clare Rowland, Mental Health Support Worker from [The Children's Society](#).

Rebekah Stevens <https://www.lep.co.uk/lifestyle/family-and-parenting/family-anxiety-specialist-shares->



Look after your own wellbeing this festive season, as well as that of their family and friends.

# Christmas Wellbeing Advent Calendar

1 Do something kind for someone else.	2 Make a batch of Christmas biscuits to share with family and friends.	3 Find some seasonal natural treasure and bring it inside to display.	4 Get a cosy blanket and snuggle up on the sofa with a good book.	5 Create a piece of art using natural materials.	6 Arrange to see a friend for a chat and a giggle.	7 Wake up in time to see the sun rise.
8 Make a Christmas card for a friend thanking them for something.	9 Get creative! Use paint to create a winter scene.	10 Listen to your favourite Christmas song.	11 Go for a winter picnic with hot chocolate and a cake.	12 Complete a seasonal craft project. Use sequins, glitter or colouring pens to get creative.	13 Sit in a quiet area outside and listen to all the natural sounds you can hear.	14 Look outside in the early evening and try to spot some stars.
15 Dance to your favourite Christmas song.	16 Research a charity. Think of a way you could help raise money to support a good cause this Christmas.	17 Create a senses box. Place smells and textures that remind you of Christmas inside it.	18 Plant some spring flowering bulbs like daffodils or tulips.	19 Sitting comfortably, close your eyes and breathe deeply. Think of five things you are grateful for.	20 Create ice art. Collect leaves or petals and put them in a pot of water and then freeze it. Take your ice sculpture out of the pot and display it.	21 Watch your favourite Christmas film with someone special.
22 Invite a friend round to play a game.	23 Wrap up a gift for a family member.	24 Arrange a family meal where everyone suggests a course.	25 Wrap up warm and go for a walk outside.			



Health and Wellbeing / KS2 / Advent Calendar

twinkl.com



Sending you peace, light and blessings this Christmas

From all at Deanery

