



Workplace Wellbeing Newsletter: December 2022

The Christmas period can be a time of celebration for family and friends. However, many people find it challenging. 2022 has proved to be a very hard year for many people. Domestic and financial problems, along with issues in work, can often seem particularly challenging when the weather turns colder and the days grow shorter.

Take seasonal affective disorder (SAD), for example. According to the NHS, its symptoms are similar to depression but they only come on at certain times of the year, usually in winter.¹ It commonly involves low mood, loss of enjoyment and interest in life, diminished energy and sociability. Like depression, SAD is more common in women than men and appears related to reduced light in winter. There is usually an improvement in spring and one person in every three experiencing SAD feels more energetic than usual in spring and summer.² Even if you aren't affected by this condition, it's really important to look after your wellbeing over the course of the winter months.

In spite of chilly weather, you can follow our simple winter wellbeing steps and stay well at work and at home:

Keep active, be healthy

Yes, it's cold out but, provided we wrap up warm, we can get active in the great outdoors. Choose a change of scenery by going for a jog or taking a daily walk at lunch or in the evening. Breathing in the fresh, crisp air and enjoying the sights and sounds of winter keep your mind sharp for January.

If you stay well over the holidays, your transition back to work life should be much less of a jolt to the system.

It's always a good idea to drink sensibly at Christmas. Why not opt for a soft drink or a non-alcoholic beverage when you can?



Stay connected

Try and make an effort to meet up with friends and family. Lots of people are off work and there's no better time to reconnect with those around you. The festive season is also at its best when we're looking out for each other.

Loneliness and isolation often emerge as subjects of concern at this time of the year. The impact of poverty and deprivation also becomes more acute. By checking in on older neighbours or volunteering with local charities and food banks, you can contribute to making things easier and more hopeful for those in your community.

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad/overview/>

² Kelly, B., Mental Health in Ireland: The Complete Guide for Patients, Families, Health Care Professionals and Everyone Who Wants To Be Well, 2017

Plan ahead

Winter can be a very busy time, especially in the run-up to Christmas. Whether you're dealing with professional or family-related issues, this time can feel overwhelming. From a pre-holiday work deadline to a big family Christmas, it will all go more smoothly for everyone if tasks are shared and people pull together.

Think about what might be difficult for you and if there's anything that might help you cope, and consider whether you really need to do certain things if you're not looking forward to them. You could maybe do them differently or quicker. Plan ahead and avoid taking on more than you can handle: don't be afraid to say "No" or ask for assistance from friends, family and colleagues.



Get some shut-eye

Good sleep keeps us on top form. It's central to our physical and emotional health.

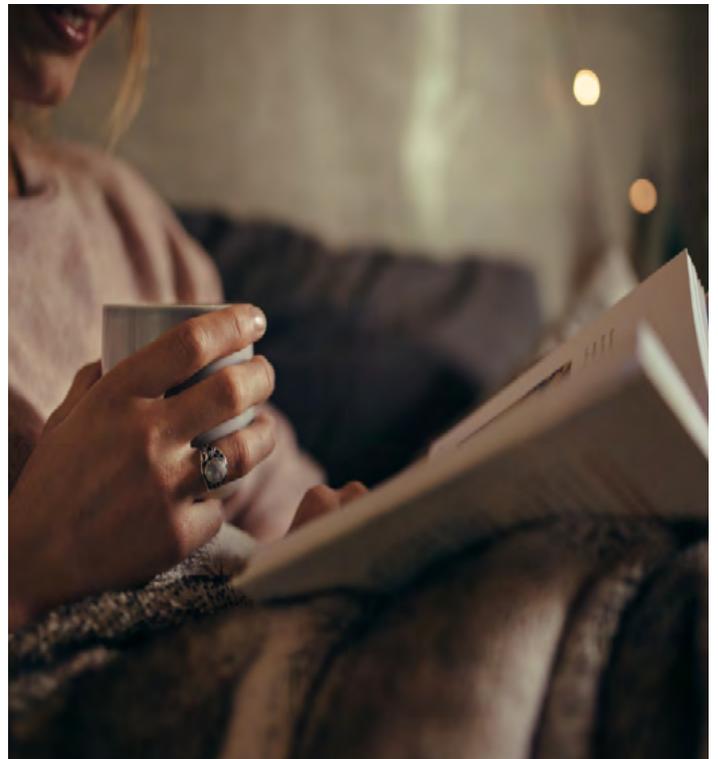
Sleep is one of the most important parts of day-to-day wellbeing. During sleep, our brains and bodies rest and recharge. It improves our focus, concentration and immune system, which is particularly vital when we're prone to contracting viruses.

Be gentle, generous and patient with yourself

It's ok to prioritise your own wellbeing at Christmas. Think about what you need and what you need to do to get it. How can you make Christmas and New Year meaningful for yourself?

If you're worried about feeling lonely or isolated this Christmas, think of some ways to help pass the time. Do something creative or spend time in nature. Try to plan something nice to do after Christmas. Having something to look forward to next year could make a real difference to your mental health.

And if you're not working, make sure to fully switch off and enjoy the time away from that space.



Remember, if you are concerned about your mental health, you can always get advice from your GP.