

Dec
2024

mental health awareness



Support During the Holidays

It is no coincidence that National Grief Awareness Week is in December – many of us know only too well the unique challenges grief can pose as the year draws to a close. All the festivities can amplify feelings of loss or loneliness. Grief and loss can be experienced in different ways for each of us, so it's helpful to remember this when having conversations with others, and in acknowledging your own journey through grief at this time.

As always, we are here, ready to be alongside you and those you care about, steadfast in our desire to let you know you are not as alone as you might feel. Please reach out.

Nat Clewley Clinical Director – Wellbeing Solutions



Recognising Signs of Loneliness at Christmas

While festivities are often filled with gatherings, some of us may feel isolated or disconnected, especially if separated from loved ones. Recognising signs of loneliness, such as withdrawal, low enthusiasm, or avoidance of social events, allows us to offer support proactively. Simple gestures, like an invitation to join an event or a friendly chat, can go a long way. Let's work together to create moments of warmth and inclusion, offering those feeling isolated a sense of belonging and comfort.

Remember that loneliness is nothing to be embarrassed of. You don't have to have a big scary life overhaul or do anything dramatic – finding ways to reconnect can feel overwhelming, so small steps often can be a good start.

What's Going on This Month?



2nd - 8th December | National Grief Awareness Week

A campaign raising awareness of the impact of grief, aiming to break the taboo and provide guidance of what to say and what to do to help the bereaved.



3rd December | International Day of Persons with Disabilities

A day to observe the rights and wellbeing of people with disabilities all over the globe.



10th December | Human Rights Day

A day to observe, remember and help support the unalienable rights of everyone.

Self-Care Tips for the Holiday Season

- ✓ **Prioritise Self-Care**
Dedicate time to activities that encourage relaxation and wellbeing.
- ✓ **Set Realistic Expectations**
Keep holiday goals achievable and remember that it's okay to say no.
- ✓ **Nurture Connections**
Engage in shared experiences to combat feelings of isolation.



Handling Grief in the Workplace

If you are living with grief, the Christmas period can be extra hard. Also, even if a loved one died quite a while ago, it might bring back feelings of grief. Experiencing grief is challenging at any time, but it can feel particularly isolating around festive seasons.

Reawakened and delayed grief may come out of the blue, or by experiencing something triggering. This could include an anniversary, or a familiar smell or sound. It's important to allow ourselves the time and space to process our feelings. Talking to a friend, meditating, or cathartic activities like painting can help us express our grief.

Workplace bereavement can manifest as disrupted sleep, heightened stress, or lowered focus. Supporting colleagues who are grieving includes offering a compassionate space for them to share their feelings, recognising changes in behaviour, and providing understanding. Gentle check-ins and continuous support can help colleagues feel less alone during this difficult period.

If you or someone you know is struggling with grief or other issues highlighted in this newsletter, don't hesitate to reach out for professional assistance. Our team is here to provide the support you need, 24/7.

Supporting Others at Christmas:

- ✓ Understand that Christmas may bring up different feelings for others.
- ✓ Try to make Christmas more inclusive. For example, if someone has caring responsibilities at Christmas, try to arrange activities around their schedule so they can join in.
- ✓ Let people know you're thinking of them. If someone you know is struggling or feeling lonely at Christmas, it might mean a lot to them to hear from you.
- ✓ Look after yourself. For example, you might feel sad or conflicted. It might help to talk to someone you trust about how this is affecting you.

Counselling & Advice Helpline

Your counselling & advice helpline covers a variety of personal and workplace issues such as:

- ✓ Anxiety or depression
- ✓ Everyday financial or legal struggles
- ✓ Workplace stress

This service is paid for by your employer and is provided by an independent company, Wellbeing Solutions. There is no cost to you and all calls are confidential.



24/7 freephone:
0800 328 1437
employeeassistance.org.uk



Mental
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