



## ENJOY A STRESS FREE CHRISTMAS

December  
**2013**

*During this busy time of year, many of us forget the importance of maintaining our health and well-being. At a time when it's essential to take care of ourselves and our loved ones, it's often one of the first things to go when the going gets tough. We start feeling exhausted, overwhelmed and guilty.*

*Unrealistic expectations of having everything 'done' before Christmas leads to increased pressure on individuals and families. While our stress levels increase, our tolerance levels decrease.*

*Instead of being filled with Christmas cheer and goodwill to all, for many, this is an increasingly tiring time of year. With this in mind, here are some ways to relieve stress and pressure in the weeks leading up to Christmas:*

### BLENDING FAMILIES... 10 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ✓ Avoid conflict, it is the major cause of unhappiness and poor outcomes for children.
- ✓ Children need reassurance that their parents still love them.
- ✓ Children need reassurance that what has happened is not their fault.
- ✓ Children and young people need information about what is happening in their family – in ways they can understand – and without a blow by blow account or whose fault it is.
- ✓ Children don't want to take sides – don't make them.
- ✓ Children benefit from keeping contact with both parents – and their wider family.
- ✓ Children will tell each parent what they want to hear – opposing views are not uncommon.
- ✓ Children can cope with short-term disruption in their lives – as long as parents continue to support them.
- ✓ Children cope best when they can go easily between their two homes.
- ✓ Children need their parents to make decisions.

**Most of all – look after yourself so you can look after your children!**

### SELF-CARE

It's important to  
fit your own  
'oxygen mask' first.

Make self-care one of your top priorities this Christmas.

When you look after yourself, especially at this busy time of year, it's easier to manage everything else.

It's when we stop taking care of ourselves that things often fall over or break down.

Schedule 'me' time in your diary, along with other priorities and commitments.







## GIVE YOUR TIME THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a time for giving, and what could be better than to give your time to make the festive period a happy one for others.

### **VOLUNTEER**

Christmas is all about giving and while we don't always have the money to help other people, we can normally find a bit of spare time to help out.

Hospitals can be depressing places at the best of times, but when you're a child that has been hospitalised over Christmas things can become very miserable.

### **GIVE AWAY YOUR OLD PRESENTS**

We all have the odd toy or gadget that we know we will just never use again!

So instead of hiding it under the bed, why not donate it to your local Church or hospital.

Hospitals and Churches are always looking for presents to donate to children around the Christmas period. Not only will you be decluttering, but you could also help make a child's Christmas that extra bit special.

### **PASS ON YOUR INTERNET SKILLS**

Why not teach your grandparents how to shop for presents online? So that they don't have to leave home and they'll get the presents delivered straight to their front door! Bridge the internet divide between yourself and your grandparents or other local elderly people.

## OLDER PEOPLE RISK ISOLATION AT CHRISTMAS, CHARITY WARNS

Loneliness can have real health effects with Christmas a particularly bad time.

Older people are at increased risk of suffering isolation and loneliness over the Christmas holidays.

It's very easy for people to get caught up in their own lives at Christmas time, and we need to remember how important it is to visit and check in on older people who may desperately be in need of company, or some support.

### **HOW DO I ACCESS EAP?**

EAP appointments can be made simply by contacting EAP Services Limited anytime 24 hours 365 days by:



SCAN QR

☎ NZ 0800 327 669

☎ Intl +64 9 353 0906

@ [www.eapservices.co.nz/booking](http://www.eapservices.co.nz/booking)



## FINANCIAL

One major cause of stress this season is finance.

Expectations of the season can make the holidays extremely stressful. With a little planning you can hopefully keep the stress down to a minimum.

- ✓ Create a budget, keep it realistic, this will help to minimise overspending.
- ✓ Make a list of the people you wish to buy for and the maximum amount you can spend on each person.
- ✓ Talk to family about having a secret Santa, instead of buying for every person. Draw a name out of a hat and set a 'spend limit'
- ✓ Use fresh food and flower markets to shop for food. Try to avoid shopping for fresh fruit and vegetables on Christmas Eve.

If your financial situation is getting to stressful, simply call

**0800 327 669**  
for advice and support.

## THOUGHTS OF GRATITUDE

### **KEEP US IN A POSITIVE MINDSET**

Other people feel our positive energy when they are around us. Gratitude also reminds us to extend goodwill to others who may be going through a difficult time or just need a smile or an encouraging word.

There are so many people in the world who have extended their goodwill to us over the years. These people include parents, children, friends, teachers, mentors and all of the people that we work with and interact with every single day.

Take time during this holiday season to acknowledge all that you have been given and the people who have extended goodwill to you over the years. And remember that when you extend goodwill to others, you are making life better for every life you touch.