

Managing Christmas Anxiety for Carers

Christmas can be a difficult time for anyone, including carers. You may really enjoy Christmas but find it tough to celebrate it how you would like. Here are ways to help you manage Christmas anxiety during the festive period.



1. Plan Ahead If You Can



Planning your festive schedule in advance can help ease any worries about balancing celebrations, social events and caring responsibilities. Similarly, if your loved one likes to follow a routine, talking to them about the festive season and your plans can help them adjust to any changes within their daily routine.

2. Acknowledge And Recognise Your Feelings



It's normal to experience a range of emotions as a carer, especially over the Christmas season. However, it's important to acknowledge how you really feel and not bottle any emotions up, as this can leave you feeling under more pressure than before.

Try not to push any feelings aside. Allow yourself to recognise and accept the emotions you're feeling at that time.

3. Share How You're Feeling



Opening up about how you feel can really help. If you're able to, you can open up to the family member you're caring for or friends and family. You can work together to find support that works for you and the person you're caring for.

If you don't feel comfortable sharing these feelings with friends and family, you can call 1800 242 636 to make an appointment with the National Carers Counselling Program - Monday to Friday 6.00am to 3.00pm. Counselling is offered face-to-face, via telephone, email and Skype, or in a group.

4. Don't Be Afraid To Ask For Support



As a carer, you must be able to take time for yourself over the festive period. Don't be afraid to ask a friend or family member for additional help or support. If there are other people who can help with the caring duties see if you can talk to them about how they can help you get through the Christmas period. Even a small amount of help can make a big difference.

5. Plan A Break



The festive season is often the busiest time of the year but it's still important that you find some time to do things for yourself. As much as 5 minutes to go outside and take a breath, have a cup of tea, or go for a walk around the block can help. If you can, try to find some time to plan something that you can look forward to. If it's not possible to do this during the Christmas period, see if you can plan a break after the silly season or school holidays are over.

6. Be Kind To Yourself



Christmas is a time full of expectations and stress. Things won't always go to plan and problems will crop up. It's ok to feel frustrated and overwhelmed. It's not always possible to meet everyone's needs and do everything else at the same time. Give yourself a break and allow yourself to make mistakes without feeling guilty. Remember we can all only do our best.

Christmas holidays can be a tough time and recognising that you need someone to talk to is just as important. Here are a few numbers that you can contact:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
- Crisis Care Helpline: 1800 199 008
- Family Helpline: 1800 643 000
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 007 339

Note: For immediate risk of harm to self or others - call the Police, Fire and Ambulance: 000