

## If Things Get Difficult

- Ask yourself will the problem feel better tomorrow, is it just the fact that it's Christmas that makes the difficulty feel worse.
- Take time to think what you would do at any other time of the year. Is there a friend, relative or neighbour that could help.
- Would just taking 10 minutes out to think about the best way to sort this out help. Have you had this difficulty before, what did you do to work it out.



## Where to get help

**Family Lives:- Parenting and family advice** 0808 800 2222

**Samaritans:-** 116 123

Available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Here to talk to you about anything that may be troubling you.  
[www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us)

**Childline:-** 0800 1111

Childline is a free 24-hour service for children and young people.

**NHS:-** 111 is the NHS non-emergency number. When you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

**Non-Emergency Police:-** 101  
(Open 24 hours).

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**Online Counselling support for Young People**

(Online counsellors) 11-25 years.  
(Open Mon-Fri noon-10pm)  
(Sat-Sun 6pm-10pm)

*Family Christmas Survival Guide*

*2017*



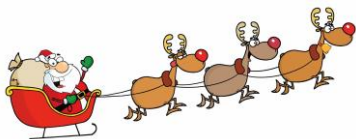
## Christmas can be stressful

Although Christmas is meant to be a happy and joyful time, this isn't how everyone feels at this time of the year. Christmas can be a stressful time for many people.

Some people find that the Christmas spirit can be spoilt by:

- Money worries
- Feelings of being alone
- Family arguments
- Separation and divorce
- Bereavement
- Becoming a step-family
- Health worries

Some people find Christmas time difficult because of marital break-up, or being separated from their family and children. The emphasis on family, friends and shared good times during the 'festive season' can make people feel sad.



## Some ideas to ease the stress

If separated by distance from those family members you would like to be close to, could you keep in touch by phone, text or email?

Christmas shopping for loved ones can help you feel connected, however buying expensive gifts are not the only way to let people know you care. How about giving a home made promise voucher to do tasks such as:

- Washing up for a week
- 2 hours ironing
- Evening of baby sitting
- Foot massage

For children you could also do promise vouchers for favourite activities such as:

- Trip to the park
- Family film night at home
- Painting/ craft session
- Baking cakes

If you can, try to make plans for Christmas Day. If you are expecting the day to be stressful, break the day up. An energetic walk around the park can help burn off some energy for children who get over excited and eat too much sugar can help. Can a family game distract bored teenagers?

If you have no one to share the day with, consider volunteering for charity work.

Local organisations value people who can give time to others at this time of year. Local church organisations also often really value those who can offer a little time to help at Christmas time.

## Family tensions

All families experience tension to some degree. Part of the reason why Christmas time can be so stressful is the unrealistic expectation of coming together as a happy family on this one day of the year. Try to be realistic, if there are already family tensions it's unlikely that these will just disappear because it's Christmas Day.

- Keep realistic expectations. If your relatives tend to argue throughout the year, they will most likely argue on Christmas Day as well.
- Everyone is under stress to some degree, it does sometimes feel like that it's only your family that has upsets, however for most people Christmas does bring some worry and stress.
- Consider breaking up the celebrations to keep likely upsets to a minimum.
- Christmas may not be the right time to talk to someone about an important issue, e.g. an ex-partner about contact arrangements or maintenance payments.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol – alcohol can change how we see things, sometimes we do or say things after having had a drink that we wouldn't normally say or do.