



## **Take care of your mental health this holiday season!**

### **Feeling stressed, lonely, or sad around the holidays?**

For many of us, the holiday season can bring about feelings of depression, and even despair, rather than joy and merriment. These holiday blues can stem from a variety of factors such as preexisting mental health issues, the loss of a loved one, jam-packed social commitments, emotional and financial pressures from family and friends, and family conflict.

The good news is that there are ways in which you can plan for and protect your mental health during the holiday season. Here are some suggestions:

#### **Know what's your holiday triggers!**

Triggers are people, places, and things that remind us of a past trauma or upsetting event. Some examples of holiday triggers might be traumatic memories, stressful family relationships or the anniversary of the loss of a loved one.

Knowing your own unique holiday triggers can help you to control your emotional reactions and it can help you to put plans in place to reduce holiday-related stress. We suggest you do things that makes you feel happy, such as taking a warm soothing bath, going for walks, or watching silly TV shows.





### **Give yourself permission to feel your emotions**

In a gentle and loving inner voice, tell yourself it's really OK if you're not feeling particularly "merry or joyous" this holiday season. Giving yourself permission to feel your emotions, can go a long way in helping to reduce your holiday-related stress and depression.

### **Be patient with yourself**

It's important to keep in mind that it takes time, patience, and self-compassion to sort out complicated emotions and to understand the full circumstances surrounding them. Remind yourself that you're not alone in feeling the way you do. Slowing down our bodies and mind helps to bring our stress levels down. You can do this by making deep breathing exercises a daily practice.

### **Reach out**

If your usual pattern is to feel more lonely, depressed, or isolated during the holiday season, being proactive can help reduce these negative feelings. Make plans with trusted friends and family or stay connected with others through digital platforms.

### **Talk with a mental health professional**

Sometimes our own efforts to improve our holiday-related stress or our emotional health around this time of the year are not as effective as we had hoped. When this happens it's important to give yourself permission to ask for help. Reach out to us by booking an appointment with one of our Psychologists on **014 590 1700**.