



Pathfinder News

Winter 2022

Wishing all our service users and partners a safe and peaceful festive period

Winter wellbeing

The seasons can have a significant impact on our mental wellbeing. Here we explore how the darker months can affect some people and offer a few tips on how to look after your wellbeing during winter.

During the winter, the days draw in, the evenings are longer and darker and the weather gets colder and wetter. For some of us, our mental wellbeing starts to deteriorate and we feel tired, unmotivated, low and sad.

Some of us will experience these feelings, but in a more severe form, and suffer from seasonal affective disorder (or SAD). This is a type of depression that people experience during particular times and seasons of the year, often the autumn and winter. If you think that you may have SAD, it's worth reaching out to a professional for an evaluation and advice.

Here are some things we can do to try and boost our mental wellbeing during winter:

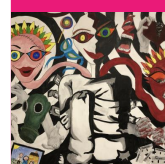
- Try to get more exposure to natural light. Wake up earlier and go for a morning walk or go for a walk during your lunch break.
- Keep yourself entertained with a hobby. During the long winter evenings, we may find ourselves bored and this can negatively impact our mental state. Start a new hobby or pick up an old one.



You could even join a local club or group to keep you stimulated and socialising.

- If the lack of light during winter affects you, consider a light therapy lamp. Light therapy lamps simulate the sunlight that we receive less of during autumn and winter, helping to boost our mood. There are affordable lamps available, depending on the features you require.
- Make sure you are exercising regularly. Exercise is vital for our mental wellbeing and in the winter, it can be easy to fall into sedentary habits which can have a negative impact on our mental wellbeing.

Artistic licence: the benefits of creative activities for your



mental health

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Coping with Christmas: tips to survive the festive season.



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During the darker, colder seasons, it's easy to fall into bad habits with diet. We can often find ourselves eating more - and less healthy - food. With diet being a key component for our wellbeing, it is crucial to maintain a healthy diet during winter. ➡

Finally, ensure that you continue to socialise with others. During winter, we tend to spend more time inside, often on our own. So try to arrange to spend regular time in the company of other people, family or friends.

Artistic licence

Creative activities are a great way of helping us look after our mental wellbeing. They boost our mood, reduce stress and anxiety - and they can help us explore difficult thoughts and emotions. Here are some tips to get started and let your creativity flow.



The benefits of creative activities, such as painting, drawing, knitting and pottery, for people's mental health are well known. From art therapy to group pottery and drawing sessions, the use of artistic activities in mental health support is widespread. Indeed many of the organisations involved in Pathfinder West Sussex routinely use creative activities as part of their support offering.

However, to get creative, you don't need to join a club or group. Although being part of an art group is great for socialising, creative activities can also be beneficial as a solitary, mindful experience, where you can take some time for yourself, relax and explore

your inner thoughts and emotions. Research has found that making art can reduce stress, lower our anxiety levels and improve our mood. Creating art can also help us to explore our thoughts and emotions and occupy ourselves while we focus on a creative endeavour for a while. It also gives us a sense of achievement, which helps to boost our self-esteem and confidence. Don't think you're creative or artistic enough to get started?

Please don't be put off. Creative activities are for everyone, regardless of experience or skill. Everyone has to start somewhere and over time you will find yourself improving and developing your abilities.

Being creative isn't just about drawing or painting - you could try collaging, dance, song writing, pottery or knitting. The list is literally endless.

And it doesn't need to be expensive either. Something simple like drawing or writing can be done at relatively little cost. Or you might consider joining a local art club or group, which can be a great way of getting involved in creative activities, but without taking on a large cost for materials.

Here are some ideas for creative activities to get you started. Try out a few and see which ones you enjoy.

- Drawing and painting. This is perhaps one the simplest ways to make art. You can get going by creating anything from simple doodles and detailed pencil sketches to full-fledged paintings. Knowing what and how to draw/paint can be daunting. But there are a plethora of ideas online to get your started. Think YouTube tutorials as a good starting point with lots of support.
- Collaging. Collaging is a great activity to get stuck into if you are apprehensive about drawing or painting. Collaging particularly lends itself to the creation of abstract pieces of art. Old newspapers or magazines that you may have laying around are great materials for collaging, or for a more personal touch try using some spare photographs.
- Pottery. Pottery is great as it's hands on and tactile, making it a very mindful experience. Pottery can seem



inaccessible to the average person, due to the cost of equipment or materials, but joining a local club can be great way to get started making pottery.

- Writing. This is an excellent creative activity, particularly due to the wide range of ways in which you can explore and express yourself. Express yourself through fiction writing, poetry or even a journal/diary.

- Sewing/knitting. Sewing and knitting are not old hat! In fact, in recent times, they have experienced a *renaissance*. Think of Tom Daley knitting at the Olympics or post-box toppers. Both are great activities to do alone in an evening in front of the television.
- Photography. Photography is also a great way to get out and about. Take some pictures of local landmarks and landscapes or of your favourite people. No need for an expensive camera, either. You could get started with your phone.
- Dancing. This is another great way to get creative. Learn new dances, put your own spin on classic dances and even create your own dance moves. Dancing is also a great way to socialise and get active, particularly if you join a local group.
- Acting. Acting is a great way to express yourself. And it comes in many shapes and sizes – from classical Shakespeare to musicals. Joining a local drama club or group is a great way to socialise with others and get involved with your local community.



- Music. There are many different instruments you can learn to play, depending on interest and funds. You could even join a local band or orchestra.

Creative activities can boost wellbeing and lighten symptoms of poor mental health. Why not try something creative today?

Maintaining your mental wellbeing this Christmas

Although traditionally people think of Christmas as a jolly time of year, it is also a season that many people find difficult with a negative impact on their mental health. So how to maintain your mental wellbeing during the festive frenzy?

Christmas can be difficult for people for a whole host of reasons. Many people spend the holiday alone due to bereavement, estrangement, divorce/break-ups, health problems, or practical reasons like cost.

It's a very expensive time of year and this is particularly stark this year with the rising cost of food and heating.

People often feel under pressure for different reasons: the pressure of buying presents, making Christmas dinner, hosting family and friends. Just the idea of spending time inside with family members over an extended period can cause anxiety for many.

It can be harder to get out and about, because of the weather, adding to a sense of cabin fever, and there's a lot of social pressure to enjoy yourself and get in the Christmas spirit.

Although Christmas can be difficult, we want you to enjoy your festive season. Try our tips to look after yourself and maintain your mental wellbeing this Christmas:

- Routine is important for your wellbeing. Though it may be difficult, try to keep to a regular routine.
- A healthy diet is vital for our mental wellbeing. At Christmas, it can be easy to fall into bad eating habits and over-indulge. It's okay to treat yourself, but try to balance this with healthy food, such as fruit and vegetables.



- If you have too much to handle and feel stressed try to lighten the burden. Suggest secret Santa for presents rather than a present for each person, make fewer courses for Christmas dinner or ask others to bring food.
- Communicate with friends and family. Be open about whether you need help and what to expect. Contact friends and family you won't be seeing over the festive period and see how they are doing.
- You don't have to attend every event. Attending too many events may make you feel stressed and tired. Prioritise the more important ones; it's okay to say no.
- Practise self-care. Have some "you time". That could be a nice bath, something delicious to eat or a walk.
- Make sure you get some time outside and some light exercise. It's easy to be sedentary over Christmas, but time outside often makes us feel better.
- Check in with friends and loved ones and see how they are.
- Finally, Christmas is a time to be with people who are the most important to you (that may not be family!) and to relax. Even if you find the season difficult, try to find things to do you appreciate and enjoy.

Have a safe and peaceful Christmas and do reach out for support if you are struggling.

Cost of living help



It's a challenging festive season this year for many people with rising food and energy prices, worries about making ends meet and the inevitable consumerist pressure of Christmas.

The impact on people's wellbeing is significant – and those with existing mental health problems are particularly at risk from the increased stress and worry this brings.

Here are some local organisations that can help with various issues around the cost of living, as well as some general resources around money and wellbeing.

Citizens Advice West Sussex for benefits, debt, energy, housing, employment and other advice: www.advicewestsussex.org.uk

Call 0808 278 7969 (Mon to Fri, 9am-4.30pm)

Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice for benefits, debt, energy, housing, employment and other advice: www.arunchichestercab.org.uk

Free advice line: 0808 278 7969 (Mon to Fri, 10am-4.30pm). For energy advice, call 01243 974 063 (Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm). Help to Claim benefits team: 0800 144 8 444 (Mon to Fri, 8am-6pm). Help with debt: 0800 240 4420 (Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm). The advice line, Bognor Regis Advice Centre and Wick Surgery Outreach will be open on selected dates throughout the Christmas period – see website for details.

Age UK West Sussex Brighton & Hove Money Advice service: www.ageuk.org.uk/westsussexbrightonhove/our-services/money-advice-service/

Call 0800 019 1310.

Chichester District Council cost of living help and advice: www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyoucampaign

General advice

Advice on maintaining your mental wellbeing at this time and information about how to manage your money as your bills rise - www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/en/managing-money/cost-of-living-crisis-and-your-mental-health/

Money and mental health: tips for everyday living – from National Mind: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/money-and-mental-health/



For mental health support across West Sussex

pathfinderwest
sussex.org.uk

It's not all ho, ho, ho...

Be kind to yourself this festive season. We're here if you need us. Find local mental health support at www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk



Local Christmas events

Christmas day lunch and entertainment

Better Together are hosting a Christmas Day lunch with entertainment at 1pm for people seeking company (people can also bring a friend). Transport can be arranged if needed.

The lunch is free and will be held at Wivelsfield Village Hall, Eastern Road, Wivelsfield, Haywards Heath, RH17 7Q6.

To book a place, contact Shelia Blair on 01444 233 937 or email sheila.blair@btinternet.com. Or contact Carola Goodman on 07502 37422.

Renew 139 wellbeing session

The Haven at The Shore Community Church is holding a wellbeing session on 23 and 30 December 10am-12pm at The Shore Café, 73 Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, PO21 2TD.

The session is free and requires no booking. Contact 01243 821891 or email thehaven@theshore.community for more information.



Crisis numbers

Samaritans – 24/7, call 116123

Calm – open daily 5pm to midnight, call 0800 585 858

Sussex Mental Healthline – 24/7, call 0800 0309 500

Papyrus – open daily 9am to midnight, call 0800 068 4141

Anxiety UK – open Mon-Fri 9:30am to 5.30pm, call 03444 775 774



What is Pathfinder West Sussex?

Pathfinder West Sussex is an alliance of organisations working together to enable people with mental health support needs, and their carers, to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

We provide a pathway of mental health recovery support so people can move freely between services to get well and stay well.

Services are provided in ten areas: Adur, Bognor, Chanctonbury, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton, Midhurst, Mid Sussex and Worthing.

The four lead providers of Pathfinder services are West Sussex Mind, United Response, Sussex Oakleaf and Richmond Fellowship. The other organisations that make up the alliance with them are CAPITAL Project, Mind in Brighton and Hove, Rethink, Stonepillow, Southdown and NHS Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT).

