

# wee changes can make a **big difference**

## tips for a COVID19 Pandemic Festive season

### Manage expectations

This festive period won't be like other years due to the pandemic, it may even be through loss, it will never be the same, as those you love are no longer with you to share Christmas with. Be kind to yourself and do what works for you, not what the adverts and films all sell as the perfect Christmas. On the COPE Scotland website [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org) there is a piece on coping with loss, it won't have all the answers, but may offer something to help you suffer less.

### Make plans as far ahead as suits you

This can often be a time of year which is stressful, trying to get round and visit all the people you feel you must see. With the restrictions this maybe even more of a challenge. Be realistic in what you can do and still stay safe. If that means for this year you maybe don't get round anyone, so you don't offend everyone, then maybe have fun planning something you will do with each group of family/friends in 2021.

### Be aware of unhelpful coping strategies

When we feel overwhelmed, anxious, fed up, we can turn to strategies which aren't helpful for us, gambling, overeating, drugs, alcohol. This can lead to even more challenges and in the long term doesn't help us at all. Sometimes we need someone to talk to, or, help to find ways to cope with how we feel. Many services are closed over the festive break, but there are still helplines if you don't have friends or family to talk to. Use them, they can save lives, sometimes our own. We have listed some contacts at the end of this wee sheet

### Watch the pennies

Sometimes when things seem overwhelming, we can feel 'ach stuff it' and decide lets' just blow the money and have a great Christmas. However, the most priceless gifts are often the ones which cost the least money and in a time of uncertainty, spending money, we can't afford, is only setting up a problem we need to deal with in the future. It maybe already you are worrying where you will even get food to eat on Christmas day. Check out Trussell Trust for a foodbank near you <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank>

### Manage the stress

This year has been unlike any experienced before and it is taking its toll in many ways. Even if you or those you love haven't had COVID19, you will still have experienced the restrictions and uncertainty caused by the pandemic. How we are living just now, we know isn't natural for us. It is going on longer than anyone expected, and we may even find we wonder, when will it end? There are breakthroughs in vaccines and new developments are happening all the time. However, we need to stay well during this time and not make the festive season another stressor, which really, we don't need. Perhaps think about using the time over the festive period, to recharge your energy levels, pick up your life again. There are pieces on the COPE Scotland website [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org) on ideas to recharge your battery, as well as a workbook on, "picking up the pieces when the world feels changed"



## What connections do you need?

We are often sold this image of 'The perfect Christmas' and when we don't recognise that as our experience, either feel left out, or try to recreate it. But life isn't like the telly and in real life people are unpredictable, whereas in the films and adverts they work from a script, and keep repeating it till they get it right! If you enjoy your own company and don't want to spend Christmas with others don't feel under pressure to 'do what others think you should do'. If you are alone at Christmas and don't want to be, then see what can be done to create some company, even if that's a phone call, a virtual zoom call, or walking the dog with someone you know. Socially isolated doesn't need to mean being alone. There is a piece on the COPE Scotland website [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org) on socially isolated doesn't need to mean alone, you may find interesting.

## Your wellbeing plan in emergencies!

We have a fire drill, in the event of fire we know what to do. We should maybe also have a wellbeing drill. So we know what to do if we feel overwhelmed. If we maybe have panic attacks, what we can do to help control them. On the COPE Scotland site [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org) there is a video on surviving panic attacks. This does not replace professional advice, the aim is to offer some self-management tips until you speak to someone. There is also a video and several pieces on the site if you feel your mood has dipped, again this does not replace professional advice. We are all different, think about your own circumstances and if you are in receipt of any health care support, work out with your providers, things you can do to look after you and emergency numbers to call when self-management is not enough.

## Tap into assets around you

We are often capable of a lot more than we give ourselves credit for, but often we lack the confidence to see that. If you visit [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org) there are several pieces on lifting confidence, including in the video section, how to use a kinder inner voice. We can also be more creative than we realise and again on the site is a piece on ideas for how creativity can improve our mental health. It is amazing, there are often far more local assets than we realise, local groups, befrienders, places of worship. Find out what is happening near you and if it meets your needs maybe think about how to tap into those assets, even if for now that means online. If you need help to get online, find out who your local support is e.g. **Glasgow Life – Digital Support Freephone Helpline T: 0800 158 3974**

## Have enough supplies in

It's important when planning ahead to have enough supplies in, so you have enough medication, food, other items you may need over the festive period. This is even more so if you need to self-isolate. People perhaps recognise the festive season, COVID-19 does not, it won't be on holiday. Issue 11 of the 'whit's happening' magazine on the COPE Scotland website [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org) offers some ideas of how to prepare if you need to self-isolate. The magazine has some other information you may find interesting.

## USEFUL NUMBERS

**Samaritans 116 123**

**Domestic abuse and force marriage helpline T: 0800 027 1234**

**Childline T: 0800 1111**

**Emergency Homelessness T: 0800 838 502**

**Alcoholics Anonymous T: 0800 0086 811 / 0800 9177 650**

**Gamblers Anonymous Scotland T: 0370 050 8881**

**Overeaters Anonymous <https://www.oagb.org.uk/find-a-meeting/>**

**Narcotics anonymous T: 0300 999 12 12**