

MEDIA RELEASE

Coping with Christmas

20 December 2019

Christmas time isn't always joyful. It can remind us of people who aren't here, or there can be conflict with others who are here. Financial strains, extra travel, shopping and celebrations; expectations and over indulging - it can all get a bit much.

By taking a proactive approach to our mental and physical health, we can help ourselves get through this busy and sometimes stressful period.

If you're grieving...

... you can practice strategies for dealing with feelings of sadness and grief. It could be as simple as talking, by sharing memories – and tears. It is important to accept there's no formula or time-period to mourn the loss of a loved one, so give yourself permission to talk and grieve. Even in the midst of grief, you are allowed to have fun - laughter can be great medicine!

If you're struggling mentally...

... try to make self-care a priority and be patient and accepting of yourself. Activities like mindfulness and exercise can help you relax and recharge, while taking your mind off things. It's also important to have a sense of purpose by doing things you enjoy and setting and achieving realistic goals. Talking with someone also helps to share the load and can give you extra support when it's needed.

If you're experiencing loneliness...

.. connection with people – and even animals – helps us to feel less isolated. Consider taking part in local community activities, volunteer with a local organisation or join an online or face-to-face group if you share a common interest. If you don't have a pet, you might consider adopting an animal from a shelter.

If someone you know is struggling...

... it is OK ask someone how they really are, but the most important thing is to listen. Try not to make assumptions or to judge someone's situation. You can, however, encourage people to seek help and then check back in with them to see how they're going.

If you're worried someone may be at risk of suicide, you can go online and complete the free 'Question. Persuade. Refer.' training. QPR teaches you the three simple steps that could help you save a life from suicide: murrayphn.org.au/qpr/

No matter whether it is holiday season or not, there are many sources of free help and advice:

- headtohealth.org.au
- smilingmind.com.au
- ruok.org.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Standby Support Murray 0439 173 310
- Mental Health Crisis Line: 1300 783 347
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

Mildura is one of 12 locations taking part in Victorian Government trials to develop local strategies to prevent suicide. This work forms part of the Victorian Government Suicide Prevention Framework 2016-2025, which aims at halving the state's suicide rates by 2025.

Contact details

Please note that Murray PHN's Communications Team will be on leave from COB 24 December until Monday 6 January. Emails to communications@murrayphn.org.au will be answered on our return.