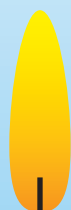


Spending Christmas Alone During Coronavirus

Christmas can be a difficult time for many, especially in the face of constant reminders that it is the 'season to be jolly', not to mention the financial pressures that come with it.

The tips below may help to make the day a little easier. Some might work for you, but not others. Try not to put pressure on yourself to do something that doesn't make you feel good.

This year will see record numbers of people celebrating alone due to coronavirus. This may be by choice, for practical reasons or to protect their own/others health. It's been a tough year, many of us already feel lonely, low or overwhelmed.



"My biggest tip I tell everyone is don't be afraid not to celebrate Christmas, don't feel obligated to do things you don't enjoy. You can make your own traditions"

Focus On What You Enjoy

"I'm going to be on my own at Christmas. I have plans to go for a walk in the morning, followed by a roast chicken dinner, then a new book I've been looking forward to. Then either a film or bath. I'm determined to enjoy the day, despite being alone"

Take some time to make where you live feel nice. This could be putting up decorations or setting some time aside to making everything spick and span.

Plan to enjoy your favourite food and drink. It could be an excuse not to eat traditional Christmas food! Spend the day doing things you enjoy. For some that could be a morning jog, playing video games or doing a jigsaw. Maybe a hot bath with a good book or a lie-in wearing your favourite pyjamas.

Connect with Others

Speaking to people is often the best way to protect your mental health. If there are people you'd like to speak to, arrange to talk over the phone or by video call.

Perhaps go online. There are lots of ways to talk to people online, including talking to others who may be spending Christmas alone. As an example, British comedienne, Sarah Millican hosts a Christmas day chat on Twitter each year, which anyone can join: [#JoinIn](https://twitter.com/SarahMillican75) The idea is to connect people who could do with some company.

Engage with your local community.

Whilst face to face meet-ups may be difficult, you may be able to find digital events, like a live stream of a church service or a virtual pub quiz.

Choose Whether to Celebrate

"I'm not sure if I'm going to be alone for Christmas or not this year.

If I am, I'll probably call my mum, watch Christmas movies and just try not to think too much about it."

You may decide not to celebrate Christmas this year, and **that's fine!** Let others know your plan, so they can support you by treating it like any other day. You could exchange any gifts you have in advance, so you don't have to worry about it on the day.

Stay off social media and try to avoid adverts on TV or online. If you have phone apps which might send Christmas messages, perhaps you could turn off notifications for the day. Perhaps watch a TV series or film that isn't Christmas-related or even do your normal housework and chores.

HELP AND SUPPORT IS OUT THERE

If you are struggling with your mental wellbeing; talking helps.

Helplines:

- Samaritans (24hrs): 116 123
- Breathing Space (Mon – Thurs 6pm – 2am, Fri 6pm – Mon 6am): 0800 83 85 87
- NHS 24 (out of hours): 111
- Childline (for Children/Young People): 0800 111
- Hopeline UK (For Young People): 0800 068 4141

For tips on looking after your mental health and wellbeing:

- <https://clearyourhead.scot>
- <https://nhsinform.scot>
- www.lanarkshiremindmatters.scot.nhs.uk
- <https://elament.org.uk>

