

MANAGING FESTIVE ANXIETY

With the countdown to Christmas on, many people are starting to get anxious about all that has to be done in the next few weeks! Managing this anxiety can help you enjoy this time of year!

Why is it Important to Manage Festive Anxiety?

- Anxiety can cause irritability, poor sleep and even behavioural changes. For example, you may become so anxious about fitting everything in that you avoid social events which you would usually enjoy!
- Anxiety that lasts for weeks has the potential to be bad for your health. Hormones such as adrenalin are released during these times which can cause an increase in blood pressure, insomnia and poor digestion.

Why is it Important to Do Something Now?

- A bit of planning now can help to manage or even avoid anxiety.
- Start with mapping out the big things you know are going to happen: family gatherings, Christmas Day, parties you are planning on attending or giving. If possible, try not to clump too many things together on consecutive days.
- Work out a budget – take into account travelling expenses, gift purchases, outings, groceries as well as your usual expenses.

What about Lifestyle?

- Having a healthy lifestyle is important at this time. It can help to support all the unexpected or unusual things that happen in the next 6 weeks!
- Eat a balanced diet – lots of fresh fruit and vegetables! This is a time when there's lots of sweet or rich food which can leave you feeling sluggish and irritable - try to balance it with fresh food! Start the day with cereal and fruit or eggs on toast to give you a healthy boost!
- Don't drink too much alcohol. Even one or two extra drinks a day can leave you feeling out of sorts and it may increase your anxiety! Try having a glass of water between each alcoholic drink and have a couple of alcohol free days a week!
- Drink lots of water! As the weather warms up, it's easy to become dehydrated and this can cause headaches or snappiness! Carry a water bottle with you and sip from it regularly!

What Else is Important?

- Take time to relax – every day! Relaxation helps to calm your mind, releases muscle tension and regulates your breathing. Consider meditation or a walk in the morning. Even just sitting quietly with a book or some music can give you a relaxation break!
- Keep up your exercise routine – even going for a short walk each day – as this helps to burn off some of that adrenalin.
- Get enough sleep – lack of sleep can cause difficulty in concentration, headaches and irritability. If you know you're going to have several late nights in a row, try to sleep longer in the morning or take a nap the afternoon before.
- Socialising can be fun and sharing a hug can be very therapeutic – but sometimes constantly being around people can be stressful. Know your limits and take some time alone if you need it.

What if this Doesn't help?

- Acupuncture and massage are great for anxiety – it's the gift you can give yourself!
- If anxiety is becoming overwhelming, see a doctor – you may need a referral to a counsellor or medication to help manage your anxiety.