

Tips For Coping At Christmas

When family and friends get together over Christmas our usual boundaries and coping mechanisms can go out of the window. If you are affected by a loved one's substance use this Christmas, take a look at our tips and advice.

TIPS:

- Avoid isolation. It can be tempting to pull away and isolate at this time of the year due to the ongoing stigma of substance use, but isolation will take a toll.
- Spend time with people in a balanced way that you feel comfortable with.

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- Choose self-care over additional responsibilities or activities. Do not feel you have to be a superhero, you don't have to be everything to everyone. Take time out for yourself.
 - Support your loved one at this time around their substance use but remember that their recovery is not your responsibility.
 - If gatherings have traditionally involved drinking, then think about changing this focus to support your loved one or suggest an alternative. At the same time, do not take their recovery and make it your own. The decisions they need to make to stay on track are up to them. You can support and make suggestions but, you should not make their recovery your mission.
 - Boundaries are more important than ever at holiday times. If a loved one is using substances problematically then involving them in plans can be a complex issue.

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- When considering the reaction of not involving someone in family plans, it is the needs and emotional safety of other family members, particularly children, that's a priority. If you choose to invite your loved one, then firm boundaries and expectations must be set and communicated in advance. Any consequences must be followed through. If your loved one chooses to stay away then do not force the issue- demanding they attend could only add to a difficult situation.
 - Have a support plan in place this Christmas. for more information about where you can get help visit: <https://adfam.org.uk/christmas>

CONFLICT AT CHRISTMAS:

Why can conflict happen?

- Disagreements can arise in families with a substance user due to everyone wanting different things from one another e.g. money, time, support.

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- Other family members may feel “cheated” of time with you, they may feel frustration, anger, resentment etc. towards the user.

Tips for dealing with conflict

Think about these things:

- What are the triggers? Does the conflict have to start? Are there any fixed patterns to how conflict happens? What are the roles that people adopt in the family? What benefit do they get from adopting these roles?
- What is my responsibility in this? **This is the bit you can change.**

[Visit our website](#) for more support and information