



Mindfulness Monthly

Merry Christmas!



Issue 25: December 2025

Welcome to the final 'Mindfulness Monthly' of 2025! The year has certainly flown by and I am sure students and families are looking forward to a well-earned, well-deserved Christmas break. In this edition of Mindfulness Monthly we will share some information about how to support the mental health and well-being of both your young person and yourself over the busy holiday season.

Practicing gratitude and kindness

Gratitude and kindness are powerful tools for mental health, and the festive season is the perfect time to practise them. Try creating a gratitude jar where each family member writes one thing they're thankful for each day. This simple activity helps children focus on positive aspects of life and builds resilience. Acts of kindness, such as baking for a neighbour, donating to a charity, or writing a thank-you note can also lift spirits and strengthen family bonds. These small gestures not only make others feel good but also boost your young person's sense of purpose and happiness.

Keeping calm during the Christmas rush

The festive season often brings joy, but it can also create stress for families. Between shopping, social events, and managing expectations, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. As a result, you may wish to try one or more of the following;

- Planning ahead can make a big difference. Try creating a simple calendar for key dates and stick to a realistic budget to avoid financial strain.
- Prioritise downtime by scheduling quiet family moments, such as watching a movie, playing a board game, or taking a walk together.
- Remember, it's okay to say no to invitations or activities if it helps protect your family's well-being.

Keeping things simple often leads to a more enjoyable holiday for everyone.

Reminder for those stressing about Christmas

You don't need matching pyjamas to be happy.

Children need presence more than presents.

A Christmas movie night does not need to be on a 70" inch TV.

Colour coordinated decorations means nothing to children.

The number of presents isn't a reflection of you as a parent.

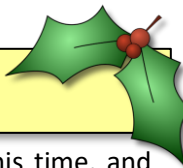
Your kids will grow up and remember the laugh and love.

Winter blues vs Seasonal Affective Disorder

Shorter days and colder weather can affect mood, and while occasional low feelings are normal, persistent sadness might signal Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Seasonal Affective Disorder is a type of depression that occurs at certain times of the year, most commonly during the autumn and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. It is linked to changes in light exposure, which can affect the body's internal clock and serotonin levels, leading to symptoms such as low mood, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and difficulty concentrating. If your young person is presenting in a low mood, encourage them to get outside daily; even 15 minutes of daylight can boost mood and energy levels. Staying active is another powerful tool, as exercise releases feel-good chemicals that help combat low mood. Keeping routines steady, with regular sleep and mealtimes also supports emotional balance.

When Christmas isn't merry

Not every child feels festive joy. Some may struggle with loneliness, anxiety, or grief during this time, and that's completely normal. If your child seems sad, listen without judgment and allow them to share their feelings openly. Avoid forcing cheer - validate their emotions instead by saying things like "It's okay to feel this way". Remind your young person that they are loved and that it's okay to take things at their own pace.



Website recommendation of the month

Mental Health UK

(<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/>)

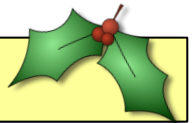
Mental Health UK offers a vast resource library designed to help parents and carers confidently engage in conversations about mental health, emotional well-being, and resilience with young people. The site includes conversation guides for talking to children about mental health, as well as guides for discussing concerns with other parents and carers. The platform also provides animated videos based on topics young people have identified as important, focusing on resilience-building strategies and coping techniques.



Navigating family gatherings without stress

Large family gatherings can sometimes feel overwhelming for children, especially if they're shy or anxious. If you are attending a large gathering over the festive season, try to set realistic expectations; remember that not every moment will be perfect, and that's okay. Modelling calm behaviour is key, as children often mirror your stress levels. By keeping things relaxed and flexible, you can help your child feel more comfortable during social events.

Digital well-being during the holidays



Screens can easily dominate downtime during the holidays, but balance is essential for mental health. During the holidays you may wish to consider introducing a "Tech-Free Hour" each day. This can help to build family connections – you could use this time for games, crafts, or simply chatting. Setting boundaries around screen time *before* the holidays start can also help to prevent conflict later. Encourage creative alternatives like baking, making decorations, or going for a winter walk. These activities not only reduce screen fatigue but also create lasting family memories.

'Winter Wonderland Adventure'

To celebrate the rapidly approaching Christmas holidays, a series of advent style posters promoting the importance of mental health and well-being have been posted around the school. Behind each door is a different top tip or affirmation, and there is a prize for students that find them all using a scavenger hunt style worksheet (found in the Learning Centre). Please do promote this with your children, and maybe ask them to share what the top tips are!



Self-care tips for parents and carers

Your well-being matters too, especially during the busy festive season. Take five minutes for deep breathing or a short walk to reset your mood when things feel overwhelming. Stay hydrated and nourished, as skipping meals can increase stress and fatigue. Don't hesitate to ask for help – sharing tasks with family or friends can ease the pressure and make the holidays more enjoyable. Remember, looking after yourself sets a positive example for your child or young person, and it helps you support them more effectively. Try to keep realistic expectations – it's okay if everything isn't perfect. Focus on what truly matters, like spending quality time together, rather than striving for an ideal holiday. If you notice stress building, pause and remind yourself that small moments of calm can make a big difference. Prioritising rest and balance now will help you start the new year feeling refreshed and ready.

Well-Being Quote:

**"You don't have to control your thoughts.
You just have to stop them controlling you"**

Dan Millman

December Kindness 2025



MONDAY

1 Spread kindness and share the December calendar with others

TUESDAY

2 Contact someone you can't be with to see how they are

WEDNESDAY

3 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment

THURSDAY

4 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about

FRIDAY

5 Give a gift to someone who is homeless or feeling lonely

SATURDAY

6 Leave a positive message for someone else to find

SUNDAY

7 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today

8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member

9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead

10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them

11 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank

12 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today

13 See how many different people you can smile at today

14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one

15 Say hello to your neighbour and brighten up their day

16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to

17 Give thanks. List the kind things others have done for you

18 Ask for help and let someone else discover the joy of giving

19 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated

20 Help others by giving away something that you don't need

21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you

22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed

23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness

24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh

25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!

26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature

27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat

28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy

29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people

30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why

31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2026

