

Seeking Additional Help

**If you want to speak to someone over
Christmas for support / advice:**

Samaritans - Call free day or night 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.ie

Pieta House - Crisis helpline 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444

Childline Helpline - 1800 666 666 (Anytime – automated response)

Barnardo's Bereavement Counselling for Children -
Helpline 01 4732110 (10am -12noon Monday – Friday)

Jigsaw - <https://jigsaw.ie/talk-online/live-chat/>
Get free, text-based support with a clinician online through 1:1
web chats if you're between 12-25 years old.

**If you are seeking access to a local service – mental
health, counselling or psychological therapy,
during working hours you can contact:**

Your GP or After Hours GP Service – (or NowDoc 0818 400 911) to get a
referral to Mental Health services or Counselling in Primary Care.

HSE Support Line – 087 140 5138

HSE National Counselling Service (incl. Bereavement Service) - 074 91 67250

HSE Donegal Psychology Service - 0749104641

Jigsaw Donegal (for young people 12-25 years) – Call 074-9726920 or
email donegal@jigsaw.ie or <https://jigsaw.ie/talk-online/live-chat/>



Minding Yourself at Christmas

Guidance to support coping and recovery at Christmas

Christmas is traditionally a time for family and it's a time when we naturally miss and remember our deceased loved ones and those who are not at home. This year has brought unprecedented loss and trauma to the community of Creeslough and surrounding areas. You may already feel more emotionally vulnerable and sensitive. Christmas may heighten your sadness, anxiety or trauma, this is what you can do support recovery and coping.



COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE
CAVAN DONEGAL LEITRIM MONAGHAN SLIGO

Be Compassionate (sensitive to your own needs and feelings)

One of the most important things you can do is to allow yourself to 'be' whatever way feels right for you.

Be compassionate with yourself. Accept your feelings.

Forgive yourself your frustrations and irritabilities.

Do only what you need to and do things slowly. Recovering from a trauma and experiencing grief is physically exhausting.

Allow time for yourself. Allow yourself to retreat to your own space for a lie down, a short walk, or to do something relaxing.

Others may have different ways of mourning and recovering from difficult experiences and be reassured that this is ok.

Accept offers of support from others. Minimise pressure and expectations that you place on yourself over the Christmas period.

Find Your Safe Space or Support People

You might experience a whole range of difficult emotions, including sadness, guilt, or anger. Equally, it is ok and normal to experience positive feelings.

Spend time with your important people who make you feel safe and connected.

Sometimes our safe people are in our memories, or we have an inner sense of a safe space, or indeed prayer can make us feel safe.

Getting together with family and close friends may be a chance to remember the good times and to laugh. This does not mean you have forgotten about the tragic events that have occurred in the community.

Maintain (or develop) your own rhythms and routines

People often feel emotionally safer and reassured by routines and following their own rhythms of life. You may find it helps you to cope and recover when you:

Take care of your body and your mind by maintaining regular patterns of sleeping and eating and other personal routines.

Give yourself permission to be flexible with Christmas celebrations. Some families may feel like they do not wish to celebrate Christmas at all, whilst others find that maintaining their typical routine and celebrations is what feels right.

Consider new traditions or activities e.g., visiting a place you spent time with a person you have lost, write them a letter, buy them a gift.

Move and Breathe

People often find they feel physically unwell or become numb, immobilised or get 'bogged' down after something traumatic happens.

Getting out in the fresh air and doing activities that activate your physical senses may help your emotional recovery or to cope.

Engage in any movement or physical activity that helps you breathe and that gently moves your body.

Use habits or techniques that ground your body (e.g. yoga, meditation, grounding techniques, mindfulness etc).

How to Support Children and Young People at this time

Children, like adults, may find that Christmas-time brings up difficult emotions. The following information is for caregiving adults to support young people at this time.

Keeping everyday routines (e.g. mealtimes & bedtimes) will reassure children and young people that they will be okay. Predictability and structure creates a sense of safety for children and young people.

Provide increased comfort through nurturing physical contact e.g., hugs, rocking.

When it comes to Christmas traditions and celebrations, talk with your children in an age-appropriate way about how they feel and what they want to do.

Be with your child and all their feelings. Acknowledge that it is normal to feel anger, guilt, upset or sadness, and to express these feelings in their own way. Do not worry about knowing exactly the right thing to say. Listening and accepting is what they need.

Let your children know that it is still ok to laugh and have fun this Christmas.

Support children to keep active. Movement is a very effective tool in helping children to use the extra adrenaline created by stress, as well as supporting them to feel regulated and grounded. So lots of walking, dancing, sports or imaginary play. Gentle stretching/yoga can also help calm the mind and body.