



# Don't lose your Christmas Cheer This year!

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## Keeping Cool at Yule

Christmas is the most stressful time of the year for many people.

We have developed a guide to help you avoid stress and anger.

We have looked at the build-up, and Christmas itself.

### Here are some common themes in how families experience Christmas:

- More than half of all families have disagreements at Christmas.
- Many adults tell us their relationships with their partners can come under pressure over holiday time, and that a festive argument made them want to separate.
- Counselling services show an increase in telephone requests for help.
- The average family has their first argument before 10a.m on Christmas Day.



## Reasons for arguments can include...

- Who's doing the washing up.
- Spending more time with family than usual.
- Too much alcohol.
- Fights over the TV remote control/game console.
- Many go for a walk to avoid rows.

## The Build Up...

- Avoid the pressure of 'It has to be perfect' - family means sharing responsibility and it is only one day!
- Think about what can trigger you stress and have a plan of how you can deal with it. See the big picture (whatever happens with the other person, it will all be over within a matter of hours/days and losing your temper may not be worth it. Consider who may make you angry - think about all their good points and things you like about them. Try to focus on these things.
- Work out how to share responsibility for the day - plan jobs for all children and adults. Get some agreements on what everyone will do so the success of the day isn't only down to you.
- Get as much done in advance as possible.
- Agree some rules and arrangements with the family that will help things run smoothly.

- Avoid drinking too much - alcohol is responsible for lots of misunderstanding and arguments.
- It is more difficult to be fair and open minded when under the influence.
- Drinking lowers your defences and can change your mood.

**Listen carefully to what the other person is saying and show you understand their point of view, even if you don't agree with it. Choose your words carefully:**

- Instead of saying "you make me..." try saying "When do you that I feel...". Use volume control. Talk not shout - discuss not argue.
- Accept it - things can be messy; someone will put their foot in it, so try not to argue over little things.
- Avoid conversations that always lead to the same arguments. Change the subject as smoothly as you can.
- If you start getting angry, take time out. If you can, walk away or find a quiet space, or go out for a walk, make time to calm and think about the big picture.
- Tell people you're going for a walk because you have eaten a lot or want a good appetite not because you need to escape them.
- Remember your children will learn to shout if you do.
- You only have to... eat some food/speak to your aunty/say thanks for an unwanted present/other... just for today to help the day go well.
- Try not to deal with difficult stuff over by phone, email or text. Your body language and facial expressions are necessary to understanding the other person's point of view.

- Look for the positives - seeing family/friends, the memories the children will have of happy christmases, and the meal itself, which research says is the most enjoyable part of christmas for many people.

### For Young People:

- Try to get enough rest before Christmas day. Tiredness makes everyone grumpy.
- If you get over-stimulated or start getting annoyed you, walk away and find a quiet place to calm down.
- If your siblings are winding you up, tell someone who isn't too busy.
- You may find listening to music, or practising breathing slowly and deeply, will help you avoid blowing your top.

### Top Tips to avoid anger:

#### **Managing anger helps you manage stress, anxiety and low moods.**

- STOP, think, and take a look at the bigger picture.
- It's okay to have different opinions.

#### **Not everything is worth arguing about.**

- Use your emotional supports: people, things.
- Keep a diary or journal. Try not to take things personally.

### About Witherslack Group

We are committed to sharing advice and support to parents, carers and professionals. Our webinars and online resources provide expert knowledge and practical support. If you would like to find out more information you can email [webinars@witherslackgroup.co.uk](mailto:webinars@witherslackgroup.co.uk) or visit [www.witherslackgroup.co.uk](http://www.witherslackgroup.co.uk).



### About ADHD Foundation

To find out more information about the ADHD Foundation please visit [www.adhdfoundation.org.uk](http://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk).

