

Preparing for the winter

With summertime coming to an end, this article looks at how we can all prepare for the winter months. Adverse weather can have a negative impact on our mental and physical wellbeing. [Seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\)](#) is a form of depression that people experience at particular times of the year, most commonly during winter.

Tips to look after your mental wellbeing through the winter

- **Try to make the most of any natural light** – Getting out in the sun each day, for 10 or 15 minutes has been recommended by NHS as a means of obtaining sufficient levels of Vitamin D.
- **Try to avoid stress where possible** – Some people find the winter more stressful than other times of the year. If you are one of the people that find the winter more stressful then it is important to try and prepare for the winter by making it as stress free as possible. You can do this by planning stressful events and activities for other times of the year if possible. Make the most of the times where you are feeling well by preparing for the winter such as buying Christmas presents for example. You could also learn a relaxation technique to unwind.
- **Exercise** – Physical activity can be a good way of lifting your mood and increasing your energy levels. You do not have to do anything too strenuous but any exercise such as a gentle walk, housework or gardening for example can help.
- **Staying Connected** – Sometimes we may not feel like talking to others as much during the winter months but it is vital that we stay connected as this can have positive effects on our mental wellbeing. Talking about things you may be worried about can really help.
- **A Healthy Diet** – It is important to keep a well-balanced healthy diet. During the winter months we rely on getting our vitamin D from food sources (including fortified foods) and supplements more so than from sunlight.

What managers and team leaders need to consider?

- There may be increased absence due to illness in the winter
- You may need to plan for absence/issues employees may have due their dependants/children having flu symptoms
- What actions can you take to improve staff morale and boost resilience as this will be important as we enter the winter period

How can Care first help?

If you feel you may need some emotional or practical support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. Whilst our BACP accredited counsellors are available 24/7 to provide support for emotional issues, our expertly trained Telephone Information Specialists are available 8am-8pm Monday-Friday to provide advice on any practical issues that may be causing you a stress or worry and help you feel more in control of a situation. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support.



Please see the below links for more information

- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/keep-warm-keep-well/>
- <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/10-things-you-should-do-now-to-prepare-for-winter>
- <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/preparing-for-winter/#>

If you would like to learn more about “Preparing for the winter” Then please join our webinar on Friday 3rd September at 12pm using the details below –

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1923438779728030220>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place. If you wish to contact the Care first telephone counselling and information line then please don't hesitate to call the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

Care first