



Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter



December 2021

In this festive edition of the mental health and wellbeing newsletter, you will find:

-  Tips for staying mentally healthy over the festive period.
-  Information and advice on understanding and supporting depression.
-  Contact details for local and national mental health support services.
-  A Christmas emoji Pictionary quiz
-  Melted snowman cookie recipe

“On behalf of Noel-Baker’s Mental Health and Wellbeing team, I would like to wish all of our students, their families and the wider community a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!”



Noel-Baker Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy





Looking after your mental health this Christmas

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!" is what we hear constantly at Christmas. Whether it's on the radio, the telly or out in public, we are constantly told that Christmas is a time to be happy.

But what if you're not happy?

The reality for many of us, is that when Christmas comes around, there's constant pressure on those with mental health problems to be happy all the time. But of course, that's easier said than done.

Here's some advice on things you can do to ensure you still enjoy the festive period this year, but also look after your mental health:

Take time out

It's so important to take time out every day, not just in the festive period. If you feel yourself getting a bit overwhelmed, or upset, take five to ten minutes away from everyone on Christmas Day to just have a bit of time to yourself.

Sleep

A good night's sleep is so important when it comes to looking after your mental health. It's said that teenagers need an average of nine-and-a-half hours' sleep each night. When it comes to the festive period, ensuring you get enough sleep can become difficult due to things like late nights at home and parties. To make sure you get back into your normal sleeping routine easily, try going to bed at normal times as the festive period draws to a close. This'll make getting up for school a lot easier and, in turn, will help your mental health a lot.

Exercise

Physical activity releases a chemical called endorphins, which makes you feel good, so if you're feeling a bit overwhelmed or low at Christmas, why not go out for a walk? You could go on your own or with someone else, or go for a bike ride or even a run.

Try to relax

It's easy for me to say "Christmas is fun - just relax", but the reality is that relaxing can be tricky. Try doing things like yoga, breathing exercises or meditation to help you calm down if you're feeling a bit stressed over the festive period.

Just because it's Christmas, it doesn't mean caring for your mental health has to be put on hold. You're allowed to take breaks, and do things that perhaps don't involve the whole family. Mental health and physical health are as equally important, if you fell over and grazed your knee on Christmas Day, you'd put a plaster on it. So if your mental health needs a plaster, you're allowed to do something about it.

(Young minds, 2021)



Depression

What is depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems.

Really useful video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch/XiCmniLQGYc>



I had a black dog, his name was depression
10,380,638 views • 2 Oct 2012

The psychological Symptoms of depression include:

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- Having low self esteem
- Feeling tearful
- Feeling guilt-ridden
- Feeling irritable and intolerant of others
- Having no motivation or interest in things you once enjoyed
- Finding it difficult to make decisions
- Not getting any enjoyment out of life
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself



If you are struggling with any of the symptoms mentioned on here, reach out and talk to someone you trust.

It's worth mentioning that **Low mood** and **depression** are **not** the same thing.

How can I help my depression?

- Speak to someone you trust.
- Try and do some exercise each day
- Eat a healthy balanced diet and drink plenty of water
- Follow a self-help scheme, there are lots of books and apps available.

Some of the physical signs of depression might include:

- Moving or speaking more slowly than usual.
- Changes in appetite and weight.
- Constipation
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Lack of energy
- Changes to your menstrual cycle
- Disturbed sleep

Social symptoms of depression might include:

- Avoiding contact with friends and family
- Taking part in fewer or no social activities
- Neglecting hobbies and interests
- Experiencing difficulties in your home, work or family life.

If you think someone you know might be experiencing symptoms of depression, check in on them and let them know that you are there for them.

Local and national mental health support services



Kooth is a free, online, counselling, support and advice service for young people aged between 11-19 years old.

Website: www.kooth.com



Papyrus is a national charity, dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. They provide a confidential support service for young people who are with thoughts of suicide, or for anyone worried about a young person.

Website: papyrus-uk.org

Phone: 0800 068 41 41



Childline is a free, private and confidential national service available online and over the phone for anyone under the age of 19 years old. They have a wide range of resources and services that cater to anything a person under the age of 19 might face.

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 11 11



Young minds work closely with young people and their families to campaign on issues which impact young people's mental health. They operate a range of services, including a helpline offering free advice and support to any adult who is worried about the behaviour or mental health of a young person.

Website: youngminds.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 802 5544 from 9:30am - 4pm, Monday - Friday.

The logo for Samaritans, featuring the word 'SAMARITANS' in a bold, white, uppercase font on a green rectangular background.

SAMARITANS

Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout Great Britain and Ireland, often through their telephone helpline.

Website: www.samaritans.org

Telephone: 116 123



First Steps is a Derbyshire eating disorder charity. They support people all over Derbyshire who are affected by eating disorders and difficulties; this includes parents, partners and families.

Website: firststepsed.co.uk

Telephone: 01332 367571

The logo for Teenage Helpline, featuring the words 'TEENAGE HELPLINE' in a bold, white, uppercase font on a dark blue rectangular background. To the right of the text is a white icon of a smartphone with a heart and a speech bubble on its screen.

TEENAGE
HELPLINE

Teenage Helpline is a charitable organisation that provides services to young people across the UK. Their primary service involves putting young people in contact with peers, as well as providing peer-to-peer mentoring and other support that is required.

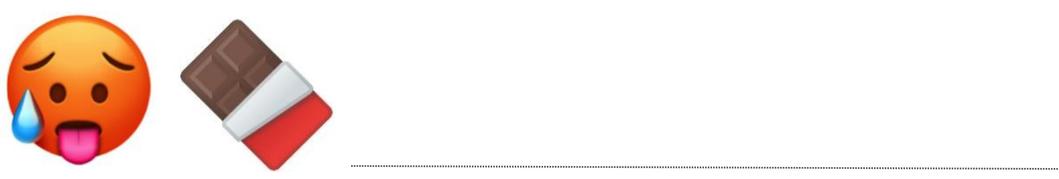
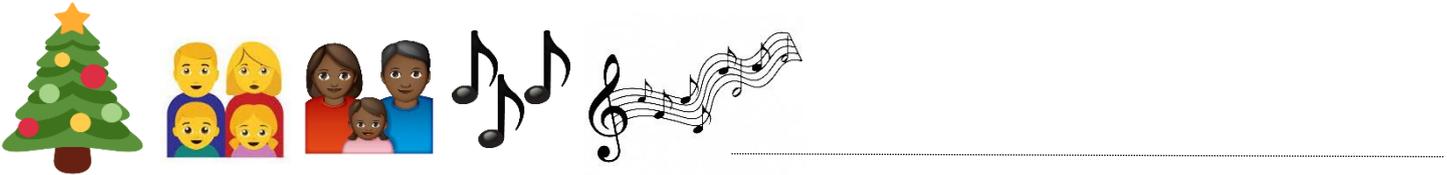
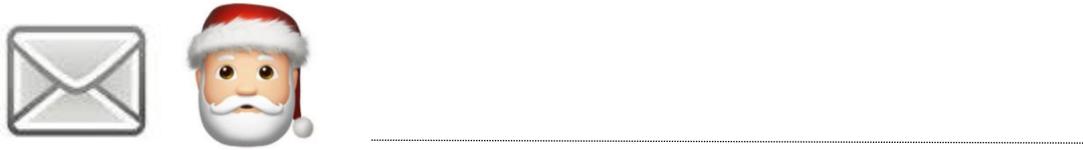
Website: teenagehelpline.org.uk

Email: support@teenagehelpline.org.uk

Christmas emoji Pictionary quiz!

Answers on
the last page

Use the emoji's to work out these common Christmas phrases



Melted snowmen cookies



SERVES 20

PREP 0:25

COOK 0:2



Ingredients

- 80 g unsalted butter (softened)
- 1/2 cup caster sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 200 g plain flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- salt

TO DECORATE

- 1 cup icing sugar
- icing pens
- licorice
- 20 white marshmallows

Step 1

To make the dough; Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced) and line two trays with baking paper. Cream the butter and sugar together with an electric mixer until pale and fluffy. Add the egg and beat well. Fold in the vanilla, flour, baking powder and salt. Mix into a dough, shape this into a disc, then wrap in plastic and let rest in the fridge for 30 minutes. Roll out and cut into circles (using a cookie cutter or the base of a glass tumbler). Transfer these to a baking tray and bake for 10 minutes or until golden.

Step 2

Let the cookies cool completely. Slice up a few licorice strips into thin strips for arms, scarves, etc. Tiny dots for eyes or triangles for bow ties.

Step 3

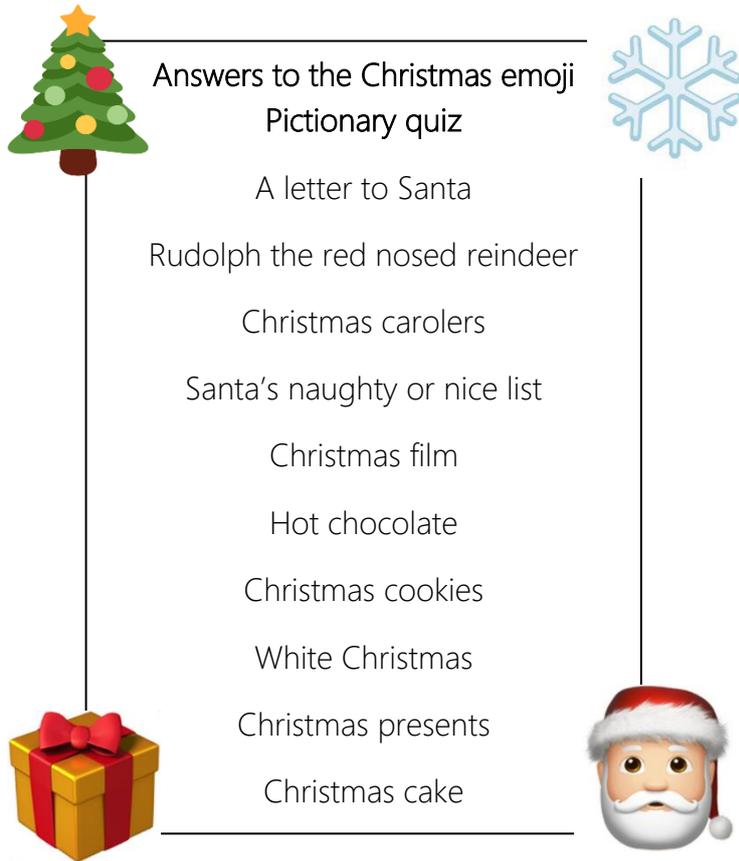
Make up a basic white icing (just add a tiny bit of water to pure icing sugar and stir, then add more water until you reach the desired consistency - should be fairly thick). Using the icing pens, decorate the marshmallows with eyes, noses, mouths etc.

Step 4

To decorate the cookies, spoon on a little white icing and spread over the surface of your cookie, then press the marshmallow down in the middle and decorate!

Step 5

Admire your amazing baking skills, eat and enjoy!!!



"It is with great sadness that I will be leaving Noel-Baker academy at the end of this term. It has been an incredible privilege to work alongside the school's wonderful students over the last term and support them with their mental health and wellbeing. After 11 years of working within secondary schools, I feel the time is right to take on a new challenge outside of education. I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff, students and parents who have made me feel so welcome. Supporting student mental health remains paramount and counselling support will continue to be available for students. Please get in touch with your child's head of house if you have any concerns for their mental health."

Danni Illston (School Counsellor)

