

### Media statement

16 December 2019

#### **'Tis the season to be mindful of your mental health**

'Tis the season to be jolly, but for some, the festive season can be anything but joyous. The holiday period can also be a time of increased stress and even harder for those with mental health conditions.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) Clinical Director Mental Health and Addiction Services Dr Chris Lilley warns some locals who are socially isolated or who experience anxiety or depression may be susceptible to mental health triggers during the holiday period.

"The Christmas and New Year period often disrupts our daily routines. It can also be a very stressful with the financial pressures of buying gifts, managing family conflicts or loneliness," Dr Lilley said.

"These feelings can produce symptoms of anxiety, anger and difficulty sleeping which, if prolonged, could have a negative impact on your mental health and wellbeing.

"In the lead up to Christmas and the new year there are some useful strategies we can all put in place to help us cope with this time of year," he said.

"For example, think realistically about the holidays. If you're facing the holiday period without your family and you know you'll find it difficult, plan ahead to make sure you'll be spending time with people whose company you enjoy. Or if you will be alone, make plenty of time for the things you enjoy to take your mind off it," Dr Lilley said.

Sunshine Coast locals are encouraged to take care of their mental health, as well as friends and family this holiday season, by following these tips:

- Remember it is OK to say no – you have a choice in how you spend your time
- Spend time with supportive and caring people
- Reach out to any friends or relatives you know might need support, a simple phone call could mean a world of difference
- If you can't comfortably spend money find other ways to do something meaningful for others such as offer babysitting or make something out of recycled materials; use community supports that are available to assist with Christmas items
- Avoid drinking alcohol as it can contribute to arguments and is a depressant
- Be realistic about what you can and cannot do
- Keep active; physical activity releases the feel-good chemicals, endorphins, which help you to relax
- Get plenty of sleep
- Don't be afraid to ask for or accept help

# Sunshine Coast

## Hospital and Health Service

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If you do require professional help over the festive season Beyond Blue [Support Service](#) is available over the holiday period 24/7 on 1300 22 4636, [online chat](#) (3pm-12am AEDT) or email responses (within 24 hours). There are also other [services](#) to contact for support over this time if you need someone to talk to.

**ENDS**

**Media contact: Alexia Kelly | Alicia Temple 5202 0083**

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