

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## RAMHP's 13 tips to reduce stress over the festive season

Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) Coordinators have developed 13 practical tips to help manage and reduce stress over the festive season.

Spread across NSW, the RAMHP team are only too aware of the extra challenges and stress that the Christmas period can bring.

RAMHP Coordinator Camilla Kenny says, it can be a tough time for many people with additional financial stressors, relationship challenges, grief and isolation. For many there is also the uncertain weather conditions and being on constant alert for bushfires.

As part of RAMHP's end of year wrap up, Coordinators are asking people and communities to be mindful of those who might be experiencing mental health issues and to reach out, check in and ask: Are you OK?

The team has also put together these practical tips for looking after your own mental health and wellbeing; as well as others.

1. **Get away from our normally busy routines and recharge** – treat yourself to a sleep-in, read a new book, or go for a bushwalk or trip to the beach. (*Camilla Kenny*)
2. **Take a break, switch off from technology** and focus on celebrating with your family. (*Helen Sheather*)
3. **Connect with loved ones** that you haven't spoken with in a while. As well as immediate family, I like to contact a more distant relative or an old friend I've lost regular contact with. (*Steve Carrigg*)
4. Christmas is a reminder to me that not everyone will have shelter, warmth, food and love around them at this time of year. **So take some time to be grateful** for all that you have and share a little of this with others less fortunate. Even a smile can go a long way in a lonely person's world. (*Jennie Keioskie*)
5. The festive season is such a joyous occasion for me but it can be a tough time for some, where we remember and talk about our loved ones who are not at the Christmas table. It is so important that in all the excitement and celebration that we **take the time to listen and support family and friends, check in and ask "how are you doing?"** (*Sam Osborne*)

6. Down in the Riverina we will be experiencing high temperatures over the Christmas and New Year period. Water slides in the back yard, swimming in the river, lakes and swimming pools will be high on everyone's agenda. As will opening gifts, drinking alcohol and eating the wonderful fresh food we produce in this area. It is beautiful to me to celebrate with family and friends but we need to **remember that everything in moderation is the key** to enjoying the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018. *(Meryl Limbrick)*
7. Christmas is a chance to **take time out**, share food with others and hope that the coming year is even better than the last. *(Kylie Atkinson)*
8. Christmas, for some families, can be a sad time of the year. **Be mindful of others and reach out to people who need it.** *(Judy Carmody)*
9. Families can feel a lot of pressure at Christmas time, particularly when it comes to finances. **Share the stress – share the cost.** *(Di Gill)*
10. **Spend some time in nature; stop, breathe and appreciate.** *(Judy O'Mara)*
11. The festive season may see our alcohol intake increase. Try to **have alcohol-free days**, and when you are drinking, keep up your water intake and remember to eat. *(Marie Kelly)*
12. During the 'silly season', it's especially important to keep the basic things in place to keep yourself healthy. **Make sure you get enough sleep, drink lots of water and exercise.** This solid foundation will go a long way to getting you through this often hectic time of year. *(Kate Arndell)*
13. It's important to **keep Christmas in perspective.** The day is about spending time with people you love. In five years you aren't going to remember who got what, or what meal was served, you're going to remember the company and how they made you feel. *(Sarah Green)*

To find a RAMHP Coordinator in your local area or find about RAMHP, visit [ramhp.com.au](http://ramhp.com.au) or email [ramhp@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:ramhp@newcastle.edu.au)

If you have any concerns about yourself or a loved one, please contact the NSW **Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 (free call for landlines)**, the **Alcohol and Other Drugs Information Service (ADIS) 1800 422 599** or call **Lifeline on 13 11 14.**

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