



Virtual Memory Café

Welcome to our December 2021

Virtual Memory Café Newsletter Edition 19



Please join the Solent Admiral Nurse team at our Virtual Memory café. Grab a cuppa, sit down and relax. Our Virtual Memory café will hopefully give you some advice and guidance, however most importantly we hope that it makes you smile and reminds you that you are not on your own.

Please feel free to call us on 0300 1234 026

or email snhs.admiralnursing@nhs.net

Address: Admiral Nurses, East Community Independence Service, Bitterne Health Centre, Commercial Street, Southampton, SO18 6BT



AdmiralNurses DementiaUK
Helping families face dementia

Thornhill Memory Cafe

Facilitated by Admiral Nursing

For Carers of people with Dementia

(you are welcome to bring the person you are caring for)

Medwall Court

Tatwin Close, Thornhill, SO19 6JS

1st Tuesday of every Month,

2 till 4pm

Join us for Tea/Coffee,
Peer support, advice and
signposting. Plus 1-1
support as needed



Future Memory Café Dates:

Tuesday 07 December 2021

Tuesday 4 January 2022

Highfield Memory Cafe

Facilitated by The Caraway Trust

Highfield Church

Highfield Lane, SO17 1RL

3rd Tuesday of every month, 2 till 4pm



Join us for Tea and
Cake, support, a lis-
tening ear and much
more Including 1-1
support from Admiral
Nursing

Future Memory Café Dates:

Tuesday 21 December 2021

Tuesday 18 January 2022

Caraway Cafe

For those with memory problems, their carers and households living with dementia.

When: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each Month

Time: 3.00—4.30pm

Where: Ascension Church Café

Thorold Road, Southampton, SO18 1HZ

November Dates:

- 8 December 2021
- 22 December 2021

Tea, chat and activities.



Any enquiries please contact:

Katherine Barbour, caraway@caraway.uk.com



Hampshire & IOW
Dementia Support

A Christmas Celebration

Free Social event exclusively for people living with dementia and their loved one, with live music by Delvis and festive treats provided.

Saturday 18 December

1pm—4pm

Townhill Farm Community Centre

Wessex Road, Southampton, SO18 3RA

Reserve your seat online at
xmas21event.eventbrite.co.uk
or call 07899 077249

12 Tips to Make Christmas More Manageable

Christmas is a time of excitement and festivity, but for some, the holidays can be stressful and worrying. And if you care for someone with Dementia, it can be a challenging time, both emotionally and practically.

Our Admiral Nurses want to share the following tips with you, based on the types of calls they receive on our helpline at this time of year. Hopefully these ideas will help you feel more prepared and relaxed this Christmas.

1. Plan Ahead

Over the Christmas period, services like pharmacies, shops, GPs, dentists and mental health services have reduced opening hours. To make sure you're not caught out, try to get things sorted in good time before you start celebrating with friends or family.

Get the shopping done well in advance, order and collect any prescriptions you or the person you care for will need, and organise paid care cover if necessary.

Write a list out of hours contacts for services like the GP, emergency dentist, pharmacies, mental health services and social services, so you can relax knowing if you're prepared if anything happens.

If you're visiting friends or family, especially if you're staying over pack well in advance so you can double-check that you haven't forgotten anything.

2. Avoid Surprises

If you're celebrating with guests or visiting friends or relatives, make sure they know before hand that your loved one has dementia. If it's easier or helpful, you could just tell them that the person has memory problems, and ask them to keep conversations clear and simple.

If your friends, family or guests know that the person has dementia, but hasn't seen them in a while, let them know of any changes to expect.

It's good to involve the person with dementia when planning activities, if you can— make sure they know what's going to happen, and that they're happy with it, but equally , try not to overload them with too many choices or expectations, as some people with dementia can find this overwhelming.

3. Think about food and drink

Try to follow your loved one's normal likes and dislikes when it comes to food and drink.

If they have a smaller appetite, keep their portions small, and talk them through what's on their plate if that would help them. Check in with them during the meal to see if they are managing, and discreetly offer help, if needed.

If the person enjoys an alcoholic drink, they should be free to enjoy one, but bear in mind that some alcohol can interfere with some medication or can be disorientating for a person with dementia. Have a conversation with your pharmacist or other health professional about medication if you're unsure or think about offering them alcohol-free varieties of beer and wine.

4. Be kind to yourself

Christmas can be especially difficult if you're spending it alone—perhaps your loved one has moved into care, or if you've been bereaved. Give yourself time to process your feelings, be kind to yourself, and spend your Christmas in whatever way you need to.

Coping with loss and bereavement can take a long time, and even if you thought you were doing ok, you might experience a “dip” around a family-oriented time like Christmas.

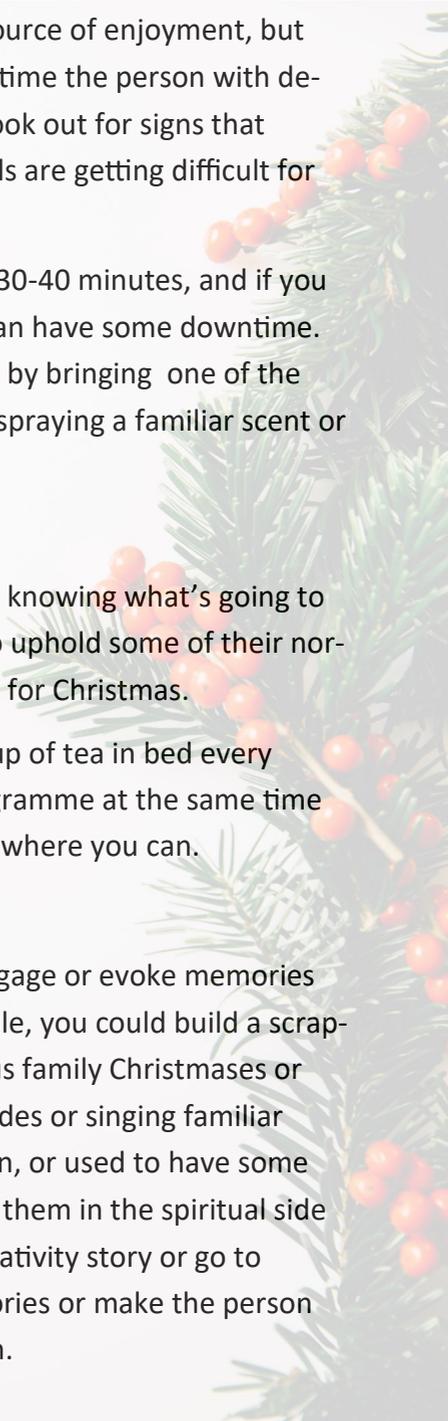
This may mean you don't want to celebrate the holiday, or that you feel you need to be around friends or family. You might even want to do something completely different, like voluntary work for people in need. Visit the Community Christmas website—<https://www.reengage.org.uk/support-us/community-christmas/> to find out about community events happening in your area that you could help with.

If you need someone to talk to, our Admiral Nurse Helpline— 0800 888 6678 can provide support. Here, you can also find contact details for other support you can access on Christmas Day.

5. Avoid overstimulation

The noise and hubbub of a busy family Christmas can be overwhelming for a person with dementia, so try to avoid overstimulating them with sights and sounds.

If you can, reduce unnecessary noise like Christmas crackers and loud music, and limit competing noises— for example, turn off the TV if people are talking.



Children can be a great distraction and source of enjoyment, but you may need to monitor the amount of time the person with dementia spends with young visitors, and look out for signs that they're becoming tired or that noise levels are getting difficult for them to tolerate.

Keep activities short, with a pause every 30-40 minutes, and if you can, set aside a quiet room where they can have some downtime. You make an unfamiliar room welcoming by bringing one of the person's sofa cushions from their home, spraying a familiar scent or playing music they love.

6. Keep to routines

People with dementia often benefit from knowing what's going to happen next, so it can be helpful to try to uphold some of their normal routines, even if they're not at home for Christmas.

Do they have meals at a set time? Or a cup of tea in bed every morning? Do they watch a favourite programme at the same time every day? Try to support these routines where you can.

7. Think of engaging activities

Try to think of things to do that might engage or evoke memories for the person with dementia. For example, you could build a scrapbook together using photos from previous family Christmases or revive family traditions like playing charades or singing familiar songs together. If the person is a Christian, or used to have some Christian beliefs, you could try to engage them in the spiritual side of Christmas, too: sing hymns, read the nativity story or go to church— anything that might spark memories or make the person feel peaceful and connected to their faith.

8. Find out about support groups in your area

If you're caring for someone this Christmas, or spending the day alone, find out about support groups near you. Local centres might be holding a lunch or a meet up– it might be comforting to spend time with other people in a similar situation to you, even if going out feels like a lot of effort.

Charity organisations like your local Age UK may have details of events happening over the festive period, and you may also be able to find information in local social media groups and through your GP surgery.

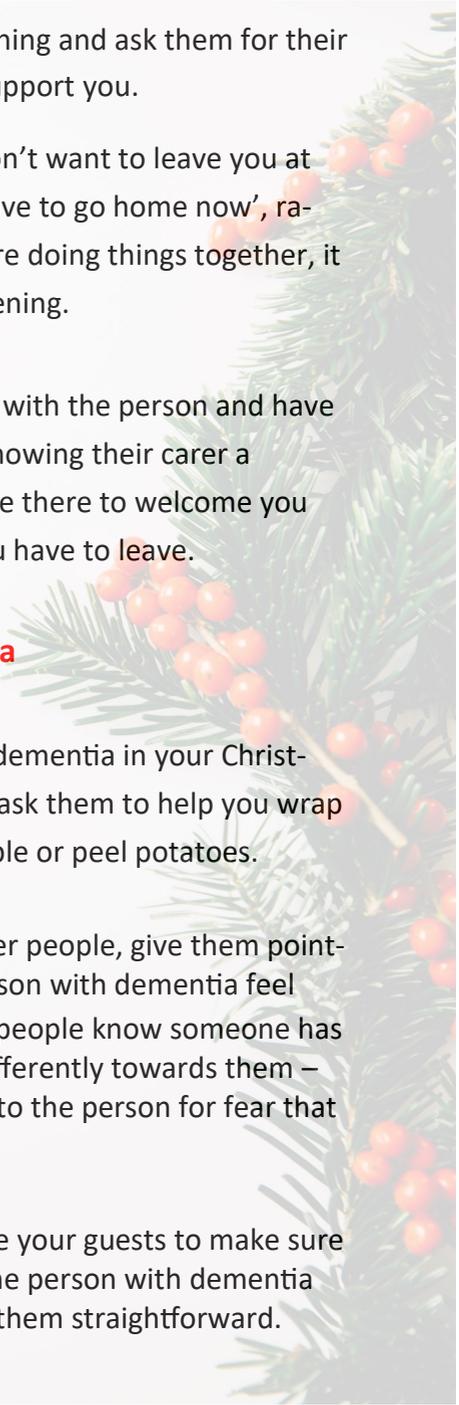
If you can't get out, there may be local retailers and voluntary groups that can deliver shopping and other supplies for you. It's a good idea to look into this in plenty of time in the weeks running up to Christmas.

9. Don't overdo it

Keep in mind what is manageable for the person with dementia. Allow your loved one to have a nap at lunchtime if they need to, and if they're going back to their home at the end of the day, don't leave it too late– try to take them home in daylight so they can see they're back in their familiar environment, rather than waiting until it gets dark when they may be more confused or disorientated.

10. Have a practice run

If you're bringing a loved one with dementia out of their care home over the festive period, have a few practice runs. This will help you figure out if it's realistic and achievable to take them out of their care home for Christmas.



Include the care home staff in your planning and ask them for their advice and how they might be able to support you.

If you're anxious that your loved one won't want to leave you at the end of the day, you could say 'we have to go home now', rather than 'you have to go home'. If you're doing things together, it can make things less confusing or frightening.

Once you arrive back at the home, go in with the person and have an activity ready like having a drink or showing their carer a gift that they received. Ask the staff to be there to welcome you back and distract your relative when you have to leave.

11. Include the person with dementia

Make sure you include the person with dementia in your Christmas activities. If appropriate, you could ask them to help you wrap presents, put up decorations, set the table or peel potatoes.

If you're celebrating Christmas with other people, give them pointers beforehand on how to make the person with dementia feel happy and included. Sometimes, when people know someone has a diagnosis of dementia, they behave differently towards them – for example, they might avoid speaking to the person for fear that they'll get it wrong.

If you think this could be the case, advise your guests to make sure they smile and make eye contact with the person with dementia and, if helpful, keep conversations with them straightforward.

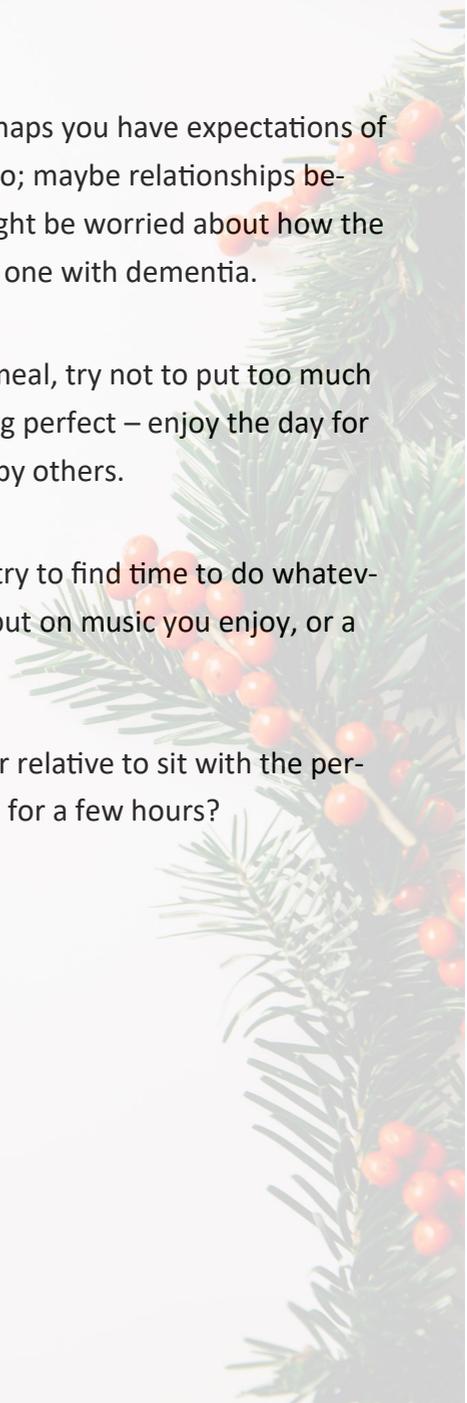
12. Give yourself a break

Christmas can be a stressful time – perhaps you have expectations of previous family Christmases to live up to; maybe relationships between relatives are strained; or you might be worried about how the change in routine will affect your loved one with dementia.

If you're entertaining or cooking a big meal, try not to put too much pressure on yourself to make everything perfect – enjoy the day for what it is, and accept any help offered by others.

If you're not visiting or having visitors, try to find time to do whatever brings you some peace – you could put on music you enjoy, or a film you love.

If you're a carer, why not ask a friend or relative to sit with the person you care for while you take a break for a few hours?



Christmas Quiz

1. The Beach Boys had a Christmas number 1 hit single in 1966 with which song?
2. Which English author wrote the book 'a Christmas carol'?
3. The Christmas film 'Miracle on 24th street' is based in which US city?
4. Which of Santa's reindeer shares his name with a small solar system body?
5. Which Christmas Carol includes the Lyric 'In heaven the bells are ringing'?
6. Which board game by Parker Brothers, where the buying and selling of properties takes place, is reported to have been the most popular Christmas gift of 1936?
7. On the 3rd Day of Christmas, what did my true love give to me?
8. What song was a UK number 1 Christmas hit for Cliff Richard in 1988?
9. In the Christmas song 'Jingle Bells', how many horses pulled the sleigh?
10. Who had a number 1 Christmas hit with 'I want to hold your hand' in 1963?

1. Good Vibrations. 2. Charles Dickens, 3. New York City, 4. Comet, 5. Ding Dong merrily on high, 6. Monopoly, 7. Three French Hens, 8. Mistletoe and wine, 9. One, 10. The Beatles

ANSWERS

My Christmas this Year

Well, 2021 has been yet another memorable year, for a mixture of perhaps, not so great reasons. How on earth are we already in December, making preparations for the season to be jolly?!?! Seriously, where on earth has this year gone????

I confess that I have not been a lover of Christmas for some years now, so I usually take myself away somewhere and climb a mountain or two, with my dogs, and avoid all the furore that it brings. Then I ride it out until the new year arrives, where I can break all manner of resolutions!

Then I received my cancer diagnosis last July, and finished chemo at the end of last November, and the prospect of walking a mountain, was a mountain in itself, so I had a very quiet time at home with my then partner.

I am back receiving chemo again, so the closest I'll be getting to a mountain, is by staying in Wales this year, with a view of the Brecon Beacons from my accommodation. A compromise I am more than happy to make, because I'm still here to be able to do such things, which wasn't necessarily a guarantee.

I informed my best friend of 47 years of my plans, and she told me that she was going to invite me to stay with her and her family for Christmas. A lucky coincidence though, because it turns out, my holiday home is only 15 miles away from their holiday home!! They go all out for Christmas, which would normally fill me with dread, but over a year on from my life changing news, the importance of just embracing whatever came my way, hit me on the head like a huge sledgehammer!

It is fair to say, my biological family are nowhere to be seen, despite knowing my health issues, but here's where I am so incredibly lucky. I get to spend Christmas with my real family this year. Growing up around the corner from them, they took me under their wings, more than my own family did. Mel's mum rings me and her greeting is, "hello darling, it's your mummy here". It always brings a huge smile to my face, and she keeps telling me how excited she is that we will be spending the festive season together, and I have to admit, I'm excited too.

I guess the moral of this tale is, no matter what life throws at you, you know you are loved, and that there is always someone there for you. They don't have to be related by blood. It could be friends, neighbours, health professionals. They all have one thing in common, and that is that they care, and want the best for you.

This Xmas is set to be back to relative "normality", compared to last year, and I wish each and everyone of our readers, **A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS, and a WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!!**

Love, Je-an xx

Resources

This is a quick guide to some of the support you can access at the moment. We have included some local organisations as well as national charities and support groups. Please let us know if there is anything that you would like us to include or if you know of a really useful resource that we have not included.



GATHERING THE HARVEST IN OUR OLDER YEARS

As well as supporting our Memory café s and providing Anna Chaplains, the Caraway Trust also have some really useful resources to download aimed at supporting people at home during Covid19.
www.caraway.uk.com



CARERS IN SOUTHAMPTON
Helping unpaid carers

Carers In Southampton help adult unpaid carers with signposting, carers cards, carers assessments and emergency planning. Tel: 02380 582387 www.carersinsouthampton.co.uk
email: enquiries@carersinsouthampton.co.uk



Dementia Carers Count provide a one-day course for partners, family members and friends caring for someone with dementia to explore the topic of delirium in more detail. If you would like to attend this one-day courses in the future. Tel: 020 3096 7894 www.dementiacarers.org.uk



Dementia UK's website is a really useful resource for lots of practical advice on living well with dementia. Their Dementia Hotline that can be contacted if you need to speak to someone. Tel: 0800 888 6678

www.dementiauk.org



Solent Mind is the local branch of the charity Mind and they also have some really good resources including a Coronavirus Well Being Hub and Well Being tool kits. Tel: 023 8202 7810 www.solentmind.org.uk

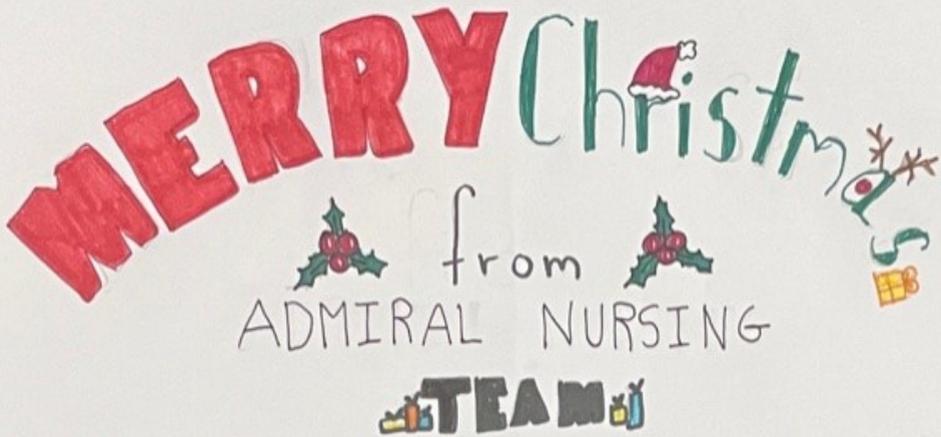


SO:Linked offer practical advice, support and sign-posting with everything from food and medicine deliveries to support with your pets. Their friendly navigators can be contacted by phone or check out their website. Tel: 023 8021 6050 www.solinked.org.uk



Whilst it is aimed at those living with early onset dementia, those of us who are young at heart will probably find Young Dementia useful as well. They have lots of practical advice about living with dementia.
www.youngdementiauk.org

MERRY Christmas
from
ADMIRAL NURSING
TEAM



by Zoe Gradidge Age 12

A Big thank you to all our contributors to this Newsletter and of course our Admin Team for all their hard work in creatively pulling this together for us every month.

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