



The Potters Bar Consortium

Christmas Stress-Buster

Christmas might be a time for festive cheer and goodwill to all – but these sentiments can wear thin as families struggle to cope with the stresses and strains of the yuletide.

Money worries, families spending more time together than usual, and a wish to create the 'perfect Christmas' can heap on the pressure and cause tempers to flare.

In response to this, and the number of families who contact the charity wanting help and support over the holiday season, parenting charity Parentline Plus has put together some tips to help ease tensions during the Christmas period.

"Sometimes the pressures of the holiday season can be a real struggle for many parents, and tensions can run high" says Parentline Plus' Chief Executive Dorit Braun. "There may be conflicting demands, with family members wanting different things and competing for attention.

"Where there has been family change, after a death or separation, there may be particular difficulties as resident and non-resident parents and their relatives and partners struggle with issues about contact."

PARENTLINE PLUS' CHRISTMAS STRESS BUSTING GUIDE

Get together and write a list of what everyone wants to do – discuss what is going to happen so no one is disappointed. With older children discuss family time and time with friends so you get a happy balance

Make a list of who needs to see who - particularly important with extended stepfamilies

Schedule in some time to recharge your own batteries - if you're well rested you'll be able to enjoy your family more

Don't assume that everyone else is having a wonderful time – everyone else is muddling through just like you, so try not to put pressure on yourself

Don't try and do everything yourself - make a list of jobs which need to be done and allocate them between the whole family

Don't try and keep everyone happy all the time - you'll collapse under the pressure

If this is your first Christmas as a stepfamily your child may feel confused and maybe even angry - try to allocate some time that you can spend alone together to reassure them that your love for them has not changed

Allocate space or a room for the kids toys so you can have some adult space - e.g. if you are at home get the kids to put all the toys in their room by the afternoon

If tempers are flaring - and everything gets too much remove yourself from the situation and perhaps call a friend or relative. If you want someone to talk to Parentline is open 24 hours a day throughout the Christmas period on 0808 800 22 22

Plan a family treat to avoid that deflated feeling after the holiday season - so you have something to look forward to rather than just the humdrum of returning to school/work
