

Friday, 24 December 2021

## ‘TIS THE SEASON TO BE NEIGHBOURLY

This holiday season, NSW Health is calling on NSW residents to look out for their neighbours, especially if they live alone, are bereaved, or separated from family.

Chief Psychiatrist Dr Murray Wright said the holiday season is not a universally joyful occasion and there will be people in our neighbourhoods experiencing loneliness, grief and stress.

“Don’t underestimate the power of giving others your time, your conversation or inviting them to share a meal with your family,” Dr Wright said.

“They’re among the most important gifts we can give each other. Positive, healthy relationships have a direct impact on our sense of wellbeing. They can reduce feelings of anxiety and depression and boost our self-esteem.

“In contrast, loneliness is a risk factor for depression and thoughts of suicide.

“Make an extra effort this holiday season to be there for older members of your community; young people who don’t have strong relationships with their parents; people whose loved ones have died recently; and people in financial difficulties.

“You cannot solve their problems but your time, companionship and consideration could reassure them that they’re not alone in their time of stress or heartache.

“If you are someone who’s struggling, and perhaps having thoughts of suicide, please don’t struggle alone or in silence.

“Please turn to people you trust, talk to your GP or call a 24-7 crisis line, such as Lifeline, Suicide Call Back Service or Kids Helpline.

“It might seem hard to believe at this precise moment, but life can get better and you can rediscover hope for your future.”

If you or someone you know needs mental health support, please contact the below services:

- Lifeline: 24/7 support **13 11 14**
- Suicide Call Back Service: 24/7 support **1300 659 467**
- Kids Helpline: 24/7 support for children or young adults **1800 55 1800**
- NSW Mental Health Line: For referrals to local mental health services by local mental health professionals 24/7, call **1800 011 511**

An extended list of extra mental health support services can be found here:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/Pages/support-contact-list.aspx>