

# Essex Family Support Service

E-Bulletin December 2022



Community360 are working in partnership and collaboration with other charities and groups across Essex to deliver this service as part of the wider Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service. We've partnered with HCRG Care Group and Barnados and want to provide as much support as we can to you and your family.

Our team of staff & volunteers are here to provide one to one support for you & your family. For details on how to refer to our service, see the last page of this bulletin.

We look forward to hearing from you.

December leads us towards the end of an eventful year; it's a good time to stop and reflect, looking forward to what we want to achieve in the year ahead.

Our E-bulletin is full of resources to help your family to look forward to the new year and work towards goals together, in a mindful and healthy way.



## Reflecting on the Past Year



It's always important that we reflect on the year been, acknowledging what we have been through and what we have achieved. Every year we will have had our difficulties but there will also be triumphs. In reflecting on the past year, think about what you are thankful for, what you have learnt and what you would like to do more of in 2023. Whether that be spending more time with family or working on your own personal dream. Set some intentions for the new year ahead, allowing you to have something to work and aim for.

The Personal Planner's free printable yearly reflection worksheet, allows you to acknowledge what you're grateful and proud of, what you have learnt and something you want to start or develop.

[Click here >>](#)

# How to Reduce Stress at Christmas

We all want Christmas to be a time of joy and laughter, but the pressure to 'make things perfect' can leave us with a feeling of dread and panic.

To induce a sense of wellbeing, mindfulness is key. Mindfulness is simply being aware of our thoughts, feelings, and sensations, of our body and mind.

Observing without judgement. Through the experience of insight, we can bring more peace, reduce stress levels, and even make better decisions.

Here is a list of fun mindfulness activities to do on your own or with children and family members. Whilst engaging in the activities, try to take a moment to be mindful, to be in the present moment.

## Colouring Christmas Cards

Making Christmas cards is a fun mindfulness activity. Colouring helps to calm the mind and body, reducing levels of anxiety and stress. There are free templates online, kits are available from craft shops and 'how-to' videos on YouTube.

## Creating Wrapping Paper

Making your own wrapping paper is a therapeutic way of showing someone you care. Get some plain paper and paint it with Christmas symbols or make a stamp from a potato or old sponge.

## Foraging

Going out to the local woods is a fantastic way to calm the mind, get some fresh air and to absorb some natural light. Use any collected cones and leaves as beautiful gifts and table decorations.



## Singing and Dancing

Singing and dancing get us breathing properly as well as stimulating the release of feel-good endorphins through movement. Try putting on your favourite tunes and spend a few minutes frolicking around your living room!

## Making Holiday Treats

Whether you are mixing, chopping, whisking, or kneading, there is the opportunity to practice mindfulness through tuning into the senses, the smells, tastes, sounds, and texture of the food.

## Yoga and Slow Stretching

During the colder months it gets harder to get out and move the body. Doing some slow stretching or yoga at home reduces stress, relieves tension as well as calms the mind.

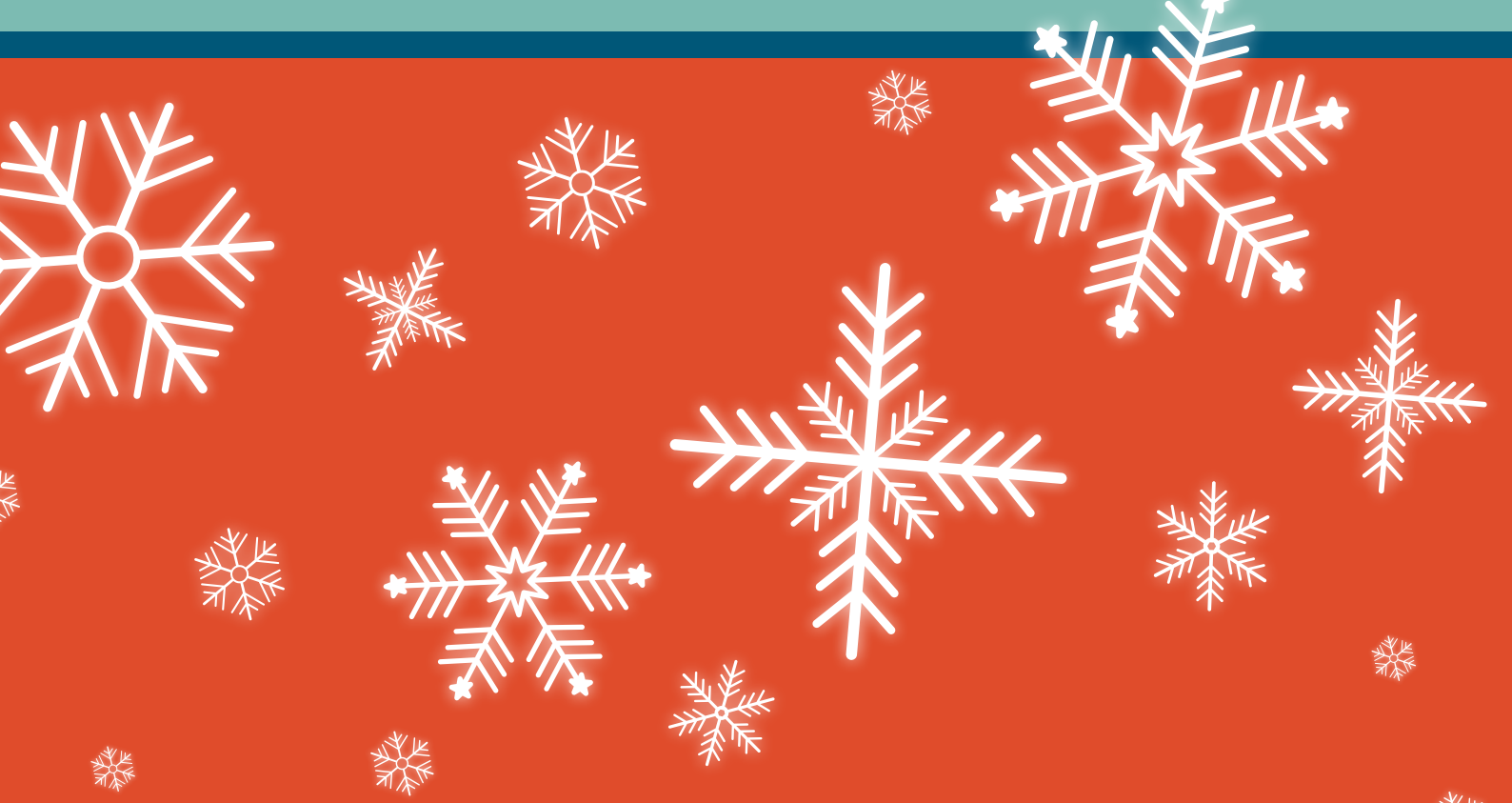
## Breathing Exercises

Focusing on the breath is a traditional way of approaching mindfulness. It can provide pain relief, reduce anxiety, and reduce negative thinking.

4,7,8 Breathing Technique: Breathe in through your nose mentally counting to four. Hold the breath and count of seven. Exhale through your mouth to the count of eight. Repeat.







And finally, here are the “10 Commandments to Reduce Stress” this Christmas  
(from [Medical-Masterclass.com](https://www.medical-masterclass.com))

## 10 Commandments to Reduce Stress

Thou shalt not be perfect or even try

Thou shalt not try to be all things to all people

Thou shalt leave undone things that ought to be done

Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin

Thou shalt learn to say “NO”

Thou shalt make time for thyself

Thou shalt learn to switch off and do nothing regularly

Thou shalt be boring, untidy, and unattractive at times

Thou shalt not feel guilty

Thou shalt not be thine own enemy

# Health and wellbeing activities at the One Colchester Hub

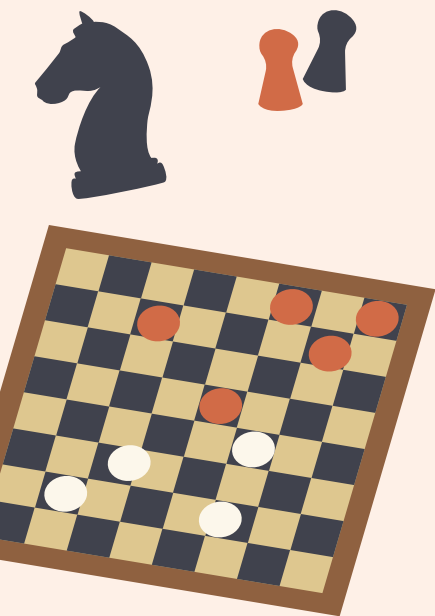
The One Colchester Community Hub at 4-6 Long Wyre St, CO1 1LH is open for support and advice and you can also drop in for a chat and a cuppa, to meet new people or learn new skills.

The Hub is home to many organisations working in our One Colchester Community Hub as part of a Live Well Neighbourhood team for Colchester. The team is committed to coming together to help residents live a good quality of life, manage their own health and wellbeing and access help when needed.

You will find a friendly welcome at our Monday morning community café, and we have a women's group, a men's group, board games, mindful stitching, textiles projects with The Clothing Clinic and more. Our Tec Mates IT Support run by volunteers is on hand twice a week to help you make the most out of your tablet, smartphone, or laptop.

EFSS weekly drop-in sessions run every Wednesday 10am-12pm for families to access advice and support in an informal setting.

The EFSS team also run family workshops on a regular basis. Our next workshop is Now Is the Time for Change (in person session) on January 14th. Contact Natalie for more information or to book. [nataliewright@community360.org.uk](mailto:nataliewright@community360.org.uk)



# WEEKLY DROP-IN ACTIVITIES :

## MONDAY

10:00 - 13:00	Friendship Group
10:00 - 13:00	Peabody for housing and welfare support
10:00 - 15:00	CBC Financial and Employment Advice
11:00 - 12:00	Coffee With a Cop (1st Monday of the month)

## TUESDAY

10:00 - 13:00	Peabody for housing and welfare support
10:30 - 13:00	Weight Management
11:00 - 15:00	Textile Collective
11:00 - 13:00	Tec Mates IT Support
11:00 - 12:00	Golden Days
13:00 - 15:00	Men's Matters

## WEDNESDAY

11:00 - 15:00	Textile Collective
10:00 - 12:00	Family Support drop-in
13:00 - 15:00	Board Games

## THURSDAY

10:00 - 13:00	Peabody for housing and welfare support
10:00 - 12:00	Women's Group
11:00 - 15:00	Textile Collective
13:00 - 15:00	Rough Sleeper Support
13:00 - 15:00	Table Tennis

## FRIDAY

10:00 - 13:00	Peabody for housing and welfare support
11:00 - 13:00	Tec Mates IT Support
14:00 - 16:00	Craft Group
14:00 - 16:00	Ukrainian support

## SATURDAY

10:00 - 15:00	Warm welcoming space, various activities
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# New Year Resolutions for the Family

## 1. Eat Healthily

Parents can set a good example for their children by eating well. Children will learn how tasty healthy food can be and they too will learn to practice healthy eating.

To make them more interested in healthy food, let your children help you in the kitchen, ask them to help with prepping meals or cleaning the table. Involve them with the meal planning, this helps ensure that the children eat dinners that they enjoy and cuts down on food waste. Use this time together to strengthen your bond too.

## 2. Exercise as a Family

Regular exercise is always recommended to keep your body in shape and your mind fit and well and doing this with the whole family is a lot merrier. Maybe take a walk for 30 minutes to the park every day or play outdoors with your children, partner, friends or extended family.

You may want to enrol in a program in your community for families to engage in physical activities. The whole family get a workout, and it allows you to have fun with your loved ones.

## 3. Read More

Include reading in your list of New Year resolutions as it enhances one's creative mind and can be very relaxing. Read a good book yourself and find age-appropriate books for you and your children to read together.

Dig out those books that you've been meaning to read or those you want to read again. Visit your local library for new books or to join a book club.





#### 4. Make Household Chores More Enjoyable

Assign everyone in the house some chores, keep a chore chart so you don't have to remind them every time.

Maybe have a chore jar as a form of motivation. It's a good time to teach your children that they can be rewarded if they put in the work.

Make sure the chore you're giving your child is age appropriate. For example, a 6yr old child could make their bed each morning and a 10yr old child could dust and tidy their bedroom.

#### 5. Practice Good Financial Habits and Goals

Add practicing good financial habits and goals to your New Year resolutions and teach your children about proper budgeting and saving money. This helps them manage their own money as they grow older.

For example, when you're doing groceries with them and you pick cheaper but good-quality items, explain to them why you have chosen those, help them understand.

#### 6. Unplug Your Devices

Today is the age of high-end technology, and many children spend their childhood playing with gadgets. Try and break this habit by playing outdoors more, play board games, tell stories, listen to music, or watch family movies or programmes together.

#### 7. Sleep More

Getting enough sleep is essential for health and wellbeing. Aim for at least eight hours sleep every night.

Talk to your children about nightly routines. Maybe use a bedtime checklist that they can create with you and hang on their wall. Read them bedtime stories when they are lying in bed, have quality time with them before they go to sleep.



## 8. Practice Kindness

Practicing kindness is also another good thing to include to your New Year resolutions. Teach your children to be kind, lead by example.

Being compassionate to your partner, helping others in the community, being polite to others all set a great example. Teach your children to share with other children. Help them understand that kindness is beautiful and healthy for everyone.

## 9. Go Out on More Dates with Your Partner

Occasional date nights with your partner are a great idea. Spending time doing the things that you both enjoy will strengthen your relationship and benefit your own emotional wellbeing. Maybe go out for a bite to eat or cook a special dinner for each other or enjoy a romantic walk in the fresh air with a flask of piping hot tea.

If you're worried about who is going to be with your children, especially if you have younger kids, you can ask someone from the family to look after them. Your parents might be more than willing to babysit and are just waiting for your call.

## 10. Go Green

Going green is good for your family, your wallets, and the planet! Practice this by recycling more, reuse grocery bags, or join your local community's environmental programs.



# Useful Services to know about

## **Family Hubs**

Family Hubs offer support to families, from early years support to parenting classes, all of which can make a big difference!

Family hubs are a bit of a one-stop-shop where families can access important services. An effective family hub acts as a single 'front door', making it easier for families to get the help they need, and to improve the support on offer. For more information regarding family hubs please follow this link:

[Click here >>](#)

## **Greenpath Ventures**

Looking for a way to bond with your family outdoors and contribute to the community through volunteering? Greenpath Ventures offer families time at its allotment in Colchester to build planters, plant vegetables and enjoy exercise outdoors.

[Click here >>](#)



### **The Sleep Charity**

Sleep deprivation can have a serious impact on emotional, physical, and mental health and many people who are seeking our support are approaching crisis point, whether that's adults or families.

We aim to provide access to high quality information and advice to deal with most sleep issues and ensure everyone understands the value of a good night's sleep.

[Click here >>](#)

### **Step Change**

Step Change offer free, flexible debt advice that is based on a comprehensive assessment of your situation. Step Change then provide practical help and support for however long it's needed.

[Click here >>](#)

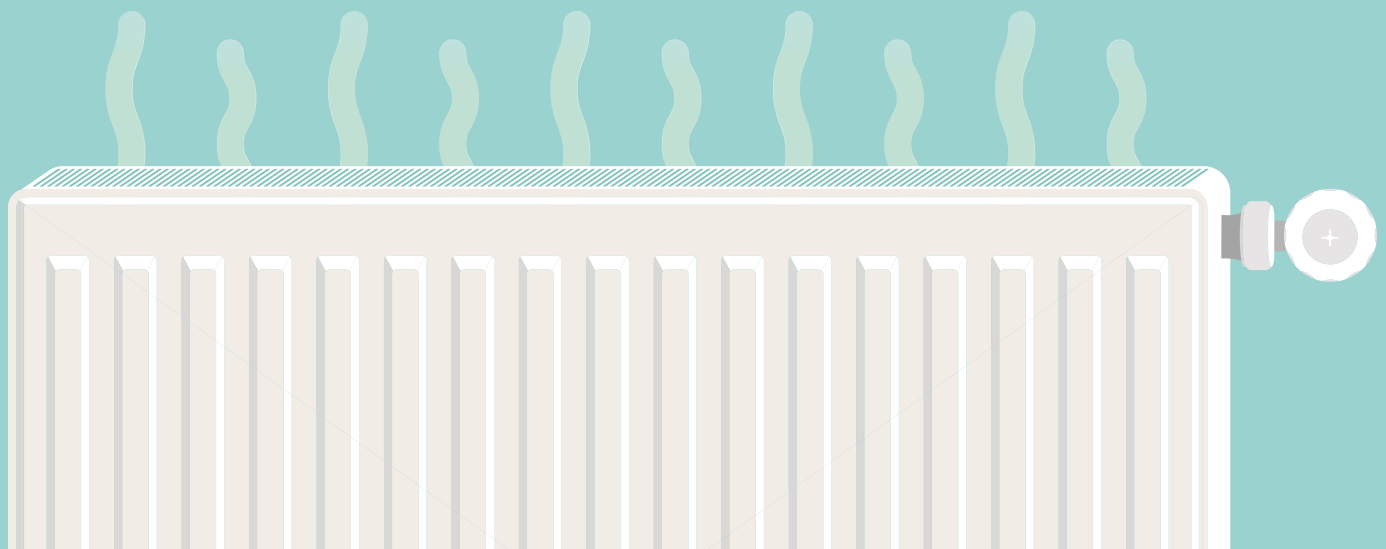
### **Warm Homes Essex**

Staffed by experienced, professional advisers, based in local Citizens Advice offices around Essex, our service is resourced by the Warm Homes Fund.

They can help with:

- Maximising your income to make sure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to
- Helping you with fuel debt – if you have already fallen to arrears (in some cases we can apply to trusts and foundations to help pay these off – giving you a fresh start)
- Energy saving around the home
- Energy tariffs - are you on the best one for you?

[Click here >>](#)





# Get in touch!

Please let us know what you would like to see in the next edition.  
How can we help you and your family?

**You can call us on:**  
**T: 01206 505 250**

**Or you can email us at:**  
**E: [families@community360.org.uk](mailto:families@community360.org.uk)**

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