



# MASE Monthly Newsletter



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

## December 2021



*MASE Trustees & Volunteers send Carers and their cared-for, all good wishes for Christmas, and for a Happy, and Healthy New Year!*

### Alzheimer's and Christmas

**Celebrate in style but perhaps try to cut down** - Maybe this is the year your Christmas cards don't go out to 100 people, but instead, they go to your 10 closest friends. Stick to one small Christmas tree – these are important traditions that you can keep up but without all the worry and expense of past years.

**Create a safe environment in your home** - Keep decorations simple and avoid using candles. Make sure there is plenty of space in your home for someone to assist your loved one, if needed. Keep aisles and walking spaces clear and plan where your loved one will sit at dinner to best engage in conversation and make an easy exit.

**Include your loved one in Christmas preparations and celebrations** - It's the holidays for your loved one too, and including them in things you are doing ie to help or wrap gifts is a great ways to involve them in Christmas. In later stages of the illness, a gentle touch or kind word is a great way to let them know they are loved and involved.

**Maintain a normal routine and schedule as much as possible** - The holidays bring a number of additional commitments and parties, all of which are fun and a great way to be involved in the Festive season. However, keeping to your normal routine as much as possible can help bring your loved one peace and security in a busy and often stressful time.

**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 concerned and agitated.

**Tweak and adapt family traditions, if necessary.** If the normal traditional festivities will cause a problem, do what you can to tweak them in a way that will better involve your loved one. For example, if your family gathers around the piano to sing Christmas classics, pick a few your loved one will remember. Keep an old photo album handy so you can then perhaps sit with your loved one and spend some time going through old photographs, this is a really good form of reminiscence.

#### CARERS PLEASE REMEMBER:

The Silver Line Service is a free confidential helpline that provides information, friendship and support to older people. They are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. **Keep their number handy just in case you should need it:**

**0800 4 70 80 90**



### Cannock Group - 10 January is the first meeting in The New Year

We will be handing out the New MASE Calendars for 2022, together with the magnetic dates of the Groups for your fridges at the December meetings. There is also a useful small gift in the bags for all Carers which we hope you will find useful. This has been a difficult year for us in many ways, and unfortunately last year we spent a great amount of money on the Calendars and the Magnetics which because of Covid-19 turned out to be a waste of precious funds.

However, fingers crossed this year you will be able to use the Calendars and keep the magnetic dates on your fridges.

For our people at Cannock please note that our first group is one week further into the month and instead of January 3rd we will be opening in on January 10th 2022. We apologise if it causes any inconvenience to you, but it is unavoidable. Our Entertainer for January will be Damian, so we know we are guaranteed a good afternoon. **We wish you all a peaceful Christmas with your loved ones & let's hope for a Happy and Healthy New Year. We look forward to seeing you all again in 2022.**

**TRUSTEES:** Daphne or Richard: ☎07939 505455 Mike Creek: ☎01785 663596 Dave Degg: ☎07974 983459 Dave Godden: ☎07968 848120

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

## Tips for Carers at Christmas

### 1. Avoid crowded and noisy places.

Remember - loud or startling noises can further confuse or frustrate someone living with dementia.

### 2. Be creative in giving gifts.

Think through safe gifts that a loved one can use and ask people to purchase those gifts. Ideas include clothing, music, photos or videos, or identification bracelets. Also, be sure to put some respite care on your own wish list to give yourself a bit of rest and relaxation during or after the holidays.

### 3. Designate a quiet room.

If you are planning on having family and friends over frequently, choose one room in the house that is specifically for your loved one to escape if things become too hectic for them. Tell your guests to please stay out of that room, leave your loved one alone if they escape to it and explain it is a safe haven from stress.

### 4. Give yourself permission to say "no."

You are not obligated to attend every social gathering of the season and you are not obligated to host parties in your home. Remember that each commitment you agree to means that you are also saying no to something else. For instance, time to prepare, relax and time to spend with loved ones.

### 5. Involve your loved one in holiday preparations.

The holidays are fun and having loved ones participate in the fun can create special memories for you. Decorating cookies, hanging decorations, setting the table, and even wrapping gifts are some examples of things people with dementia can do to help celebrate Christmas - it also makes them feel involved.

### 6. Keep traditions alive and well.

Just because a loved one may not remember past traditions does not mean that you can't [continue to honour them](#). Singing Christmas carols, eating holiday foods, can help a loved one with dementia connect to holiday celebrations.

### 7. Look for signs of Carer burnout.

As Christmas brings additional financial and time restraints, Carers are more likely to experience caregiver burnout. The stress builds up, Carers are robbed of energy, and sometimes they reach a point of total emotional, mental and physical exhaustion. Carers may lose motivation completely, or feel they just don't care about their loved ones. They may feel that they have got lost in the vastness of caring and that nothing they do will make a difference. Watch out for these signs of emotional highs and lows, extreme fatigue and foggy thinking. Get help from family, or friends, just to give yourselves a break.

### 9. Maintain routines

This can be challenging during the holidays when parties go late, but try to keep your loved one on a similar routine so that holiday preparations do not become disruptive.

### 10. Trust your instincts

You know more than anyone else how much you as a Carer and a loved one can handle without feeling overwhelmed. If an event, or visitors, feels like it may be stressful or troublesome give yourself permission to reschedule or decline.

### 11. The most important thing of all is to try and 'Enjoy the Festive Season'

Easier said than done, but Carers this is also your Christmas and you have to try and make the most of it. Lean on your families and friends a little for help and support – after all this is the Season of Goodwill and we all have to pull together.



## A few jokes to make you smile at Christmas

Q What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

A It's Christmas Eve!

Q What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?

A A Holly Davidson

Q What did Santa do when he went speed dating?

A He pulled a cracker!

Q Why was the turkey in the pop group?

A Because he was the only one with a drumstick!

Q What do Santa's little helpers learn at School?

A The 'Elfabet'

Q. What is the best Christmas present in the world?

A A broken drum, you just can't beat it!

Q What do snowmen wear on their heads?

A Ice caps!

Q Why does Santa have three gardens?

A So he can Ho Ho Ho!

Q What do you get if you cross Santa Claus with a Duck?

A A Christmas Quacker!

Q How will Christmas be different after Brexit?

A No Brussels!



If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: [www.themasegroup.com](http://www.themasegroup.com)

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