|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Leeds Autism AIM:  Christmas Survival Kit** |

This document is made to help you plan how you can cope through the Christmas and New Year period as an autistic person. There are sections in this guide covering different activities during the festive season.

Each one has two columns – what I find difficult and what can be done to help. Under each heading, there are examples of what you could write to help think of something.

**Useful links**

* **My Social Profile** – a profile we created to help you say how you prefer to socialise: [**https://leedsautismaim.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2022/07/leeds-autism-aim-my-social-profile-final-02.03.21.docx**](https://leedsautismaim.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2022/07/leeds-autism-aim-my-social-profile-final-02.03.21.docx)
* **Warm Spaces map** – an interactive map of warm spaces in Leeds this winter: [**https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d6adbf692a7b4cfb8250b36bf8501a90/**](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d6adbf692a7b4cfb8250b36bf8501a90/)
* **Cost of Living links** –resources and links with useful information on getting support with the cost of living from Leeds City Council: [**https://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living**](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living)
* **NAS’ Christmas guides** - Guides and blog posts about surviving Christmas, written by autistic adults: [**https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/christmas-resources**](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/christmas-resources)
* **Three-week planner** – a calendar covering the three weeks spanning Christmas and New Year 2022/23: [**https://leedsautismaim.org.uk/2022/12/13/christmas-new-year-2022-23-three-week-planner/**](https://leedsautismaim.org.uk/2022/12/13/christmas-new-year-2022-23-three-week-planner/)
* **Touchstone’s Winter Wellbeing booklet –** a resource from Touchstone about staying well during winter in Leeds: [**https://leedsautismaim.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2022/12/Leeds-Touchstone-Winter-Wellbeing-Booklet-2022.pdf**](https://leedsautismaim.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2022/12/Leeds-Touchstone-Winter-Wellbeing-Booklet-2022.pdf)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Online and in-person Christmas/New Year parties** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., talking to people I don’t know, filtering out noise when two or more people are talking at once. | How to survive this e.g., ask people to speak one at a time, ask people to introduce themselves if you’ve never met |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Buying Christmas presents** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., knowing what people like, knowing where to go shopping for them | How to survive this e.g., asking people you’re buying for what their interests are, researching shop opening times |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Going food shopping at Christmas** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., going when it’s busy, what to do if the food I want is out of stock | How to survive this e.g., going shopping when it’s less busy, having alternatives on shopping list in case |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Using public transport or taxis** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., getting on a bus when it’s full, anxiety if my taxi doesn’t arrive | How to survive this e.g., look at a live timetable online, call another taxi firm if they’re available |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Keeping warm this Christmas** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., can’t afford to turn the heating on, knowing when to have heating on, having warm clothes | How to survive this e.g., see what financial support is available, finding affordable or free clothes, access to hot food |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cooking a big Christmas meal** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., getting the timings right, catering for people with different tastes. | How to survive this e.g., prepare food the day before, ask for help in the kitchen from family members |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Giving and receiving presents** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., responding to getting a gift I don’t like or don’t need, wrapping the gift properly | How to survive this e.g., politely word what you think of the gift, use a gift bag instead to save time |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dealing with arguments** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., being dragged into an argument that does not involve me, people raising their voices | How to survive this e.g., stand well back, have the police on standby if it becomes too heated |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Being alone at Christmas** | |
| What I find difficult e.g., not having anyone to talk to; not knowing when the right time is to call a family member/friend | How to survive this e.g., look for online groups and events; call a helpline; email or text a relative if possible |
|  |  |



**Season’s Greetings from the Leeds Autism AIM team!**