

HOW TO KEEP SAFE THIS XMAS

One: Go easy on the alcohol, it's nice to have a few, yet when a 'few' becomes one too many that is when the bad things may start to happen. Alcohol can bring out the worst in people in a stressful situation. Try having non-alcohol alternatives such as, cordial, juice or iced tea.

Two: Do not drink and then start to drive. It is not worth the risk! Arrange a sober driver to take you and your family home. Look out for friends and family that may want to drive home intoxicated, remind them you want them to arrive home safely in one piece.

Three: Try not to overspend on gifts. Don't spend what you can't afford. Work out what you need to buy for Christmas and what bills you need to cover and set that money aside. If You are on a budget and things are tight, try alternative gifts. Such as home made gifts, lucky dip, or a Secret Santa. At the end of the day, material things shouldn't matter it is the quality time spent with family that is really important.

Four: Do you live with family violence? Work out a safety plan if things flare up, this could be a safe space within the house, or with neighbours' so you know what to do and where to go. If people seem grumpy and/or angry allow them the space to be grumpy Preferably not around the children! If you have any safety concerns for children or family either call the police or the 'it's not ok' 0800 number. Please consult the list of phone numbers on the second page for further information.

Five: Breathe, take a deep breath if things are getting heated take a deep breath and walk away, let people calm down or sober up. Think about how the children feel, don't let their memories of Christmas be ruined by violence or other anti-social behaviour. Yet if arguments do get more heated, call the police to prevent it from getting worse

Six: If you have children and are separated, plan ahead. Make plans in advance and stick to them, Christmas is all about the children so make sure they spend fair and quality time with both families. Also if you are finding the planning and the whole idea of Christmas stressful, find a trusted friend or confidant to talk to. Talking about one's feelings can go a long way to relieve stress.

Seven: Don't sweat the small stuff and try not to let it get to you especially, Don't have a cow man! One does not need to go to a full-blown argument to resolve any differences. Where to resolve any conflict, one party needs to make the first move towards reconciliation. Let that party be you. Be the grown up.

Eight: Be authentic with yourself and to the others in your life. Let people know how you feel and express those feelings in a way that others can understand what is going on for you at the time.

Nine: We have all recently experienced in the November earthquakes, the importance of reaching out to friends, family, and neighbours and by extension the wider community is important for the overall wellbeing of everybody in a civil emergency. Use the time of Christmas to spend quality time with your friends and family, Concentrate on the things you do have in life and not what you don't have. See the silver lining in the stormy rain clouds that may approach.

Ten: Take time out for yourself. This is how I do it, chill out and make iced tea, see recipe below. Iced tea can be made with 4 teabags summer fruit with the pips, simmer for 35-45 minutes in a saucepan add cane sugar strain and chill. Or to make a concentrate use 6-7 teabags add more cane sugar, then add cold water to the warm tea and serve straight away.

Wishing You a Safe & Happy
Holiday xxx... Āhuru Mōwai O Te Awakairangi