



# CHRISTMAS CRACK UP OR CRACKING CHRISTMAS?

KEEP YOUR COOL THIS YULE



THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
of ANGER MANAGEMENT





## KEEP YOUR COOL THIS YULE

Christmas is the most stressful time of the year for many people.

The British Association of Anger Management has collated a plan to help you avoid the stress, and associated anger.

We have looked at both the pre-Christmas preparation period, and Christmas itself.

We have added some interesting statistics about how we experience Christmas in the UK.

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## What the surveys say...

- More than half of all Brits have family disagreements at Christmas.
- A quarter of all adults say their relationships with their partners come under pressure over the period, and an eighth say a festive argument made them want to split up.
- Calls to Relate go up – up 59% over Christmas 2009.
- The average family has their first argument at 9.58am on Christmas Day morning.

## Most likely reasons for increased anger are...

- Who's doing the washing up
- Spending more time with family than usual
- Too much alcohol
- Battles over the TV remote control
- Almost a third of people chose to go for a walk to avoid rows.





## Pre-Christmas Preparation

- Don't give yourself a hard time about making Christmas perfect
  - it's not all your responsibility and it is just one day in the year.
- Think about what sets you off and figure out in advance how you are going to deal with it. Plan ahead and think of the big picture (whatever the other person / thing does, it will all be over within a day (few days) and getting angry may not be worth the long term effect. Think about the person who might make you angry: now write a list of their good points and think about the things you appreciate about that person (there is some good in all of us). Try to focus on those good things.
- Plan to share the responsibility for the day. Share out chores with the children and the other adults. Get some firm agreements on what each person will do, so the success of the day isn't on your shoulders entirely.
- Do as much as you can in advance.
- Agree beforehand with other family members some rules and arrangements that will help things go smoothly.

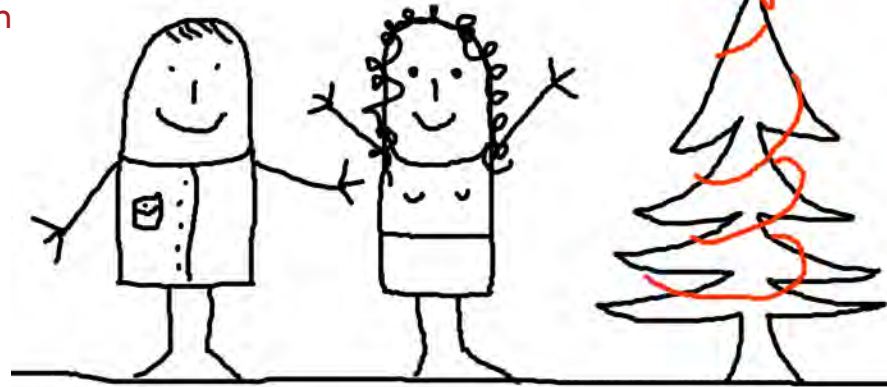




## On the Festive Day(s)

- Don't drink too much – alcohol is responsible for lots of arguments, and it is more difficult to keep a perspective when under the influence of drink. Drinking lowers your defences and changes your mood.

- Listen carefully to what the other person is saying, and show you understand their point of view, even if you don't agree with it. Choose your words carefully: rather than saying "you always....." try saying "you sometimes.....". Keep the volume down. Don't shout, speak. Don't argue, discuss.



*Remember if you shout, it's likely your children will shout back at you.*

- You only have to .....eat sprouts/ speak to your uncle / say thanks for an unwanted present / (add your own option here), just for the day to make the festivities flow smoothly.

- Try not to tackle controversial matters over the phone, email or texts. Body language and facial expressions are vital to appreciating the other person's point of view.

- Learn to break recurring conversations that always lead to an old argument. Take action and change the subject as smoothly as you can.

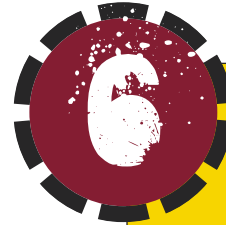
*Accept the inevitable (eg there will be a mess /your mother-in-law will say something you don't like / etc, and try not to argue over smaller things.*

- Take deep breaths and count to 10 if you are getting frustrated. Think about the consequences and step back.

- Look for the positives – seeing family / friends, the memories the children will have of happy Christmases, and the meal itself, which research says is the most enjoyable part of Christmas for many people.

## For Young People:

- Try to get enough rest before Christmas day. Tiredness makes everyone grumpy.
- If you get over-excited or if someone's annoying you, walk away and find a quiet place to calm down.
- If your siblings are annoying you, tell a grown-up who isn't too busy.
- You may find listening to your favourite music, or repeating a calm word to yourself while breathing deeply, will help you avoid the angry outburst.



# Rules to Beating Anger

Managing Anger is a Primary Key  
to Controlling Stress, Anxiety & Depression.

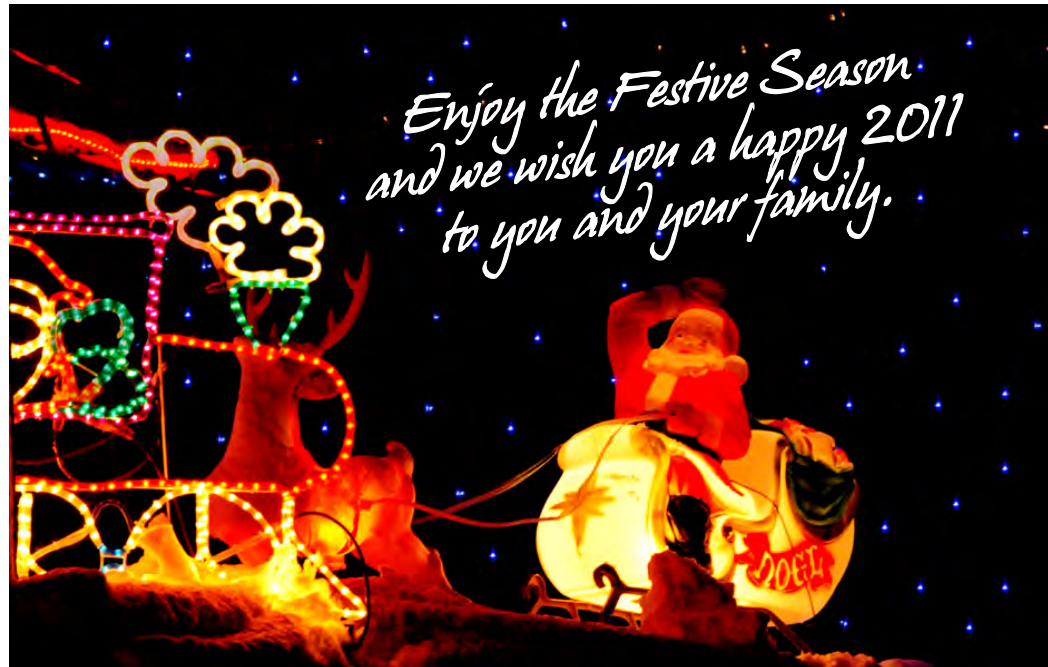
- 1 **STOP**, think, take a look at the big picture.
- 2 It's OK to have a different opinion.
- 3 Listen actively.
- 4 Use your emotional support network. (Anger Buddies)
- 5 Keep an anger management journal.
- 6 Don't take things personally.



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If you'd like more information visit [www.beatinganger.com](http://www.beatinganger.com) or call 0845 1300 286 or email: [info@beatinganger.com](mailto:info@beatinganger.com)



The British Association of Anger Management has Beating Anger clinics across the UK. Our courses have helped thousands of people learn about anger and find healthy ways to express their emotions since 1998.

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