

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



December 2019

Dear Colleagues,

As the end of another busy year draws closer, it's also a time for reflection and thanks to all who have contributed to ensure we all share a healthy and safe workplace.

Many in our community have made great progress, and some have had 'light bulb' moments in their understanding of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

The HSW team is celebrating success on many fronts, but 3 areas deserve special mention: the development of business cases for 2 Projects (Improving Health and Safety – now **approved** for delivery!, and Health & Wellbeing); embedding our partnership model by aligning HSW Managers to Faculties and Service Divisions (and developing strong relationships); and developing a new [HSW website](#), which is **now live!** All this was achieved on top of the BAU service brought to you by our excellent, high-performing team!

The coming year will be no less busy, as we deliver the first of the projects mentioned above. This will bring much-needed improvements in the way all accidents, incidents, near misses and hazards are reported. We will have greater visibility on what is being reported along with the ability to analyse trends. We will have an online, easy to use system that enables a strong health and safety reporting culture. Later in the year there will also be a centralised system to capture and manage health and safety risk assessments, controls and corrective actions, and a system to manage the required skills/training, and plant/equipment maintenance. The intention is to have an easy-to-use tool to help you manage all your HSW risks and controls.

Our team is also changing, with Rob Powell and Kathryn Gibson moving to new challenges outside the University: I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rob and Kathryn for their extensive contribution to HSW, HR and the wider University.

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Safety Alert

Please read through the 'Safety Alert' below and distribute it to any areas where there are walk-in freezers. [Safety Alert: Walk-in Freezers](#)

Guide to coping with Christmas

Christmas for some people can be a difficult, challenging time! Here are some tips to coping with Christmas:

1. *Drink sensibly*

Remember that alcohol is a depressant, and drinking excessive amounts can cause low mood, irritability or potentially aggressive behaviour. Also try not to 'use' alcohol but 'enjoy' a glass or two. TAKE NOTICE and be aware of your alcohol intake!

2. *Eat healthily*

A healthy diet can help to improve mood or overall wellbeing. This can increase energy levels, motivation and banish that sluggish feeling that many of us have over the Christmas period. Also try not to 'overeat' at Christmas.

3. *Be active*

By doing some gentle activities like walking in the park, strolling on the beach or joining in with Christmas fun and games you can benefit by reducing your anxiety, lifting your mood and improving your self-esteem. KEEP ACTIVE and TAKE NOTICE of your surroundings while you're out and about.

4. *Get involved*

CONNECTING other people has been shown to be important in improving our physical and mental wellbeing. Why not make contact with someone you haven't seen for a long time? GIVE

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them some of your time – take interest in other people and their stories. Talk to someone new – make that CONNECTION. If you're feeling down because you're not with family or friends, (or because you are) try and make time to GIVE to others... maybe volunteer.

If you know of someone who may be on their own, consider inviting them to share in your Christmas day.

5. Relax

By exercising more regularly and learning to relax more, you can help reduce signs of stress and gain more control when coping with difficult situations. Try listening to relaxing music, a relaxation CD and/ or control your breathing. TAKE NOTICE of how much physical activity you do and the changes to your body as you exercise or relax.

6. Sleep

Try to establish a routine for bedtime. Try not to eat too late at night, don't read or watch TV in bed, try to listen to your relaxation tape or do your controlled breathing. Drinking less alcohol over the Christmas period and getting a bit more exercise can help you develop a healthier sleep pattern.

7. Challenge yourself

Set yourself an 'achievable' goal that you'd like to undertake over the Christmas period. This must be realistic and something that will challenge you but that won't put you off. It could be that you start to do something that you used to enjoy but that you have stopped doing or something new that you have always wanted to try. Try not to make New Year's resolutions that are too difficult to keep. KEEP LEARNING – Maybe try learning a new skill.

8. Don't believe the hype

Don't compare yourself and your Christmas with the representations of perfect Christmas moments on social media or on adverts. Remember that everyone is only sharing the good bits

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and that we don't know what is going on behind the scenes. Don't get sucked into measuring your experience against something that's ultimately fake.

We'll send out another E-update in January, with the usual tips, reminders and action points for the ongoing health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and students. In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy festive season and a relaxed holiday break.

This and previous issues of the HSW E-updates are available [here](#).

As usual, if you have any query on anything related to health, safety or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact us on hsw@auckland.ac.nz.

Have a very merry and safe Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!



Angus Clark

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