

Spread cheer to others at Christmas

ROCKINGHAM residents are being encouraged to spread a bit of Christmas cheer this year by inviting someone who will be alone at Christmas to their Christmas gathering.

Rockingham Act-Belong-Commit Project Officer Simone Comtesse said for many people, the Christmas period was a time of joy and happiness with friends and family, but for others it could be a time of sadness or anxiety.

She said telephone counselling services such as Lifeline usually received increased phone calls over Christmas from people experiencing hardship.

"Social occasions, gift-giving and family gatherings around Christmas and the new year can cause depression and loneliness for those who are socially isolated," she said.

"Even for those with families, bringing different personalities under one roof at Christmas can be challenging and stressful.

"We're encouraging everyone to reach out and help others this Christmas, by appreciating the people they care most about."

Tips include inviting a lonely neighbour for lunch, joining other people who will be on their own and donating to charities that provide food hampers.

People are asked to spare a thought and understand that the season can be a time of stress.

Anyone experiencing financial stress, family problems, loneliness or depression can Lifeline's 24hr telephone counselling service on 13 11 14 and talk to someone about their worries.