Samaritans 'Brew Monday' Winter Campaign message

The Samaritans have launched a campaign to help people get through what is a really difficult time of the year, particularly in this pandemic. It was launched on 18 January, to turn the third Monday in January, which is usually known as 'Blue Monday', into something positive by encouraging people to get together over a warming virtual cuppa: 'Brew Monday'.

Over the coming months, can you reach out to one or more friends, family members or colleagues for a virtual chat and cuppa, to check in to see how they are doing? Just taking time to really listen to another person could help them work through what's on their mind. Because now more than ever it's about reaching out, checking in and staying connected with others. Nobody should have to struggle alone.

Have a virtual Brew Monday any Monday, or other day that's good for you!

Here are a few ways you can connect virtually:

- Group audio/video calling is available on Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp (up to 4 people on a call) and Facebook messenger.
- A phone call or conference call can work just as well for connecting with people, especially for those not comfortable on camera.

To help you do this here are the Samaritans' **SHUSH** listening tips:

- **SHOW YOU CARE**. Focus on the other person, make eye contact, put away your phone.
- **HAVE PATIENCE**. It may take time and several attempts before a person is ready to open up.
- **USE OPEN QUSTIONS**. That need more than a yes/no answer, and follow-up e.g. 'Tell me more'.
- **SAY IT BACK**. To check you have understood, but don't interrupt or offer a solution.
- **HAVE COURAGE**. Don't be put off by a negative response and, more importantly, don't feel you have to fill a silence.

For further information on Kingston Samaritans and this campaign go to https://www.samaritans.org/branches/kingston-upon-thames and follow them on twitter on @sams_kingston. Their free help line is available day and night on 116 123.