



Tracey Robbins, (right) Eden Communities' expert on loneliness has shared her tips for Blue Monday



Dr Radha Modgil, the expert for BBC Radio One's daytime show (centre) has shared her views on Blue Monday.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***“Depression and loneliness can happen any day of the year” - Experts encourage people to reach out on Blue Monday as part of the #WinterWarmers campaign***

Mental health and loneliness experts are asking people to reach out to those in need in their community every day, and not just on Blue Monday.

As part of their #WinterWarmers campaign to help people connect, Eden Project Communities is inviting people to send a virtual postcard on Blue Monday to connect with someone, to help bring a smile to their face.

Dubbed as being the “most depressing day of the year”, January 18, 2021 will no doubt be a Blue Monday like no other.

Loneliness and depression are serious issues so to help people who may be feeling down or dwelling on what has happened in the last 12 months, loneliness experts are encouraging people everywhere to reach out and speak to others who may have been harder hit than yourself.

As part of the campaign the Eden Project Communities team has launched a number of different virtual postcards, where you can share a message with a friend via social media.

The range of virtual postcard designs feature uplifting messages, including one that can be used to invite others to have a chat and a virtual cuppa in support of Samaritan’s Brew Monday initiative.

All are free to download from the Eden Project Communities website (<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/>)

The charity invites senders to use them to reach out on social media and in emails with personalised messages.

Among the experts supporting the campaign is Dr Radha Modgil, the medical expert for BBC Radio 1’s daytime show.

Dr Modgil told Eden Project Communities: *“Looking after our mental and emotional health should not just be our focus for only one day in a year, but every single day, especially given what we have been going through over the last 10 months, and what we are going through right now.”*

Speaking about Blue Monday, the presenter of the CBeebies show Feeling Better, highlighting the importance of talking about emotions for young children, said: *“Each of us has individual challenges to face right now, and we are all experiencing uncertainty, change, worry and emotional fatigue.”*

*“One of the things that can help all of us is not feeling alone with how we feel, and knowing someone is there for us. Connection, compassion and reaching out for support is an absolutely vital step that can help our mental health.*

*“It is free and it is a simple act that we can all take. It is one of the most powerful things we can do right now – to be kind and to ask for help.”*

Dr Modgil, a practising NHS GP, broadcaster and campaigner for wellbeing also gave her five top tips to help deal with loneliness and depression.

- 1) Stop and reflect on how you are doing** – self-awareness about our mental and emotional energy levels is the first step in our journey towards feeling better
- 2) Design a small individual toolkit of strategies that help you feel better** – these will be different for everyone but may include exercise, music, art, breathing techniques, grounding techniques, meditation or mindfulness
- 3) Breaking things down into the next step** – when we try and think too far ahead and about too much we get overwhelmed. Concentrate on the next step, the next moment and the next decision
- 4) Reach out for a chat, some support, tell someone how you feel** – the power of someone asking us how we are is healing in itself. It helps us know we are loved, we are valued and that someone cares, and that they are willing to listen and give us time.
- 5) Develop a caring relationship with yourself** – When we are kind to ourselves things can change and get better. How can you be kinder to yourself today, in this moment? What next action does that translate into?

Across the winter months Eden Project Communities, part of the world-famous Eden Project, launched #WinterWarmers, a campaign to help encourage people to carry out an act of kindness over the colder months.

The campaign which is made possible by The National Lottery aims to encourage people to be kind, connect, share and support others in their communities.

#WinterWarmers ideas include reaching out by saying hello to a neighbour or someone in the street, connecting with someone you miss by sending a card, calling them on the phone or online, or even making a small gift to share with your neighbour.

Eden Project Communities will also be supporting Samaritan’s “Brew Monday” campaign, which encourages people to get together over a warming virtual cuppa.

The Samaritans is asking people to reach out to a friend, family member or colleague for a virtual cuppa and a chat.

Since March, Eden staff have been taking part in virtual tea breaks as part of the ethos of The Big Lunch, Eden Project Communities biggest event of the year.

It will also be hosting a virtual cuppa on ‘Brew Monday’ where anyone can join us for a cuppa.

Tracey Robbins, Eden Project Communities expert on loneliness, who recently spoke on BBC Radio’s ‘Beating Loneliness’ show, gave some top tips for those who might be feeling alone.

*She said: “Loneliness means people can feel invisible – not seen or heard, so activities that bring people out of their cocoon are vital. We can’t meet face to face but sharing a virtual cuppa can break the ice and create the informality for a cosy chat that can alleviate feelings of loneliness.*

*“Similarly depression, related but very different from loneliness, causes people to feel emotionally cut off. Offering your listening ear over a brew whether on the phone or over zoom can make a huge difference.”*

*“Small things count and communicate we care. I can’t emphasise enough that people need to feel acknowledged, visible, and to be seen, noticed and be heard. It is important to reach out and connect on every day, and any day, and not just on Blue Monday.*

*“A group of neighbours who know each other by name looking out for each other means those small regular acknowledgements add up to a day of positive interactions. It doesn’t matter how old you are, if you’re feeling lonely - touching base can help alleviate that crushing overwhelming feeling.”*

For more information on Eden Project Communities, and for more information about how you can get connected in your community, or to download a virtual postcard visit: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/>

**ENDS**

## **IMAGES**

WeTransfer for images: <https://we.tl/t-de4kqeYk34>

### **Captions:**

**Dr Radha Modgil (1):** Dr Radha Modgil, the medical expert for BBC Radio 1's daytime show.

**Dr Radha Modgil (2):** Dr Radha Modgil, has given her top tips for dealing with loneliness and depression on Blue Monday.

**Dr Radha Modgil (3):** Dr Radha Modgil, the presenter of the CBeebies show Feeling Better, highlighting the importance of talking about emotions for young children, has spoken about the importance of connecting to help people dealing with depression and loneliness.

**Dr Radha Modgil (4):** Dr Radha Modgil, (centre) alongside Love Island star Dr Alex George on the BBC. Dr Modgil has supported the Eden Communities campaign to reach out this Blue Monday.

**Tracey Robbins (1):** Eden Project Communities expert Tracey Robbins (right) has spoken about the importance of reaching out and connecting not only through Blue Monday, but every day of the year.

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Contact**

Photos, infographics and spokespeople available. For more information please contact Liam Coleman on [licoleman@edenproject.com](mailto:licoleman@edenproject.com) or call 07817463234

#### **About The Eden Project Communities**

We aim to improve the happiness and wellbeing of people across the UK by bringing communities together and inspiring them to make positive changes where they live.

As part of the Eden Project, we're exploring how people can work with each other, and with nature, towards a better future.

We believe that connected communities are more resilient against local and global issues and are better equipped to tackle challenges and bring about positive change.

#### **About The Big Lunch**

We started with a very simple idea from the Eden Project. What if, on one day a year, people came together with their communities and shared a meal?

And so, in 2009, The Big Lunch was born. It's the UK's annual get-together for neighbours and its grown ten-fold since then, each year getting bigger and better as millions of people take to their streets, gardens and neighbourhoods to join in for a few hours of community, friendship, and fun.

The Big Lunch connects people and encourages friendlier, safer neighbourhoods where people start to share more – from conversations and ideas, to skills and resources, and, for some, it ignites a passion for doing more good things where they live. It's the first weekend in June each year, pop it in your diary and find out more.

#### **About Blue Monday**

Typically the third Monday of January, Blue Monday was calculated as 'the most depressing day of the year' and was launched as part of a marketing scheme by travel company, Sky Travel, in 2004.

The concept was originally coined in 2004 by psychologist Cliff Arnall, who came up with a "formula" for the January blues after he was asked to do so by the travel firm, who then used the phrase in a press release to promote their winter deals.

Dr Arnall's formula considered a number of factors likely to contribute to high levels of depression and low mood, including the weather, debt, the time since Christmas, and the time since many people fail to keep up with their New Year's resolutions.

#### **Dr Radha Modgil**

Dr. Radha is a practising NHS GP, broadcaster & campaigner for wellbeing. Radha educates in a creative and fun way, encouraging people to stay healthy. She has a passion for connecting with & hearing people's stories, and understanding how we can all learn from each other.



Radha is the medical expert for BBC Radio 1's daytime show, Life Hacks and the co-presenter of their weekly Life Hacks Podcast. She was the presenter of the CBeebies show Feeling Better, highlighting the importance of talking about emotions for young children. She was the presenter for the BBC Bitesize series 'Exam Survivors' on BBC Sounds.

She appeared as the medical reporter for The Sex Education Show Ch4 and Make My Body Younger BBC Three. She has been the resident GP for the daytime show Live with Gabby on CH5 and for Newsround CBBC. She has also reported on ITV's This Morning, BBC Breakfast, ITV Tonight, Channel 5 News and ITN News.

Working across all platforms Dr Radha contributes to online projects including BBC Bitesize, BBC Teach, BBC Own It, BBC Advice Pages and BBC Learning.

Apart from her BBC Radio 1, she has been broadcast on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Asian Network, LBC and Radio 1's Newsbeat.

#### **About The National Lottery Community Fund**

The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK and proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since June 2004, they have made over 200,000 grants and awarded over £9 billion to projects that have benefited millions of people.