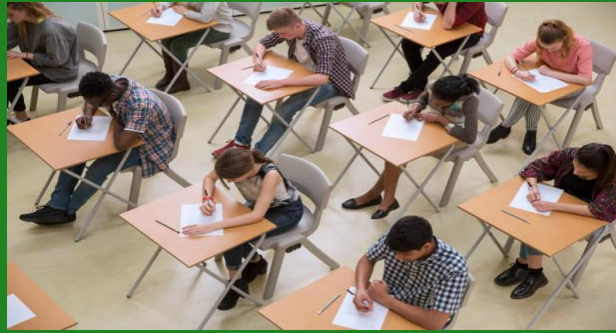


Mental Health and Wellbeing



15th May 2023

Exam Stress

Exam season is upon us and can be a challenging time for young people. Many feel stressed in the lead-up to and during their exams followed by worry in anticipation of their results.

Exams often cause some anxiety. A certain level of anxiety can be helpful; the body's warning system (the release of adrenaline) can help increase our motivation to prepare and achieve.

Sometimes, however, this warning system can be overactivated. When this happens, anxiety is more difficult to manage and might lead to marked differences in mood. This can then impact negatively on exams and day-to-day life, and can lead to problematic anxiety and low mood or depression.

Exam stress can stop young people from doing things that they are normally able to do. For example, they might find it more difficult to stick to their usual sleep or eating routines. Or they might find it difficult to do things that they normally enjoy doing, like socialising with friends.

How are you feeling?



Spot the signs

Early signs that exam stress is becoming an issue for a student include:

- noticeable low mood
- expressing hopelessness about the future
- not enjoying activities that they previously enjoyed
- withdrawing from friends
- tiredness
- complaining of physical symptoms – e.g. headaches and stomach pains
- not eating or drinking frequently
- noticeable anxiety
 - reassurance seeking
 - reduced eye contact
 - talking quickly
- avoidance
- irritability.

Tips for students

Looking after yourself

Exams can be a challenging time, and the pressure to do well can feel overwhelming, especially if you're feeling pressure from school or family. It's perfectly normal to feel worried about your exams, but it's important that you find ways to manage your worries.

- **Know the signs of stress** (Spot the signs)
- **Recognise when you're stressed;** difficulty sleeping, a racing heart, feeling angry or hopeless, negative thinking "I can't do this"
- **Create a daily timetable;** plan and be realistic about what you can achieve each day include social time and self-care and time for fun
- **Play to your strengths;** find what is your best way to learn and revise (videos, read, draw diagrams)



Sources: www.place2be.org.uk www.annafreud.org



- **Take regular breaks;** your brain cannot concentrate for long so have lots of breaks. Spend time with friends, get outside or exercise.
- **Develop coping strategies;** There are different ways to calm your body, use breathing exercises or relaxation techniques. [Try these](#)
- **Keep things in perspective;** Remember that there's more to life than your grades. Exams are only a small part of the picture, and your results don't define who you are.
- **Ask for help;** Let your family, friends or teachers know if you are struggling so that they can support you. For further support see the links at the bottom of this page.

‘If you believe
in yourself
anything is
possible’

For help:

Text SHOUT to 85258 for free to speak to someone 24/7
Call Childline 0800 1111
Speak to your GP or if you are in a crisis call 999.

Useful links:

For further support, tips for parents or ideas to support yourself, here are some useful links:

[On My Mind | Resources for Young People | Anna Freud Centre](#)

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/youth-mental-health/>