

Exam stress

It is normal to feel a bit worried about exams, especially if your child is under pressure from school or family. Exam stress can cause young people to feel anxious or low in mood, and this might impact their sleep or appetite. If you recognise any of these feelings in your child, or are worried that exam pressure is taking over their life, try our tips below:



Signs that your child may be struggling with exam stress:

Every young person is different, but typical signs that your child is struggling with exam stress may include:

- Worrying a lot
- Feeling tense
- Having headaches and stomach pains
- Struggling to sleep
- Being irritable
- Losing interest in food or eating more than normal
- Not enjoying activities they previously enjoyed
- Being negative and having a low mood
- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Always thinking about exams or worrying about them



Top tips for before exams:

- Get organised – help your child to make a plan of when and where the exams will be to avoid any last-minute panic or confusion.
- Encourage your child to take frequent breaks when revising; using the pomodoro technique can be helpful for them to keep track of revision and break times.
- Break revision down into smaller chunks to make it less overwhelming. Keeping a list of revision that has been covered can help your child to see how much they have achieved.
- Encourage effective studying – practice mock exams, past papers and learn memory enhancing techniques like chunking or mnemonics.
- Help your child get 8-10 hours of sleep each night to help improve thinking and concentration. Encourage your child to have a wind down hour between studying, watching tv, or going on their phone and going to bed to help them sleep better.
- Help your child to find ways to relax – make sure your child still makes time for hobbies, going out with friends and self-care.



Top tips for during exams:

- Try to encourage your child to practice positive self-talk e.g., “I have revised, I can do this, and it will all be over soon.”
- Prepare items the night before like pens and a water bottle.
- Drinking water regularly can help concentration.
- Practice breathing, grounding or mindfulness techniques on the morning of the exam, just before the exam starts or if panic starts to set in – see [Calm zone | Childline](#) for more examples.
- Read all questions carefully and remind your child to think about their answers before writing them down.
- Encourage exercise during exam season – this can help to boost energy levels, relieve stress and clear the mind.
- Do not add to the pressure on your child – try to support your child by being positive, reassuring and by avoiding any criticism.



Top tips for after exams:

- Remind your child that whatever their results, try to help them to keep things in perspective – exam success does not define them as a person.
- Encourage your child to relax before their next exam – getting through an exam can be exhausting so it is important to have a break before trying to revise again.
- Once exams are finished, try to remind your child to forget about them. Or if your child wants to talk things through with you, encourage them to focus on the positive parts of the exams instead of the parts they found difficult.
- Remind your child to not compare themselves with their friends as this can make them feel like they aren't good enough.
- Make time for treats and celebrations – plan some rewards for your child doing their revision and for getting through each exam so they have things to look forward to



For further tips and support, visit:

- [How To Deal with Exam Stress | YoungMinds](#)
- [Download Adapt - Revision Timetable App](#)
- [Exam stress and pressure | Childline](#)

