

Top tips for managing exam stress

Stress is not wrong. It is a natural feeling that we all experience and need to express. However there are positive and negative ways in which this can be done.

The handout aims to help young people to learn more appropriate ways in which to express and manage their stress.

Try and change any negative thoughts into positive ones. Instead of thinking; 'I can't do this', 'I'm going to fail' and 'I'm useless'. Try thinking; 'this is just anxiety, it can't hurt me', 'I can do this' 'my effort and attitude make all the difference'.

Make a revision timetable and stick to it.

Use colour coding and cue cards to help you to memorise key points.

Take breaks! Plan revision in 45 minute blocks with a break where you focus on something you enjoy.

Too much revision makes your brain go into overdrive and makes your memory less effective.

Make an emergency self-care kit full of reminders of positive activities and strategies that help you stay on track.

Keep a mood diary where you can remind yourself of times when the stress/anxiety has been less intense.

Remind yourself that these feelings don't last forever.

Get a good night's sleep. Young people your age need around nine hours per night for the brain to be at its best the next day. Avoid using screens in that last hour before you want to go to sleep.

Practice your 'I'm confident' pose and visualise how you feel when things go smoothly.

If you need time out from friends who are over-anxious or want to constantly talk about exams, then take it.

Pace yourself in the exam. Spend a couple of minutes planning how much time you need for each question so you don't hit that last five minutes panic moment.

Calm your breathing down - in through your nose and slowly out through your mouth.

Practice mindfulness on the Headspace app.

Drink plenty of water and eat some stress superfoods like avocado, tuna, salmon, broccoli, porridge, blueberries and milk. Your brain will really appreciate this.

Avoid Caffeine and high sugar foods. They will make your brain crash and reduce your ability to concentrate.

Do some exercise and help get those endorphins going. This will help you feel happier and combat the more challenging emotions you are faced with.

Talk to people about how you feel. That can be your parents, family members, friends, school staff, Kooth online or via Young Minds online support.

If talking is too hard, then try and write the worries down or draw them in a book to help free your mind.

Remember!

Everybody is good at something, but nobody is good at everything, you've got this!

Where can I find out more?

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/exam-stress/

NHS www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/

Childline www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/

With all of us in mind.