

Coping with Exam Stress

Dear Parents and Carers,

Exams are nearly upon us and many of our students may be feeling anxious. There will be lots of things that you can do at home to help your child revise and cope with stress. Most of them you will be doing already but exam time can be stressful for parents too, so here is a quick reminder if you are finding things hard: -

Stress and anxiety from exam preparation can take a mental, physical and emotional toll on your child. To combat this, you need to feed them the right foods and encourage them to be active individuals. A healthy mind and body will also help them be focused and concentrate when it is revision time.

Here are a few guidelines to follow. They are taken from the website GCSE Revision – The Essential Guide for Parents <https://revisionapp.co.uk/gcse-revision-essential-guide-parents/>

- Feed your child a healthy diet: plenty of fruit and veg and proteins will keep the brain focussed
- Keep them hydrated – preferably with water and not sugary and/or high caffeine drinks
- Encourage them to take daily exercise, e.g. short walks, dancing or a sport. Exercise gets oxygen flowing to the brain, which will help them relax and think clearly
- Encourage them to take breaks away from their revision to do things they enjoy and if possible to see friends. Having a break to play on the Xbox or to watch Netflix or whatever is a good idea if it helps them relax
- Help them get enough sleep, which means avoiding working too late into the night

Remember, the brain works best when it is relaxed, happy, entertained, inspired, engaged, challenged, and most importantly loved.

Everyone falls behind sometimes, and feel demotivated, overwhelmed and lost. Be quick to notice these signs in your child and offer help; don't make the situation worse by berating them or calling them lazy.

Have an open door policy where they can talk to you at anytime. Listen to their concerns. Let them talk freely about their issues and struggles. Take their minds off exams for a moment by taking them out, letting them do the things that they enjoy or cooking their favourite meals. Reassure them that you love them unconditionally.

Here are some more tips to help minimise your child's anxiety:

- Always encourage your child to ask for help at school on any parts of their work they do not understand.
- Be positive even if they aren't.
- Stay supportive.
- End every conversation on a good note.
- Cut back on their chores to afford them sufficient study time.
- Be as lenient as you can if your child gets angry or moody. Let them know you understand it is because they are feeling stressed about exams.
- Offer praise and treats when they have reached revision milestones.
- Have regular one on one conversations. Let your child talk more than you and be attentive.
- Regularly inquire if they need anything of you.

You may also find the following websites and sources of support useful.

FREE APP		<p>Stessheads Look up exam tips Breathing exercises Revision tips Chat room</p>
FREE APP		<p>Exam Stress Support to calm down when panicky Relaxation tracks Study techniques Help with different types of exams/ practical stuff</p>
FREE APP		<p>Stem4 Practical help if you self harm when really stressed. Things to help you stay safe and stay calm</p>
WEBSITE		<p>The Mix Advice and information on almost everything to do with being young</p>
WEBSITE		<p>BBC RADIO ONE Search for 'The Fear' – helpful advice on coping with exam stress</p>
WEBSITE		<p>Young Minds Lots of information and help for young people with mental health problems and worries. Also has a help line for parents</p>
SOMEONE TO TALK TO & WEBSITE		<p>Samartians You can ring, text, email or visit the Samritans any time fo the day, any day of the year. They understand the stress of exams and will help you talk through your worries in confidence and for free</p>
SOMEONE TO TALK TO & WEBSITE		<p>Childline Mis-named really as it not just for children. They have some great stuff for young people up to age 18 including coping with exams. Check them out on line</p>
SOMEONE TO TALK TO & WEBSITE		<p>KOOTH An online service providing information, one off help or counselling. Just register online and access help</p>