

Exam Stress and Anxiety:

Guides for Children, Young People, Parents, Carers and Teachers.

Exam Stress and Anxiety:

A Guide for Older Children and Teenagers

Exam season can be a stressful time for you, your teachers, and your family.

The pressure to perform well and hit target grades can feel overwhelming, and lead to feelings of stress and anxiety that spill over into home life, too.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to manage difficult feelings, and successfully navigate this challenging time.



Look at the signs of exam stress
on the next page.
Do any of them sound familiar?

Exam stress looks different for different people, but can include...



Being 'snappy' or argumentative

Feeling low or tearful

Spending more time alone

Sleeping less, or more, than usual

Losing interest in hobbies and activities

Physical symptoms e.g. headache, nausea

Struggling to eat well

Feeling overwhelmed

Difficulty focusing or concentrating

How to manage feelings of stress and anxiety

Everyone is different, and what works for you may not work for someone else. It's important to create a toolkit of strategies to help you manage difficult feelings.

Shift your self-talk

Talking kindly and positively to yourself can help you manage feelings of overwhelm. It takes practice at first, but over time, it can help you change your mindset.

Take action

It's tempting to procrastinate when you experience anxiety. By taking small steps, like organising your workspace or creating a planner, you can break the cycle of procrastination.

Prioritise self-care

Balance is important, and you can only thrive when you create time to meet your physical and emotional needs, e.g. exercising, socialising, relaxing, gaming etc.

Practise mindfulness

Mindfulness can help you become more aware of your thoughts and be more present in what you are doing. It helps you see things more clearly so you can adjust your perspective.



Talk to somebody

If you feel alone or isolated, it can be helpful to talk to someone. This might be a friend or family member, a trusted adult at school, or even a charity or other organisation.

For more strategies and further support, you can contact:



Young Minds
Mind
Childline



Exam Stress and Anxiety:

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Exam season can be a stressful time for the whole family.



The pressure to perform well can be overwhelming for your child or teenager, leaving them feeling stressed and anxious.

As a parent or carer, you might struggle to know how best to support them and may experience feelings of stress and anxiety yourself.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to support your child or teenager, alleviate the pressure, and successfully navigate this challenging time together.



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Tips for supporting younger children

Every child and young person is different, and what works for one may not work for another. It's important to create a toolkit of strategies, so that you can support not only your child, but also yourself through this tricky period.

Establish a regular bedtime routine so that your child gets enough sleep and feels fresh and energised in the mornings.

Staying hydrated helps with concentration, so make sure your child is drinking plenty of water throughout the day.

Encourage your child to eat nutritious meals and healthy snacks that include lots of fruit and vegetables.

Remind your child that tests are not the 'be all and end all' and that there is much more to them than results.

Make sure your child has time to do all the things they love, like seeing friends, playing sport, or getting outside.

Listen to your child's concerns or worries and reassure them that you are always there to help and support.

Supporting older children / teenagers / young people

Encourage them to establish healthy routines, such as going to bed early, limiting screen time, and eating nutritious food.

Even though exams are important, reassure them that there is more to life, and that they are not defined by their results.

Make sure they know you are there if they need you. Try to be available, both emotionally and physically.

Take some time out for yourself, to help you get some perspective on the situation. Just going for a walk can work wonders!

Keep an eye out for signs of any subtle changes in their behaviour, such as spending more time alone or becoming tearful.

Talk to other parents and carers who are going through the same thing and share helpful tips and advice.

Supporting older children / teenagers / young people

If you are worried about your child, contact their school and speak to a member of staff. They'll be happy to help.

Help them take care of practical tasks, like cleaning their room or organising their workspace.

Extend compassion to yourself and to them and remember that everyone is trying their best.

Try to make sure they strike a balance between revising, and doing things that they enjoy, such as sport, socialising, or gaming.

Try not to take things personally, e.g. if they are more argumentative than usual, it's usually a reflection of how they feel inside.

Try to maintain a positive mindset and help them to become aware of and change any negative self-talk.

If you are worried about your child, contact their school for further advice and support.

You can also find helpful tips and resources on these websites:

[Young Minds](#)

[Mind](#)

[Childline](#)

Exam Stress and Anxiety:

A Guide for Teachers

There's no denying it: exam season is a highly stressful time for teachers.

The pressure from all directions – colleagues, leaders, external bodies, parents, and carers – to ensure that children and young people perform well in statutory tests and exams can feel overwhelming.

It can result in exorbitant levels of stress and anxiety, affecting teachers' physical, emotional, and mental health.

Fortunately, there are steps teachers can take to support both themselves and their students, alleviate some of the pressure, and navigate this challenging time successfully.



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Feeling overwhelmed

Difficulty focusing or concentrating

Supporting your students

Every child and young person is different, and what works for one may not work for another. It's important to create a toolkit of strategies, so that you can support not only your students, but also yourself through this tricky period.

Encourage students to get a good night's sleep and plenty of rest, especially the night before a test or exam.

Make sure students can access drinks (especially water) throughout the day as staying hydrated helps them to concentrate.

Create time for students to relax and switch off from academic work. Fresh air and movement can help with focus.

Discuss the importance of eating lots of healthy, nutritious foods, including fruit and vegetables.

Reassure students that there is so much more to them than their results and that you value them for who they are.

Make time to listen to your students' worries and, if necessary, reach out and involve their parent or carer.

Supporting yourself

It's vital to take care of your own emotional, mental and physical health during the exam season.

If you are struggling with feelings of stress and anxiety, speak to your leadership team or HR department for advice.

Prioritise self-care, whatever that looks like for you. It could be exercising, socialising, reading, gaming, or simply setting clear, firm boundaries.

Remind yourself that you are doing the best you can and show yourself compassion, grace and patience over the exam period.

Reach out to colleagues, friends, or family members about any worries you may have. Choose someone you trust and that you feel comfortable with.

Try to establish healthy routines around eating, drinking and sleeping. Rest when you need to, and eat wholesome, nutritious food.

Visualise the end of the exam period, and if possible, plan something fun to do that you can look forward to.

Remember to stop and take a break when you need it and try to focus on what is within your control.

For more strategies and further support, contact:



[Young Minds](#)
[Mind](#)
[Childline](#)
[Ofqual](#)
[Education Support](#)



Worrying About Tests and Exams:

A Guide for Children

Tests and exams are part of school life, but they can make you feel really worried.



I don't know what I'm doing. Everyone else knows more than me.

What will happen if I fail the test? Will my teacher be cross with me?



Feeling worried is sometimes called **anxiety**. It can be an uncomfortable and confusing feeling!

Look at the next page. Do you recognise any of these feelings?

When you're worried, you might...

Feel nervous about going to school

Feel tearful or upset in class or at home

Find it difficult to sleep, or to get out of bed

Lose interest in your hobbies or things you like doing

Have a headache, feel sick, or have a tummy ache

Argue more with your friends or family

Want to spend more time alone

Find it tricky to concentrate in school

**Feeling a little bit worried
is completely normal
when you're doing tests.
Everyone else feels
exactly the same way!**

Luckily, there are things
you can do to feel better...

Try to rest

Sleep is important – it's
really hard to
concentrate when
you're tired. Try to go to
bed early and get a
good night's sleep.

Eat and drink well

Staying hydrated and
eating healthy food
helps you stay fit and
well. Drink plenty of
water and eat lots of
fruit and vegetables.

Talk to somebody

It can be helpful to talk
to someone when you
feel anxious. It might be
a friend or family
member, or a trusted
adult in school.

Have fun!

Spend time with your
friends and family and
make time for hobbies
and activities you
enjoy. Getting outdoors
is a great idea, too!

Keep everything in perspective

Remember: the tests
you're doing seem very
important, but other
things, like family and
friends, are just as
important.

Don't forget: you are so much more than your test results!