

Be Ready



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Exam Toolkit (Strategies to help with revision, organisation, time management)

How to promote mental health and wellbeing during exam season.

The importance of self-care



To translate this newsletter, follow the link in the QR code or click [HERE](#)

April is recognised as National Stress Awareness Month.



All of us will experience feelings stressed at some point in our lives. It's our body's normal reaction to perceived threat. A little bit of stress is actually good for our brains and development. But sometimes we can begin to feel a bit overwhelmed when stress becomes too much.

Can you spot the signs of stress?

Sometimes the signs our bodies give us such as headaches, lack of sleep or appetite are first indication for children and young people that something is bothering them.

You can read more about stress and how we can support children by clicking the picture to the right.

Spot the signs

Common signs that your child is experiencing stress include:

- Headaches
- Low mood
- Disturbed sleep
- Being irritable
- Loss of appetite

If you notice emotional signs such as **irritability, low mood or anxiety** – think about this like the outer wrapper of a sweet, and be gently curious about what's going on inside. It might help if they can share their thoughts and feelings with you, a friend or another trusted person.


It's important for them to feel acknowledged and listened to without judgement or solutions. They might find spending time with a pet calming or need some cuddles from you for reassurance.

And remember, whatever the outcome, keeping things in perspective, staying calm and positive and engaging with school or college for support and guidance will help.


How Can I Support My Child When They Are Feeling Stressed?


As a parent or carer you may be thinking about upcoming exams or tests and how you can support your child during this potentially stressful time, helping them with a positive outlook before, during and after exams. It's also important to think about how you can look after yourself and some of the strategies below might be helpful in modelling how you manage stress too!


Being practical, helping them to **create a plan** of how they can manage their studying: **How do they learn best?** Activities that involve a mix of **learning by doing, seeing and hearing** can help:

 making visual aids e.g. flash cards, posters, mind-maps or spider diagrams using colours and shapes for different topics



 having a dedicated area to study with an option to vary this if more helpful e.g. going to a library, a friend's place, or even a different room in the house

 recording their own notes and listening back on headphones, making videos, incorporate walking if movement helps

 talking out loud or explaining back to others, they can use songs, rhymes or raps, revising with their peers, talking in groups

It's important to **include breaks** – short study periods of 45 minutes, with time away from screens, doing something physically active, getting some fresh air and a change of environment, to help with focus and concentration.



Think of rewards for commitment and effort to help if they are struggling with motivation and worrying about getting perfect marks – reassurance that you are proud of them for trying.

BBC Bitesize Parent Toolkit

BBC Bitesize have produced a range of resources and information aimed at parents and carers who would like to support their children around the exam period.

Click the picture to the right.





How to Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing During Exam Season

C.L.A.N.G.E.R.S

This is an evidence based approach that has been proven to improve mental health and wellbeing, it is a similar to the Five Ways to Wellbeing.



Connect: Exam season can be an isolating and stressful experience for children and young people. It is important to connect with others during this time as it can help them take a break from their studies and take their mind off the pressures of exams. Connecting with peers can also help them get through exam season and strengthen their



Learn: We are always learning new things. Learning can also have a positive impact on our self-esteem and can give children and young people a sense of achievement.



Active: There are many benefits to regular exercise for children and young people. It helps improve their physical health such as cardiovascular and respiratory health. Exercise helps to oxygenate the brain and alleviates stress and tension, this helps children and young people to keep calm, relax and study more effectively. Exercise also promotes the development of motor skills, builds strong bones and strength. Physical activity helps to reduce the level of stress hormones in the body and boosts endorphins in the brain which helps children to feel happier.



Notice

Exam season can be a stressful time for children and young people. Mindfulness and other breathing techniques can help them to stay calm and ground both physically and mentally, allowing them to focus better.

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress. Be You have created a padlet of resources with mindful activities, mindful apps, interactive content and training opportunities.

Mindfulness can help to reduce feelings of anxiety and stress in children and young people. It is a skill that can improve memory, focus, and cognitive processing speed. Mindfulness has been found to help improve emotional regulation and to help you cope better in stressful situations [[mindfulness padlet link](#)].



Give:

The act of giving is beneficial for mental health and wellbeing. Studies have shown that people who help others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.



Eat well – Having a healthy, well-balanced diet has numerous benefits for children and young people. These include promoting growth and development, providing children and young people with the energy to get through the day, and helping to improve concentration, mood and stress. For more information and recommendations for achieving a balanced diet see [The Eatwell Guide \(NHS\)](#).



Relax—Take time to rest your mind each day, to let it wind down and declutter. Our brains are programmed to autofill with negative thoughts as their natural state and are neuroplastic—so what we focus on is what grows. Fill your brain with what you need to be there, the more positive, the better, clear out the rubbish and ensure you have strategies to help deal with negative thoughts.



Sleep - sleep is important to children’s health, wellbeing, learning and development. Sleep can affect our mood. Lack of sleep can contribute to irritability, reduced concentration and general ability to cope with everyday life. Find our top tips for improving sleeping habits here [[sleep padlet link](#)]



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