

Managing exam stress

Key takeaways for parents & carers

- ✓ **Some stress is normal** - A degree of pressure around exams can be helpful for motivation, but it should not overwhelm wellbeing or daily life.
- ✓ **Your calm matters more than perfect advice** - Young people often regulate their emotions through adults. Staying steady and reassuring can have a big impact.
- ✓ **Listen before solving** - Sometimes children need space to express worries without immediate solutions or pressure to “fix” things.
- ✓ **Routine helps reduce anxiety** - Consistent sleep, meals, and revision patterns can create a sense of stability during uncertain times.
- ✓ **Small steps beat big expectations** - Breaking revision into short, manageable tasks is more effective than long, overwhelming study sessions.
- ✓ **Rest is part of revision** - Breaks, downtime, and sleep are essential for memory, focus, and emotional regulation - not a reward for finishing work.
- ✓ **Know when to seek support** - If stress is affecting sleep, mood, behaviour, or attendance, early support from school or external services can make a real difference.



Promoting calm, confidence and self-care 🌟

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What parents & carers can say:

- ✓ **“I can see you’re finding this stressful - I’m here with you.”**
Acknowledging feelings helps young people feel understood rather than pressured to hide how they’re coping.
- ✓ **“It’s okay to take things one step at a time.”** This reduces overwhelm and helps shift focus from the whole exam period to the next small task.
- ✓ **“Your effort matters more than getting everything perfect.”** Reinforces a growth mindset and reduces fear of failure.
- ✓ **“Let’s focus on what you *can* do today.”** Brings attention back to manageable actions rather than future worries.
- ✓ **“Taking breaks will actually help your brain work better.”** Helps remove guilt around rest and supports healthier revision habits.
- ✓ **“I’m proud of how you’re managing this, even when it feels tough.”**
Builds confidence and resilience by recognising effort, not just outcomes.



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Recommended Support Links

If you or your child needs additional support around exam stress, these organisations offer trusted advice and practical guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/>