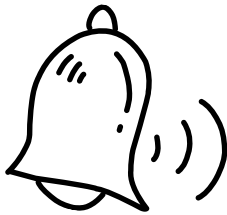


# EXAM STRESS AND ANXIETY: PARENTS GUIDE



Exam season is here, with young people across the country preparing for and undertaking their GCSEs and end of year exams. This can be a difficult and daunting time; not just during the exams but before and afterwards. As a result, some of them may be feeling stressed or anxious. As parents and carers, you can help play a vital role in helping them to maintain a positive mental attitude, however, at times it may seem difficult to know where to start. So here are some tips and advice on helping our young people with the inevitable exam nerves:

# 1



## Look out for Exam Stress

If you are aware of what to look out for, you can offer support.

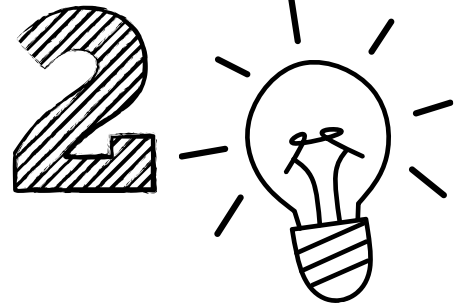
Signs could include:

- Being irritable
- Lack of sleep
- Excessive worry
- loss of interest in food.

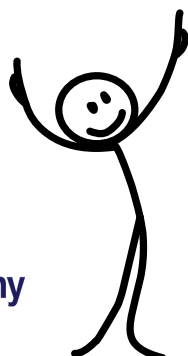
Please see more examples on the NHS website: [Help your child beat exam stress - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Talk

Remind your child that it is normal to experience some anxiety and nerves, it is a natural response. It can be a good idea to talk to about how you yourself have dealt with stressful situations.



# 3



## Encourage

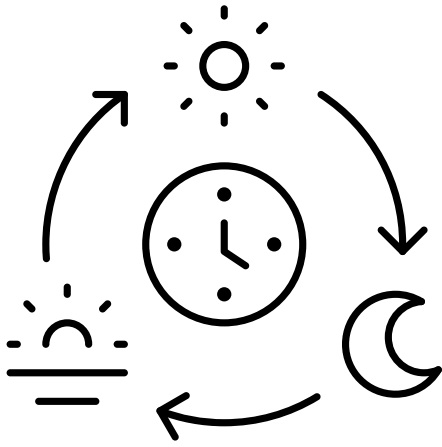
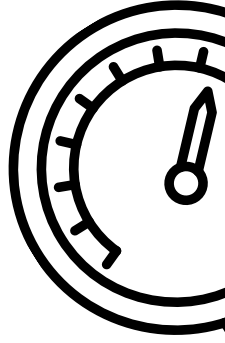
Try to positively motivate by being reassuring and by helping them keep things in perspective. Remind them that, although important, grades do not define who they are.



4

### Keep the Pressure Low

Aim to listen to your child and offer support without criticism. Let them know that if things do not go to plan, it is not the end of the world, but they will feel satisfied if they know that they've tried their best.



5

### Help Create a Routine

Help them to create a revision and exam plan, as this can help lessen the feeling of being unprepared. Block out study time but also consider breaks and downtime in their plan.



6

### Promote good sleeping habits

Sufficient sleep can help improve thinking, concentration and positively affects wellbeing. Support this by encouraging your teen to:

- turn off screens an hour before bed
- work on a bedtime routine by going to bed and waking up at similar times everyday
- Limiting sugary and caffeinated food and drinks before bed

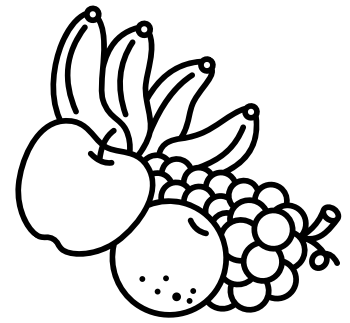
Find out more info on the teen sleep hub website:  
<https://teensleephub.org.uk/parents-carers/>



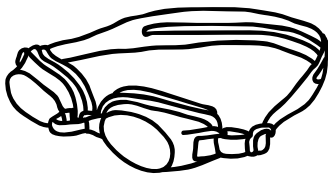
# 7

## Promote healthy eating

A healthy balanced diet is important for young peoples development. Help fuel their body and mind by having nutritious foods together and encouraging them to drink plenty of water. Discourage too much caffeine or sugar, as these can contribute to feelings of anxiety and disrupt sleep patterns.



# 8



## Encourage Movement and Exercise

Exercise is scientifically proven to help boost energy levels and relieve stress- due to hormones such as endorphins. Suggest a family walk, play football together or go for a swim at your local swimming pool.

# 9

## Unwind After Exams

Help your teen relax by spending time together as a family. Do something for them that will help them wind down, such as running them a bath.

*just relax*

# 10

## Signpost to Support

There are many different resources online that can help your child manage stress through exams such as:

BBC Bitesize Revision:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3>

Mind: Understanding exam stress

<https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/feelings-and-experiences/exam-stress/>

Headspace App- Guided meditation:

<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

Clear Fear App:- Anxiety Management

<https://clearfear.stem4.org.uk/>



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