

DEALING WITH STRESS



STRESS MANAGEMENT

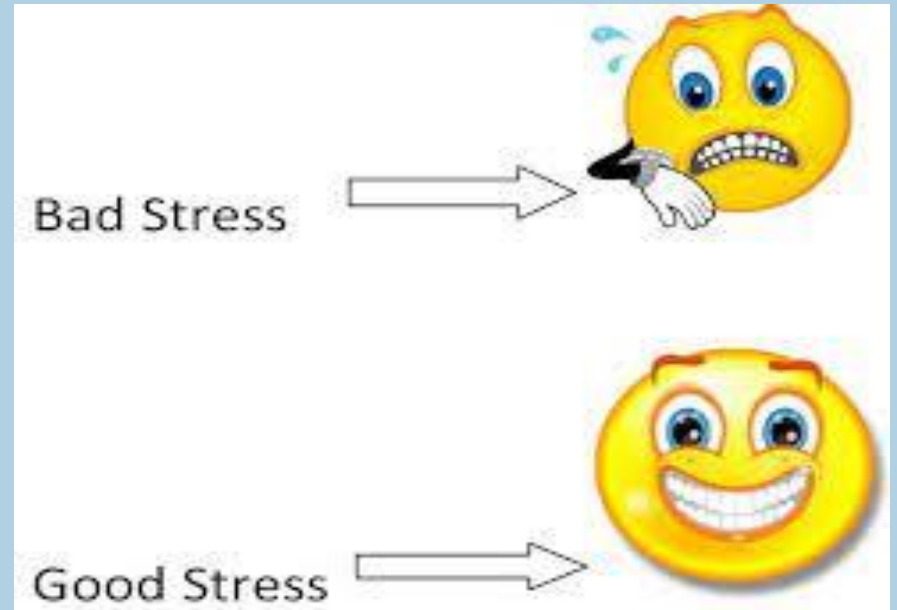
School can be fun but it can also become stressful at times. Students may feel stressed (especially in Year 11 & 13) about exams, coursework deadlines, seeing people they do not get on with or thinking about the future.

It is natural to feel stressed sometimes. It can help you cope in challenging situations. In small amounts it can even be good, because it pushes you to work hard and do your best, such as during exams.



STRESS MANAGEMENT

However, if students are feeling very stressed or struggle to manage their stress, it could affect their academic performance and maybe even lead to mental health problems such as **depression** and **anxiety**.



SIGNS A STUDENT MIGHT BE STRESSED

There are lots of possible signs of stress.

Stressed people may feel:

- irritable
- anxious
- like you cannot enjoy yourself
- worried a lot of the time

They may start to:

- have sleep problems
- find it hard to concentrate
- bite their nails, pick your skin or grind their teeth
- snap at people
- feel short of breath or breathe very fast

EXAM ANXIETY

the signs of **high exam anxiety**

Cognitive signs (thoughts)

- going blank in an exam
- difficulty concentrating
- negative thoughts about past performance or consequences of failure

Affective signs (emotions)

- feeling excessive tension
- feeling panic
- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling not in control

Physical signs

- dizzy or faint
- sweating

- fast heartbeat
- tight churning stomach

- jelly or wobbly legs



HELP WITH GENERAL STRESS

Stress usually eases once you get some of your larger tasks or deadlines out of the way and workload is reduced. However, if stress continues these things may help...

- Find the cause. Why are you stressed? E.g. is it exams, one subject or relationship problems? See if you can change your circumstances to ease the pressure.
- Make an effort to be healthy. Eat well, sleep well, exercise and relax in between studying. Avoid drugs, including caffeine - these can have a negative impact on your stress levels and wellbeing.

HELP WITH GENERAL STRESS

- Try not to worry about the future or compare yourself with others.
- Take time to try relaxation and breathing exercises.
- Plan your time carefully to help keep track of your work. Stick to deadlines and schedule in small chunks of time to keep on top of your work
- **COMMUNICATE!** Talk to a friend, tutor or someone in your family about your stress.





PRACTICE
MAKES
PERFECT

HELPING WITH EXAM STRESS



Are you ready
for exams?

Preparation is the key to overcome stress and anxiety and gives you the best chance of getting good grades.

Tips:

- **Make a REALISTIC revision schedule.** Start early to ensure you have enough time to prepare thoroughly to do it in, then schedule small chunks of time for each subject. Mix up your subjects so you do not get bored.
- **Customise your notes.** Use things such as colour coding, notes on postcards, diagrams, post its etc...
- **Revision style matters.** Find what works for you; studying alone in a quiet room, making flash cards, using GCSE bitesize or Seneca. Try playing music quietly in the background, or revising with a study buddy (but do not let them distract you!).



HELPING WITH EXAM STRESS

Are you ready
for exams?

- **Ensure you understand what you study.** If you are revising & you find something you don't understand, look it up on another source e.g. GCSE bitesize. Just memorising it may not help you in your exam. Ask your teacher or a friend for help if you need it.
- **Take regular short breaks.** Studying for hours and hours will make you tired and ruin your concentration, which may make you more anxious. A break every 45 to 60 minutes is about right.
- **Complete past exam papers.** It gives you time to familiarise yourself with the layout and type of questions you'll be asked. Practise completing exam papers in the time limit to improve your exam technique.



HELPING WITH EXAM STRESS

Are you ready
for exams?

- **Get physical.** Put the books down and do something active in your break time. Exercise is great for reducing stress and keeping you positive, and it will help you sleep better.
- **Reward yourself.** After revising for a set time, give yourself a reward e.g. play a game, watch an episode of a series, do a facemask or eat a treat!



SOURCES OF HELP

The NHS website has lots of helpful tips for managing stress and when to seek professional help. There are many links to help with time management, anxiety and depression. They have guides on unhelpful thinking and sleep problems too, as well as steps for better mental wellbeing. The below links may also help.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/top-school-stress-relievers-for-students-3145179>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/tips-to-reduce-stress/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anxiety-fear-panic/>

5 steps to mental wellbeing

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

WHEN TO GET HELP

You may want to consider getting help for stress if:

- you're struggling to cope with stress
- things you're trying yourself are not helping
- stress is affecting your life or school work
- You could try speaking to friends, family or your tutor. A GP is also a good place to start and they can help you with advice or access to treatments if you need them.

THE EXAM PERIOD IS TOUGH

But you can get through it if:

- You are prepared
- You take care of yourself
- You communicate with family & staff at school

Good luck!!!

