

Parent/Carer's guide to supporting young people with exam stress

What can you do to help?

It is normal for young people to feel stressed about their exams and some level of stress can be good, it helps a child to grow, develop coping strategies and build resilience. However, sometimes it builds up and spills over and it's important for parents to try and stay calm if this happens.

It might also be useful to reflect on your own experience of exams – consider the following questions:

- What are your own beliefs about exams?
- Where do these beliefs come from?
- What was your experience of going through exams?



Be mindful of what you say out loud, it's important to remember these are your concerns and anxieties, not your child's. Instead use your experiences to help relate to how your child may be feeling.

Normalising any stress or worry about exams is important. Being able to recognise the different ways anxiety and stress can present, such as mood swings, sleeplessness and becoming withdrawn, can help them understand how they are feeling.

Try sharing how you cope with anxious situations and come up with a list together that they can use to help manage during this time. A good starting point is the Stress Bucket – click on the links for more information.

[IHeartCBT - Stress, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Exam Stress \(weheartcbt.com\)](https://weheartcbt.com)

[The Stress Bucket - YouTube](#)

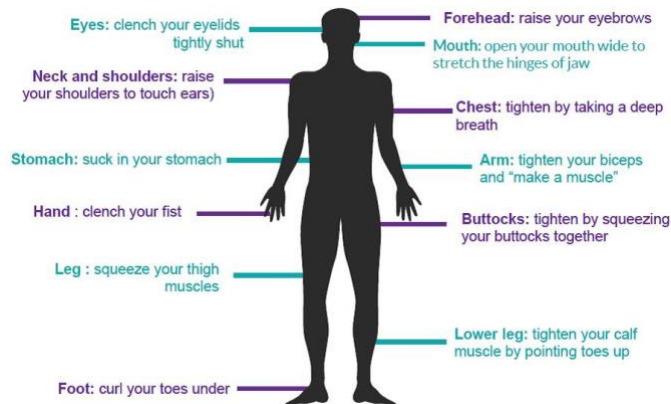
What happens in the mind influences the body so mental wellbeing plays a vital role in maintaining balance and focus. **Mindfulness** is a technique which can help support and manage your thoughts, feelings and wellbeing.

Mindful breathing is a simple activity where you focus your attention on your breath. Lots of people find that regularly using simple breathing exercises helps them to regulate their mood and manage stress.



- 1 **Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- 2 **Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.
- 3 **Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.
Tip: Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
- 4 **Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a relaxation technique. It involves tensing and then relaxing your muscles, one by one. This helps you release physical tension, which may ease stress and anxiety.



Further techniques can be found by clicking on the following links.

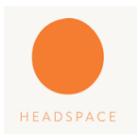
- [Learn Breathing Technique Box Breathing: Practice Breathwork for Focus and Anxiety with Dora Kamau - YouTube](#)
- [How to Relieve Stress - Headspace](#)

We have created this document with a focus on supporting young people during their exams, however the strategies and techniques can be helpful for everyone to practice day to day, regardless of what is happening. Why not give them a go 😊

For more information & advice on support for exam stress please click on the links below.



<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/exam-time/>



[How to Relieve Stress - Headspace](#)



<http://www.studentminds.org.uk/exam-stress.html>

Exams are important, but they don't define your child. Encourage your child to do their best but also remind them that one result or one grade does not determine who they are or who they become.

