



Exam stress - a student's guide

Nobody enjoys exams and the lead up to them can be particularly stressful for some students. A little bit of stress is often beneficial as it helps clear our minds and focus on the task in hand but what if your stress levels are unhelpful? See our guide below to help you to decide if you are suffering the negative effects of exam stress and anxiety and to see what you can do to help yourself regain control.

Key signs to look out for:

If you've noticed three or more of the below symptoms and you've experienced them for a few weeks you may be experiencing exam stress and anxiety:

- Difficulty getting to sleep or difficulty waking up in the morning
- Constant tiredness
- Forgetfulness
- Poor appetite
- Loss of interest in activities
- Increased anxiety and irritability
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Migraines/headaches
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness

How to help yourself:

- ✓ Talk to someone, e.g. parents, teachers, friends.
- ✓ Build some 'down time' into your revision timetable.
- ✓ Try to remember that the exams will be over shortly.
- ✓ Learn to recognise your triggers and symptoms.
- ✓ Try to avoid comparing yourself with your peers.
- ✓ Eat well.
- ✓ Avoid stimulants (e.g. caffeine and nicotine)
- ✓ Get a good night's sleep.
- ✓ Exercise.
- ✓ Practice controlled breathing.
- ✓ Don't go keep going over the exam once you've sat it – you can't change it.
- ✓ Check out the advice on the following websites:

<http://www.studentminds.org.uk/examstress.html>

<http://www.themix.org.uk/work-and-study/study-and-exam-tips/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1HsY1X8ySjKBMVXPVCbP4qH/exam-stress>

Extra support:

If you are panicking and there is nobody available to talk to, support can be found through the following organisations:

<https://www.samaritans.org/about-us>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://kooth.com/>

<https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support>