

## Exam stress

Exam season is a marathon, not a sprint. As a parent, you play a vital role in creating a "safe harbour" amidst the academic pressure. This month's newsletter focuses on practical ways to support your child's wellbeing and keep their stress levels manageable.



### Signs that your child may be struggling with exam stress:

Every young person is different, but typical signs that your child is struggling with exam stress may include:

- Worrying a lot
- Feeling tense
- Having headaches and stomach pains
- Struggling to sleep
- Being irritable
- Losing interest in food or eating more than normal
- Not enjoying activities they previously enjoyed
- Being negative and having a low mood
- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Always thinking about exams or worrying about them



### Top tips for before exams:

- Get organised – help your child to make a plan of when and where the exams will be to avoid any last-minute panic or confusion.
- Encourage your child to take frequent breaks when revising; using the pomodoro technique can be helpful for them to keep track of revision and break times.
- Break revision down into smaller chunks to make it less overwhelming. Keeping a list of revision that has been covered can help your child to see how much they have achieved.
- Encourage effective studying – practice mock exams, past papers and learn memory enhancing techniques like chunking or mnemonics.
- Help your child get 8-10 hours of sleep each night to help improve thinking and concentration. Encourage your child to have a wind down hour between studying, watching tv, or going on their phone and going to bed to help them sleep better.
- Help your child to find ways to relax – make sure your child still makes time for hobbies, going out with friends and self-care.

### Top tips for during exams:



- Try to encourage your child to practice positive self-talk e.g., “I have revised, I can do this, and it will all be over soon.”
- Prepare items the night before like pens and a water bottle.
- Drinking water regularly can help concentration.
- Practice breathing, grounding or mindfulness techniques on the morning of the exam, just before the exam starts or if panic starts to set in – see [Calm zone | Childline](#) for more examples.
- Read all questions carefully and remind your child to think about their answers before writing them down.
- Encourage exercise during exam season – this can help to boost energy levels, relieve stress and clear the mind.
- Do not add to the pressure on your child – try to support your child by being positive, reassuring and by avoiding any criticism.



## Top tips for after exams:

- Remind your child that whatever their results, try to help them to keep things in perspective – exam success does not define them as a person.
- Encourage your child to relax before their next exam – getting through an exam can be exhausting so it is important to have a break before trying to revise again.
- Once exams are finished, try to remind your child to forget about them. Or if your child wants to talk things through with you, encourage them to focus on the positive parts of the exams instead of the parts they found difficult.
- Remind your child to not compare themselves with their friends as this can make them feel like they aren't good enough.
- Make time for treats and celebrations – plan some rewards for your child doing their revision and for getting through each exam so they have things to look forward to



**Open Communication:** Instead of asking "How much have you done today?", try "How are you feeling today?" or "Is there anything I can do to help you get started?" NHS JM Mental Health. Praising them for the little things when you can see they have really struggled to get motivated and in the end they did.

An effective revision timetable is a visual plan that balances focused study with essential rest. Rather than just listing subjects, a high-quality template breaks them down into specific, manageable tasks to prevent overwhelm.



## Example of a revision timetable:

Time Slot	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Weekend (Sat/Sun)
09:00 – 11:00	School / College	School / College	School / College	<b>Heavy Topic</b> (e.g., Maths Algebra)
11:00 – 11:30	Break	Break	Break	<b>Long Break / Exercise</b>
15:30 – 16:30	Chill / Snack	Chill / Snack	Chill / Snack	<b>Active Recall</b> (Flashcards)
16:30 – 17:30	<b>Subject A:</b> (Topic 1)	<b>Subject B:</b> (Topic 1)	<b>Subject C:</b> (Topic 1)	<b>Past Paper Practice</b>
17:30 – 18:30	Dinner / Family	Dinner / Family	Dinner / Family	Dinner / Family

## To make this template work for your child, follow these five steps:

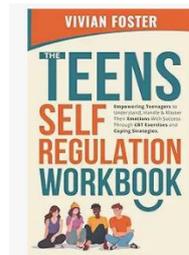
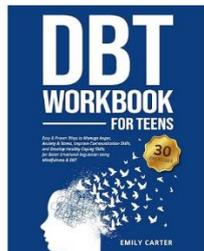
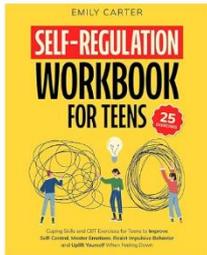
1. **Block Out Non-Negotiables:** Fill in school hours, meals, sports, and hobbies first. This shows exactly how much "free" time is actually available.
2. **Break Subjects into "Chunks":** Don't just write "Science." Instead, write "Biology: Cell Structure" or "Chemistry: Periodic Table." This makes starting much easier.
3. **Prioritize by "Traffic Lights":** Have your child mark topics as **Red** (struggling), **Amber** (okay), or **Green** (confident). Schedule **Red** topics for times when they are most alert, such as weekend mornings.
4. **Use Spaced Repetition:** Instead of cramming one subject all day, rotate between 2–3 different subjects. This keeps the brain engaged and improves long-term memory.
5. **Build in "Buffer" Time:** Leave a few slots empty each week. These are for catching up on topics that took longer than expected, reducing the stress of "falling behind".



## For further tips and support, visit:

- [How To Deal with Exam Stress | YoungMinds](#)
- [Download Adapt - Revision Timetable App](#)
- [Exam stress and pressure | Childline](#)
- [www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/young-people/exam-stress](http://www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/young-people/exam-stress)

## Recommended Books:



**"At the end of the day, your child will remember how they felt during exam season much more than they will remember the specific results."**

**Please do speak to your child's school if you have any concerns regarding your child's wellbeing. We hope you have found this newsletter to be a useful resource and welcome and feedback using the below QR Code.**



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