

EXAM STRESS

HOME LEARNING PACK

Learning objectives

We are learning about the:

- potential effects of exam stress on our physical and emotional wellbeing, and ways to manage it.

Learning outcomes

Students can:

- identify signs of exam stress in themselves and spot the signs of it in others
- know who to ask for advice and where to look for guidance on exam stress, including on the Every Mind Matters website
- select and use strategies to help them manage exam stress, including revision techniques.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQxYCEX-gRo&t=1s>

- Why do exams cause us stress?
- How could you tell if you or a friend is experiencing stress?
- What would you like to know about dealing with exam stress?

IMAGINE AN 'EXAM BUDDY' APP

- Imagine an app that could help you recognise & manage your exam stress.
- What could it help you spot?

What the person might think or say when stressed (head)



The physical symptoms a person might experience (body).

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS COULD INCLUDE:

1. difficulty getting to sleep or difficulty waking up in the morning
2. constant tiredness
3. forgetfulness
4. unexplained aches and pains
5. poor appetite
6. loss of interest in activities
7. increased anxiety and irritability
8. increased heart rate
9. migraines/headaches
10. blurred vision and/or dizziness
11. comfort eating
12. drinking too many caffeinated/energy drinks
13. exacerbated existing health conditions/depleted immune system (feeling 'run down').



VOCABULARY

- Create a 'vocabulary of stress': words that a person may use when they are feeling the pressure, to which the "Exam Buddy app might need to recognise and respond.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR EXAMS?

Pick an emoji that expresses your feelings. To help you choose your emoji, think honestly about the following yes or no prompt questions.

- Do you know how to spot when you're stressed?
- Can you think of ways to relax and de-stress?
- Would you say you're confident about revising for exams?
- Do you know what you want or need to achieve in your exams?
- Do you have a revision plan that will work for you?
- Do you know where to get help and advice about revising?

EXAM BUDDY – TIPS AND ADVICE DATABASE

The app needs to have a database of tips and advice for managing exam stress.

It could be sorted into three sections: stress before, during and after the exam.

Think about what types of tips you'd expect to see on there.

- Which would you find useful?
- Have you actually tried any?

Watch the two clips on the next slide for more ideas.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7W2yMxWajk>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZJqP2GeWc8>

Now take a look at this website. You'll find lots more ideas and films about exams, stress and revision. You may find some of the people in the films share your thought and feelings.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/youth-mental-health/>

HOW & WHEN TO USE THE TOOLS

- When is the right time to put each idea into action?
- Which ideas need to be put into practice well in advance?
- Which tools (e.g. sticky notes, a diary, study buddy) can someone use to help plan and do their revision?

You cannot underestimate importance of talking to a trusted person if you are experiencing stress.

You can talk to teachers, pastoral team, parents, siblings, friends or classmates.

It is important to get help and not suffer in silence!

My best mate always seems to have done loads more work than me. It's making me stressed out. – Sam

During exams I get freaked out by the first question if I can't answer it, and then I get stuck. – Niamh

I'm sure I'm going to fail, no matter how much work I do. What is the best way to revise? – Jack

EXAM BUDDY APP FORUM

My exams are over but I'm so worried that I can't sleep. I need to find out what I got but it won't be for weeks! – Alex

How do I make sure to leave enough time to answer all the questions in the exam? – Harry

What advice would you offer the people who wrote these posts?

I get a headache nearly every day. I keep thinking about what my parents will say if I don't get the right grades.

I'm struggling to manage my time and fit all my revision in. It feels like there's far too much to do. I keep forgetting to eat lunch. – Millie

Sometimes in exams I break out in a cold sweat and start breathing really fast. I'm starting to panic it will happen this time. – Jas

They'll be so upset and disappointed. I'm finding it hard to focus and actually revise. – Nav

BEFORE EXAMS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukLnPblffxE>

1. Eat healthily by having breakfast and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Try to avoid junk food.
2. Avoid alcohol, cigarettes or too much caffeine as this won't help manage stress.
3. Get your eight hours sleep. Wind down before bed by putting away your mobile and tablet.
4. The key to lowering your stress is organisation and preparation. Going into an exam feeling confident because you've worked hard is going to be less stressful.
5. Manage your time. Make a realistic timetable. Stick to it. Everyone approaches revision in different ways so make sure you've chosen the method that works best for you.
6. Plan breaks and treats into your revision schedule in order to reward yourself. This includes exercise breaks.
7. Plan your social media breaks so that your phone is not interrupting your revision.
8. Learn to recognise when you are becoming stressed. A break or a chat with someone who knows the pressure you're under will get things into perspective.
9. Remember to focus on yourself not your friends, so avoid comparing your revision with that of your classmates.
10. Surround yourself with a group of people who will motivate you, and who you can talk to about your exam stress constructively.

DURING EXAMS

11. If you feel yourself panicking during the exam, sit back for a moment and control your breathing.

12. Talk to the invigilator in the room if you fear you might have a panic attack.

13. Read the questions thoroughly and plan your answers to help you feel in control.

AFTER EXAMS

14. Remember to keep things in perspective and steer clear of any exam 'post-mortems'. It doesn't matter what your friends wrote as it's too late to go back and change your answers.

Put it behind you – the best thing to do is focus on the next exam.

15. Remember that there is life after exams. Things might seem intense right now, but it won't last forever.

16. There will be a point when the exam is over, so working hard for a short time will pay off when you get your results and feel that achievement.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR EXAMS?

Think back to the emoji that you chose to express your feelings.

- Have your feelings about exam stress changed since the beginning of the presentation?
- Do you feel more confident in preparing for exams and handling any exam stress?
- Do you know where to get more ideas or help if you need it?
- Can you spot when you're starting to get stressed and know what you can do to deal with it?

I CAN!

If someone I know is stressing about planning their revision, I can...

- If I see someone who needs to take a break from revising and relax, I can...
- When someone I know needs to get help with their revision planning, I can...
- If my friend gets stressed in the middle of an exam, I would advise them to...