

Navigating exam season

Student guide to managing exam stress

Exams can be a challenging time, and the pressure to do well can feel overwhelming, especially if you're feeling pressure from school or family.

It's perfectly normal to feel worried about your exams, but it's important that you find ways to manage your worries.

We've shared some advice below.



Know the signs of stress

What signs tell you that you are stressed?

- Perhaps you do certain things (shop, eat, sleep, study more, don't study)
- Perhaps you think certain things (catastrophise, "I can't do this")
- Perhaps you feel certain ways (grumpy, sad, hopeless, helpless)



Recognise when you're stressed

Think about what signs tell you are stressed - perhaps you find you have a racing heart, or find it difficult to sleep - these are perfectly normal responses. Know the signs so you recognise when you're struggling.



Develop coping strategies

There are different ways you can calm your body's stress response. Look online for guided breathing exercises or relaxation techniques (we love these [relaxation techniques from NHS Scotland](#)).



Create a daily timetable

Create a plan and be realistic about what you can achieve each day. Planning your revision time will help you know what you want to study when, which can make revision seem less overwhelming.



Take regular breaks

Make sure you take regular breaks, as your brain cannot concentrate for hours at a time. If you can, use breaks as an opportunity to go outside, exercise, or spend time with family and friends.



Play to your strengths

Not everyone learns the same way, so consider your strengths and how you learn best. You may prefer to read, watch videos, draw diagrams, write lots of notes... Find what works best for you.



Keep things in perspective

Remember that there's more to life than your grades. Exams are only a small part of the picture, and your results don't define who you are.



Ask for help

Let your family, friends, and teachers know if you are struggling so that they can support you.

If you're feeling overwhelmed and need to talk:

- Text CONNECT to 85258 for free to speak to Shout
- Call 0800 1111 to speak to Childline, or visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) for their free online chat
- Visit [place2be.org.uk/help](https://www.place2be.org.uk/help) for more advice