



Exam Time

Exams are a stressful time for any young person. Mood swings and outbursts are more likely to occur during this period. Look out for other indicators that your child or young person may be struggling, including poor sleep patterns or a change in appetite or behaviour. There are lots of ways to prepare for the lead up to exams, ways of supporting during exam weeks and thinking about how you will react and respond on the day if they don't get the result that they, or you, are hoping for.

How to support your child to cope with exam stress:

- Plan ahead - speak to their teacher to find out what revision techniques they recommend
- Work with your child to find what revision style works for them
- Encourage breaks and balance of work load and enjoyable activities
- Make sure they are eating and drinking at regular intervals
- Encourage them to take some time after revising to wind down
- Reassure them – reinforce that you are and will be proud of them no matter what happens
- Don't try to police the young person
- Remain positive and hopeful
- Plan a treat or an activity together to mark the end of the exams

How can the school help?

- If your child is struggling with a specific subject, talk to the relevant teacher and explore whether they can provide additional help
- Establish if the school has learning mentors that can help with practical steps including revision timetables
- If your child has additional learning or developmental needs, speak to the school SENCO and establish what specialist provision they can put in place

Managing general stress and anxiety in young people:

- Set aside one to one time so that they can talk to you about any worries
- Validate their feelings but also offer support and solutions where possible
- Anxiety is often worst at night and this means it is useful to encourage good bedtime routine
- Work with them to develop relaxation techniques
- If anxiety and stress start impacting their day-to-day life get help from your GP

What can help? What to do next

These are some things that can make a difference:

- On the day, ignore all the others and their parents – all the shouting, laughing, leaping around, crying– it might seem that everyone has done better than your daughter/son, but there will be plenty of others who are sitting quietly, perhaps disappointed.
- If they are happy to show you their results statement, you might find it good to confirm what the definitive results are, just in case they have misread or misunderstood.
- Accept their feelings, whatever they are – disappointment, anger, embarrassment, bravado. Their feelings are neither right nor wrong, they just are. Don't offer immediate judgement or solutions– there will be plenty of time for conversations later.
- The best thing is to simply reflect back “I can see you're disappointed with the Maths result.”
- Let them know you love them through highs and lows. Big hugs are good (although this could be embarrassing in public!)
- Schools and colleges are usually very good at providing learning mentors and staff that can explore next steps with the students including re-takes, re-marking, alternative courses, checking offers criteria etc.
- Don't come out with the kind of platitudes that young people don't appreciate – you know the kind of thing: 'One door closes, another door opens/Never mind, life goes on'.
- Don't discuss in hushed tones on the phone with friends and family – agree with your daughter/son how they want it discussed with family and friends, if at all.
- Do something to show you're on their side and support their resilient moves – get the snacks in, supply the chocolate.
- Give yourself some breathing space. Sleep on it and give yourself and your child some time to make any important decisions.

Finding support

All resources listed on this sheet are for information only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, YoungMinds cannot accept responsibility for changes to details made by other organisations.

<p>Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/exam-stress Advice around dealing with exam stress, revising and getting your results. You can also find links to blogs in which young people share their own stories.</p>	<p>The Mix www.themix.org.uk If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix about anything that's troubling you over the phone, email or webchat - and explore the information and advice available on their website. You can also use their phone or online counselling service.</p> <p>Helpline open daily 4-11pm: 0808 808 4994</p> <p>Email: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/email-us</p> <p>Webchat open daily 4-11pm: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team</p> <p>Counselling service: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/the-mix-counselling-service</p>
<p>Exam Results Helpline www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/exam-results-helpline-back-august-2019 Specialist careers advice to help young people and their families decide on options following GCSE, A Level and Nationals exam results days.</p> <p>Helpline for Scotland: 0808 100 8000 Helpline for rest of UK: 0800 100 900</p> <p>Usually available through August. Opening days and hours may vary each year - check website for details.</p>	<p>BBC Bitesize: The Mind Set www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zpmpk2p Information and advice around how to cope on results day.</p>
<p>Student Minds www.studentminds.org.uk Supports students, and parents of students, to look after their mental health. The website provides information about services offered by universities, and young people can also access their peer and group support programmes.</p> <p>Email: info@studentminds.org.uk</p> <p>Phone: 0113 343 8440</p> <p>Support for parents: www.studentminds.org.uk/supportforparents</p>	<p>National Careers Service www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk Information, advice and guidance to help young people make decisions about learning, training and work.</p> <p>Open 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week.</p> <p>Phone: 0800 100 900</p> <p>Webchat: Select the 'use webchat' option on the homepage.</p>

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<p>Apprenticeships www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide Information and advice about apprenticeships. You can also use Find an Apprenticeship to search for apprenticeships that might suit you.</p> <p>Phone: 0800 015 0400 (charges may apply)</p> <p>Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk</p>	<p>YoungMinds (Information for Parents) #Take20 www.youngminds.org.uk/take20 Ideas and suggestions to help parents find 20 minutes to do something together with their child to support confidence, self-esteem and resilience.</p> <p>Parents Lounge www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-lounge Our Parents Helpline experts answer questions on exam stress.</p> <p>Top Tips www.youngminds.org.uk/take20/top-tips-for-you-and-your-child Supporting a child through a time of difficulty or change.</p>
<p> www.minded.org.uk/families/index.html MindEd for families is a website where you can hear about other parents' experiences and find clear, helpful guidance on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>CRISIS TEXT LINE </p> <p>If you, or someone you are caring for, is experiencing a mental health crisis, you can text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger for free, 24/7 support. Text YM to 85258. Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus. This service is powered by our trusted partner, Crisis Text Line.</p>