

Coping Mechanisms

In order to limit the impact exam stress has on your child, there are things that you can encourage your child to do. They include:

- Being prepared for exams
 - Eating well
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Stay hydrated
 - Have a designated workspace
 - Keep workspace tidy and organised
 - Take regular breaks
 - Keep up to date with hobbies and friendships
 - Ensure self-care
 - Take time for themselves
 - Don't binge-revise
 - Create a timetable – and stick to it
 - Be organised
 - Help them know what their learning style is – a quick internet search will give quiz options to find what works best for them
- Remind your child that exam periods do not last
- Remind your child that exams do not reflect who they are or their worth
- Encourage your child to try their best, to celebrate the small victories, and not to dwell on exams once they have been completed – its been, its gone – it isn't worth worrying over, they have done it
- Encourage your child to open up and talk about how they are feeling
- Try breathing exercises
- Encourage physical exercise

Exam Stress Coping Mechanisms



The Lotus Mental Health

www.thelotusmentalhealth.org

What is Exam Stress?

Exam stress happens when a person is feeling extreme, severe, and life-interfering worry, anxiety and/or panic about upcoming tests, assessments, or exams.

If exam stress is bad enough, it can have a damaging effect on a person's mental health and wellbeing.

Although exam stress itself is not a mental health condition, it can lead to the development of a number of mental health conditions, including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Low-self esteem
- Self-harming
- Suicidal thoughts
- Worsening of pre-existing mental health conditions

What are the Signs and Symptoms?

- Bad tempered – especially at the thought or mention of exams
- Grumpy – especially at the thought or mention of exams
- Irritable – especially at the thought or mention of exams
- Sleep problems – unable to sleep/always tired
- Unable to relax
- Sweating/Rapid heart rate
- Nail biting
- Withdrawal
- Feeling sick - nausea
- Emotional outbursts
- Self-doubt – regardless of ability
- Severe butterflies/tummy churning
- Feeling inadequate – genuinely believing that they can't do it

Coping Mechanisms

If your child(ren) are feeling anxious, there are things that you can encourage your child to do that can help them. They are:

- Nobody should go through difficult times alone, and this is something that your child needs to learn to understand, because of this, it is important for your child to learn how to open up to people about how they are feeling. A parent, carer, brother, sister, grandparent, auntie, uncle, cousin, a trusted friend, a counsellor – it doesn't matter who, as long as your child feels comfortable talking to someone who they trust, about how they are feeling.
- Encourage your child to get the thoughts that are in their head – out. An effective way that they can do this by keeping a diary. Simply writing down how they are feeling can be really useful. Not only will that work because it helps them put a place for their negative thoughts, but it can also be used as a point of reference for any particular anxiety triggers that they didn't realise they had.
- Writing a letter – this might seem a bit daft, but if they can write letters to themselves, particularly after particular difficult anxiety attacks, they can use the letters to read back and see themselves, through their own words, that they have overcome anxiety attacks in the past, and therefore they know that they are capable of overcoming them.