

Stress and Anxiety Management Tips and Resources

General Tips

1. Watch out for exam stress

- Stressed children may be irritable, not sleep well, lose interest in food, worry a lot and appear depressed or negative. Headaches and stomach pains can also be stress-related.

2. Ensure your child eats well at exam time

- A balance diet is vital for your child's health and can help them feel well during exam periods.

3. Sleep helps exam performance

- Good sleep will improve your child's thinking and concentration. Most teenagers need between 8 and 10 hours of sleep a night.
- Allow half an hour or so for your son or daughter to wind down between studying, watching TV or using a computer/device and going to bed, to help them get a good night's sleep.

Be flexible at exam time

- Family Lives advises parents to be flexible around exam time. An untidy room isn't the end of the world and exams don't last forever!

5. Don't add to exam pressure

- Support group ChildLine says that many of the children who contact them feel that the greatest pressure at exam time comes from their family.
- Trust your child. If they say they want to do well, they usually mean it. Help but try not to control or lead too much.
- Before they go in for a test or exam, be reassuring and positive. Make sure they know that failing isn't the end of the world.
- After each exam, encourage your child to talk it through with you. Then move on and focus on the next test, rather than dwelling on things that can't be changed.

6. Have treats after exams

- When the exams are over, help celebrate with a treat.
- Don't use rewards as bribes. Instead, encourage them to work for their own satisfaction, offering small, frequent treats.

Five Ways to Wellbeing

Connect

Encourage your son or daughter to spend time with friends and family and try to make time to talk to them and really listen to their answers.

Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Take notice

Reminding your child to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities and enhance self-understanding.

Learn

Not everything needs to be about school work. Encourage them to keep up with hobbies or to enjoy learning something for the sake of it.

Give

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Although you need to cut them some slack, don't completely let them off helping out at home, encourage them to think of others.

Useful Websites / Articles

www.childline.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

www.familylives.org.uk

www.nhs.uk/livewell

Sideways Listening:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/jan/14/children-parents-talk-opportunities-sideways-listening-chats>

Coping with the stress of exam time:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationadvice/11604644/Dont-let-exam-stress-consume-your-family.html>

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