

A Guide to Exam Stress

Age Range:

13+, Years 9+,
KS3, KS4

Topics Covered:

Exams and exam stress

Time:

40 minutes

Equipment needed:

Paper and stationery.
Copies of the worksheet.
Internet access (optional).

Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have increased skills in preparing for exams.
- Young people have an increased ability to identify a range of people or services that can support with exam stress.
- Young people have increased knowledge of how to handle stress when preparing for exams.

An exercise to explore skills and attitudes around dealing with exam stress.

Introduction

This exercise can be used to explore attitudes on exams and strategies in dealing with exam stress.

First thoughts question: *"Why might someone feel worried or concerned about their upcoming exams?"* You can go around the group or ask for hands up and write up their answers on the board.

Exercise

Split the class into groups of 2s or 3s and hand out the sheet below which has suggestions on how to deal with exam stress. Ask the groups to read through the tips provided.

Then ask the groups to choose the tips/strategies they find most useful to create a plan or poster to help combat exam stress and worries. They may also want to add their own tips to it.

The groups may want to look at other posters for presentation and layout ideas online.

Summary

You could spend some time looking at all the posters/plans created and run a discussion on the benefits other students may gain from the information given.

You could sum up this exercise by having a discussion with the group on what they feel are the most effective strategies when dealing with exam stress. As well as focusing on where someone could get help and support.

There may also be an opportunity to use the best plans or posters around the school or college to help people remember and become familiar with the most useful tips.

Tips and strategies to help with exam stress:

Get support!

- You don't have to feel alone, chat to close friends, family members, teachers or even Childline about your feelings.
- Write down worries - then throw the paper away or give it to someone you trust.
- It helps to share worries/stresses with people you trust to get it off your chest.
- Speak with parents/guardians about their expectations and what you think you have the capacity to achieve. Tell them that the best way to get there is to have support from them, not pressure.
- Revising with a friend or peer may help you feel more confident and may help them too!

Keep calm and get organised!

- Break your revision down into small chunks and form a plan.
- Think about when and where you work best.
- Avoid stimulants. Caffeine, alcohol and drugs reduce energy and concentration in the long term. It'll also make it more difficult to get that much-needed sleep.
- Take regular breaks. Go for a walk or make a refreshing drink!
- Allow free time to unwind. Nobody can work all day every day.

Look after yourself!

- Keep active and get fresh air. Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de-stress and clear your head.
- Try to get about 8 hours' sleep a night.
- Listen to calming music.
- Find activities to help relax. Maybe it's a hot bath, watching a TV show, or a creative activity.
- Eat well. Have a good balance diet and eat slow-release foods like rice, pasta, fruit and veg to get the energy flowing.
- Drink lots of water. Staying hydrated will really help!

Stay positive and keep things in perspective!

- Remember that everyone's different - try not to compare yourself to your friends or others.
- Try replacing negative thoughts like "I can't do this, I'm going to fail" to positive thoughts like "relax, concentrate - it's going to be okay" and repeat these to yourself.
- Once an exam's finished, try to forget about it. Worrying won't do anything to help.
- Remember, exams are important - but they're not the only way to a successful future.