

Parent/Carer's guide to supporting young people with exam stress:

What can you do to help?

It is normal for young people to feel stressed about their exams and some level of stress can be good, it helps a child to grow, develop coping strategies and build resilience. However, sometimes it builds up and spills over and it's important for parents to try and stay calm if this happens.

It might also be useful to reflect on your own experience of exams – consider the following questions:

- What are your own beliefs about exams?
- Where do these beliefs come from?
- What was your experience of going through exams?



Be mindful of what you say out loud, it's important to remember these are your concerns and anxieties, not your child's. Instead use your experiences to help relate to how your child may be feeling.

Normalising any stress or worry about exams is important. Being able to recognise the different ways anxiety and stress can present, such as mood swings, sleeplessness and becoming withdrawn, can help them understand how they are feeling.

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The Stress Bucket

WeHeartCBT

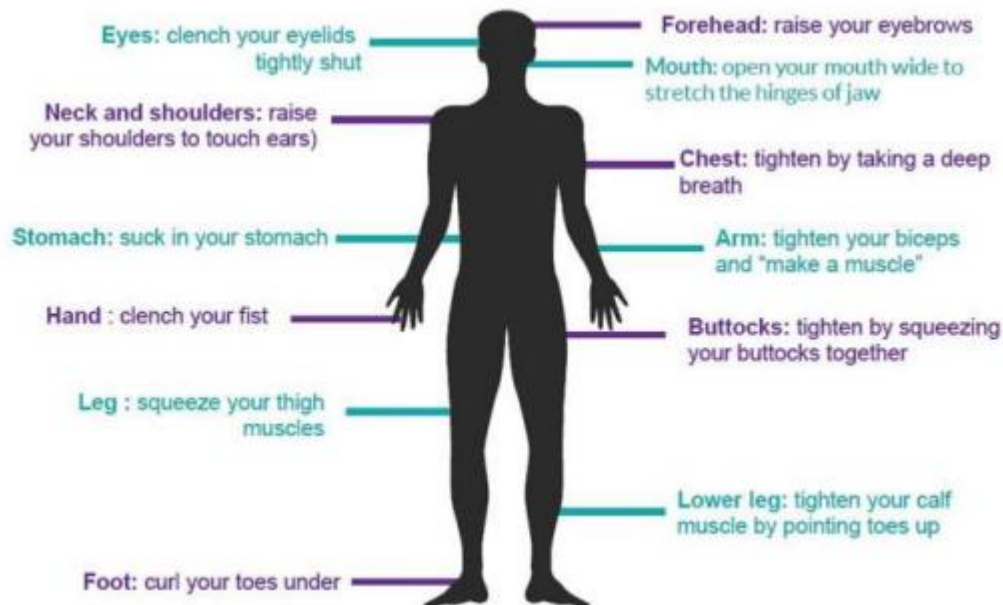
What happens in the mind influences the body so mental wellbeing plays a vital role in maintaining balance and focus. **Mindfulness** is a technique which can help support and manage your thoughts, feelings and wellbeing.

Mindful breathing is a simple activity where you focus your attention on your breath. Lots of people find that regularly using simple breathing exercises helps them to regulate their mood and manage stress.



- 1 **Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- 2 **Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.
- 3 **Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.
Tip: Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
- 4 **Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a relaxation technique. It involves tensing and then relaxing your muscles, one by one. This helps you release physical tension, which may ease stress and anxiety.



Further techniques can be found by clicking on the following links:

[Learn Breathing Technique Box Breathing: Practice Breathwork for Focus and Anxiety with Dora Kamau \(youtube.com\)](#)

[How To Relieve Stress - Headspace](#)

Further support for all types of stress and anxiety can be found on our **Mental Health and Wellbeing advice and support pages**, accessible from the Mental Health and Wellbeing section of the Parent's menu.