

Stress & Anxiety

(Especially leading up to and during exam season!)

Let's go back to basics.....

It sounds a bit odd but stress is an important part of being human. Just like every other animal there are times when we need to adapt to our surroundings quickly and respond to get ourselves out of danger. To do that effectively we need a chemical reaction, known as an adrenaline rush.

Animals have a rush of adrenaline when a predator comes near or attacks. This adrenaline gives the animal an extra boost which helps it to sprint away or fight back. Humans have the same response but the situations have changed, we are no longer dealing with wild animal attacks but it could be a family member shouting at us or someone jumping in front of us in a queue.

Stress can be both positive and negative. On a positive note it could enable you to complete a task e.g. coursework or on a negative front it can make us ill if we 'bottle it up'.

So believe it or not, stress is normal and we do actually need it!!

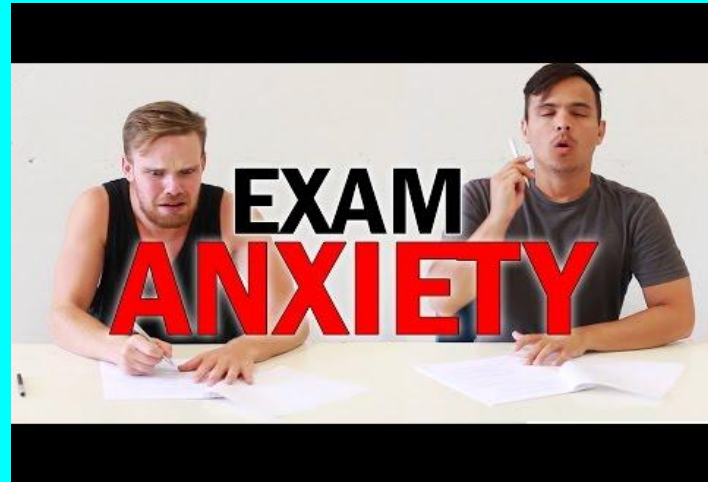
To be honest I absolutely HATE it and wish it didn't exist.

I hate feeling stressed!!



So the best things that we can do are to learn to understand our stress, learn to deal with our stress and to know what stresses us out (triggers) so we can prepare ourselves as best we can.

Most people in our world get 'stressed' around tests and exams; it is normal and we mustn't beat ourselves up about feeling stressed.



We mustn't tell ourselves things such as:

"there is something wrong with me!"

It's just not true, most people will be feeling exactly the same, it is a human response, it is normal!

UCL (University College London) say:

Pace yourself through panic

Panicking before, during or even after an exam is common among university students. If you experience it at any point, take six deep breaths, hydrate yourself, and then go back the problem at hand, being sure to break it down into several, manageable chunks. Remember that there is usually a rational solution to every problem, even if you can't see it at first glance.

So, thinking about the exam season coming up, here are some tried and tested ideas to help you to alleviate some of your stress, get you looking after yourself and help you to be able to keep things in perspective.

Get to your exam knowing that you couldn't have done anything else and you are as ready as you can be.

You can only do your best!
Don't try to be perfect!!



Do this by setting up a revision timetable - a realistic one that incorporates plenty of breaks and treats.

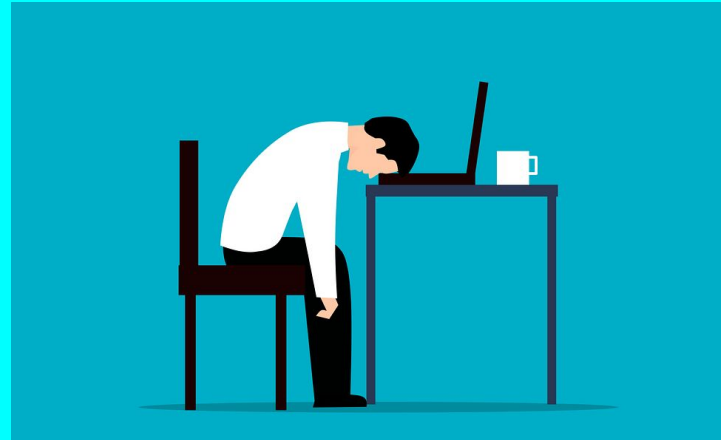


Take a break after studying for 40-50 mins-
This will help you to be as productive as
possible

Don't set yourself ridiculous goals.

Nobody can revise 10 topics a day!

Avoid setting the day up to be a disappointment.



If you struggle with motivation, start in good time by doing **SOMETHING!**

It doesn't matter how small, just something that helps with the upcoming exams early on.



What does your workspace look like?

Do you like it? Is it relaxing? Is it tidy?



“A cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind”

The more clutter you have around your workspace, the less you're able to concentrate on preparing for the exam. This is because your brain is being bombarded by so many distractions.

Physical clutter overloads your brain and impairs your ability to think, which leads to stress.

You don't have to kiss goodbye to your social life, you just have to tweak things for a little while.



Try studying/revising with a friend or friends - but just be honest with yourself, if it only ever turns into a social gathering without any work getting done then it's no good to you.



Make sure you are still socialising and not locking yourself away all of the time though. Also, make time to do things that you enjoy doing outside of college work and revision.



50 *Ways* to Take a Break

Speak to your teachers if you are unsure about anything at all in one of your subjects - that is what they are there for, they will be expecting this!



Eat healthily, get some exercise in and get plenty of sleep:

Pulling all-nighters, surviving on a poor diet, and getting minimal amounts of movement into your day can increase symptoms of anxiety. For your body's best performance, make sure you're getting 8/9 hours of sleep, enough slow-release carbs, less caffeine and more water, and at least half an hour of exercise per day.

Speak to someone you trust - you'll be amazed at how much better you can feel after a good chat with someone that understands what you're going through.



Remind yourself what all of this is for
and what you've got to look forward to
after the exams are finished:

Nice long summer, university life, bbq's
with friends, holidays, etc, etc.



A few useful websites for further help, support and ideas:

[Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

[Youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[Studentminds.org.uk](https://www.studentminds.org.uk)

[Anxietyuk.org.uk](https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Big Reminder:

Most people in our world get 'stressed' around tests and exams; it is normal and we mustn't beat ourselves up about feeling stressed.

