

Supporting exam resilience: A webinar for parents

Delivered by
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Housekeeping



Introduction

Microphones are muted and cameras are off



Please use the chat and Q&A functions



Share with care & confidentiality



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Today's agenda



Introduction

Introduction: about the MHST

Understanding Exam Anxiety

How does stress impact exam performance?

Talking to Young people about Exams

Strategies to Build Resilience

Supporting Helpful Routines

Signposting, Feedback & Questions

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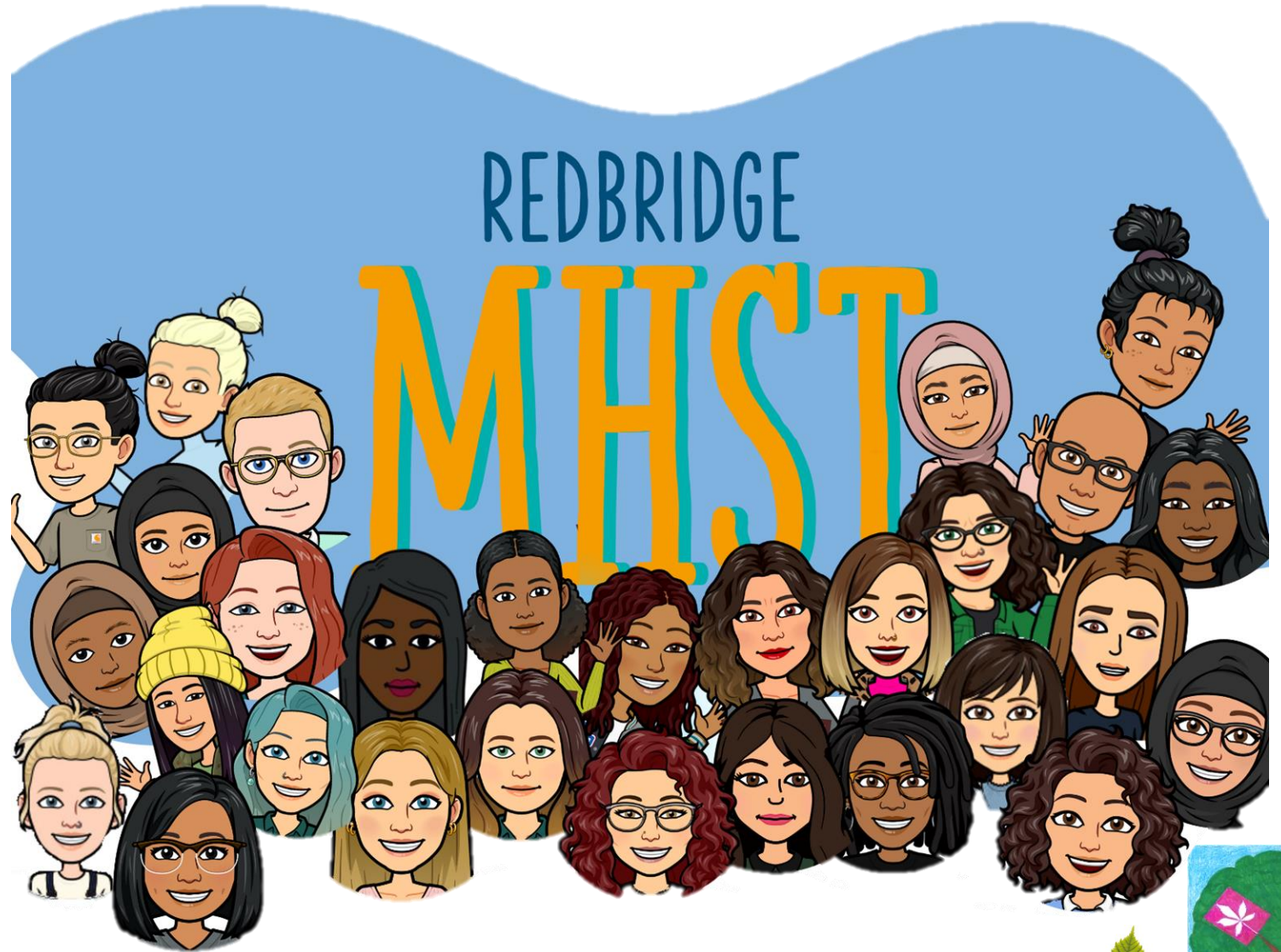
Redbridge Mental Health Support Team



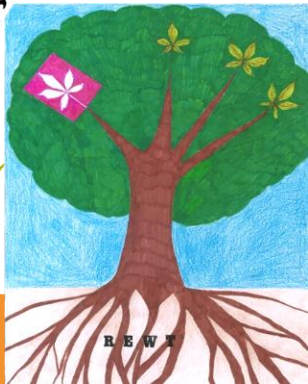
We deliver evidence-based interventions for parents/ carers and young people

We support schools with their whole school approach to well-being

We give timely advice and signpost



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How we can help - our individual and group offers

Challenging behaviour - We offer guided self-help to parents of Primary aged children to support with common behaviour problems

Anxiety and/ or Panic - We offer Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based guided self-help to parents and young people.

Low mood - We offer Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based guided self-help to young people, called Brief Behavioural Activation

We currently work into 30 Redbridge Schools, and are expanding our offer to more schools this year. Please check our website to see if your child's school is involved!





Not coping

Coping

Thriving

Mental health is **fluid and can change over time**

We can move along the spectrum in response to changes in our environment

We all experience things differently

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#BREAKTHESTIGMA

~ TOGETHER, LET'S BREAK MENTAL HEALTH TABOOS IN REDBRIDGE



Introduction

Asking for help is a sign of strength. If you don't feel well emotionally, there is confidential help for you within Redbridge.

Be kind to yourself. Self-compassion matters.


Be kind, encouraging and supportive to others. We don't know what people are going through.



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How confident are you in
supporting your child with
exam anxiety?

Please rate your current level of
confidence in managing your child's
exam anxiety on a scale of 1-10, with
1 not at all confident and 10 very
confident

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Understanding exam
anxiety

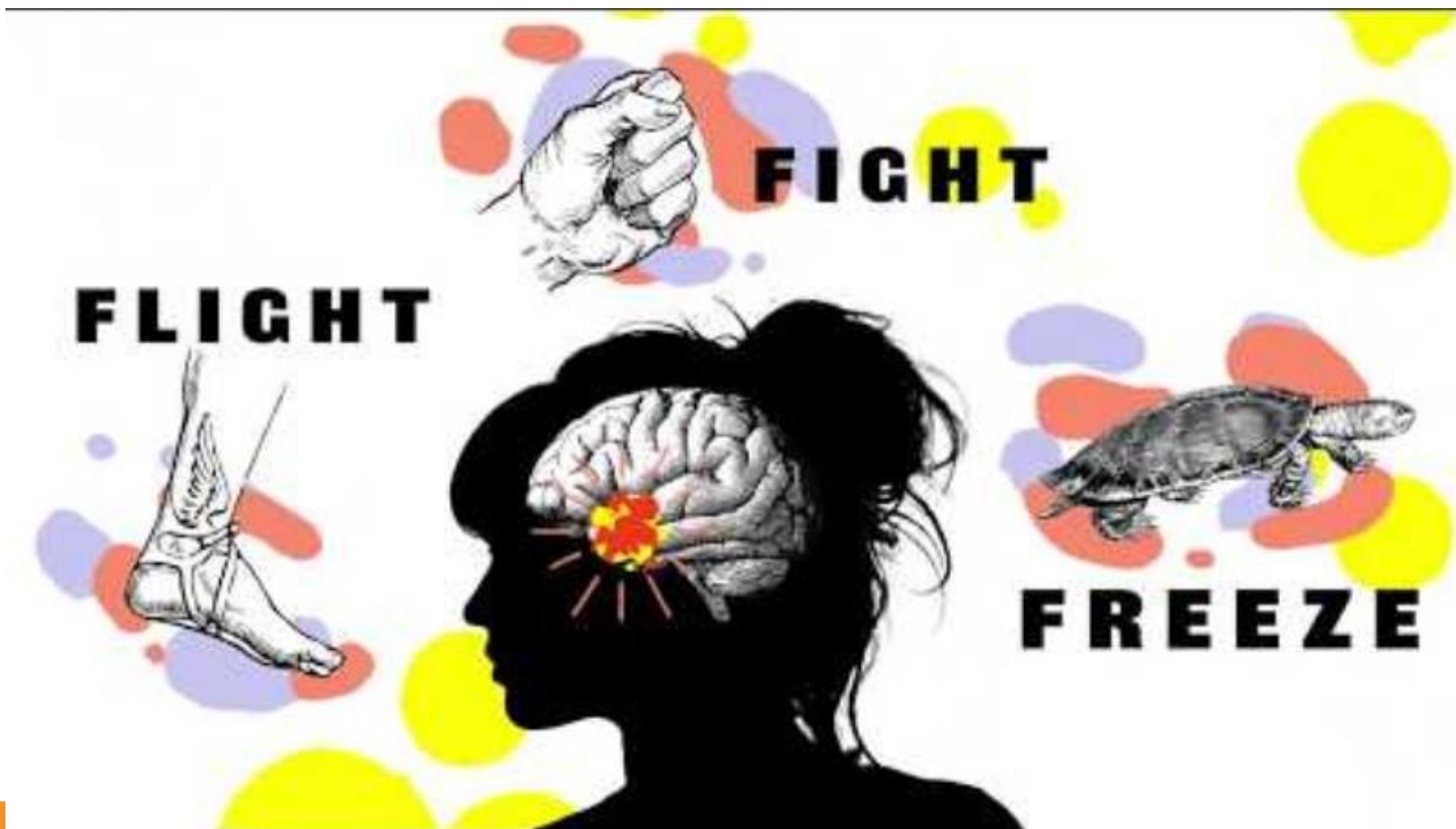
Understanding exam anxiety

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What is Anxiety?



What is Exam Anxiety?

- Exam anxiety is when people experience high levels of distress around exams and testing situations.
- It is **normal to feel nervous about exams**, and it can often give people that boost to study hard and perform to a high standard.
- However, there are also times when exam anxiety can become overwhelming and take over, creating an association with fear around exams.



Signs of Exam Anxiety and Stress

Believing you are likely to fail

Blaming others for failure

Difficulty concentrating in exams

Making silly and avoidable mistakes in exams

Find it difficult to plan ahead

Poor time management and fail to meet deadlines

Worry what might happen rather than thinking of ways to solve problems

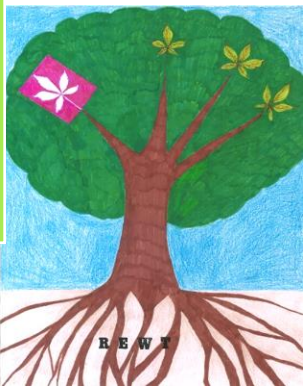
Procrastinate and put off revision

Going 'blank'

Heart racing, stomach churning, tense muscles

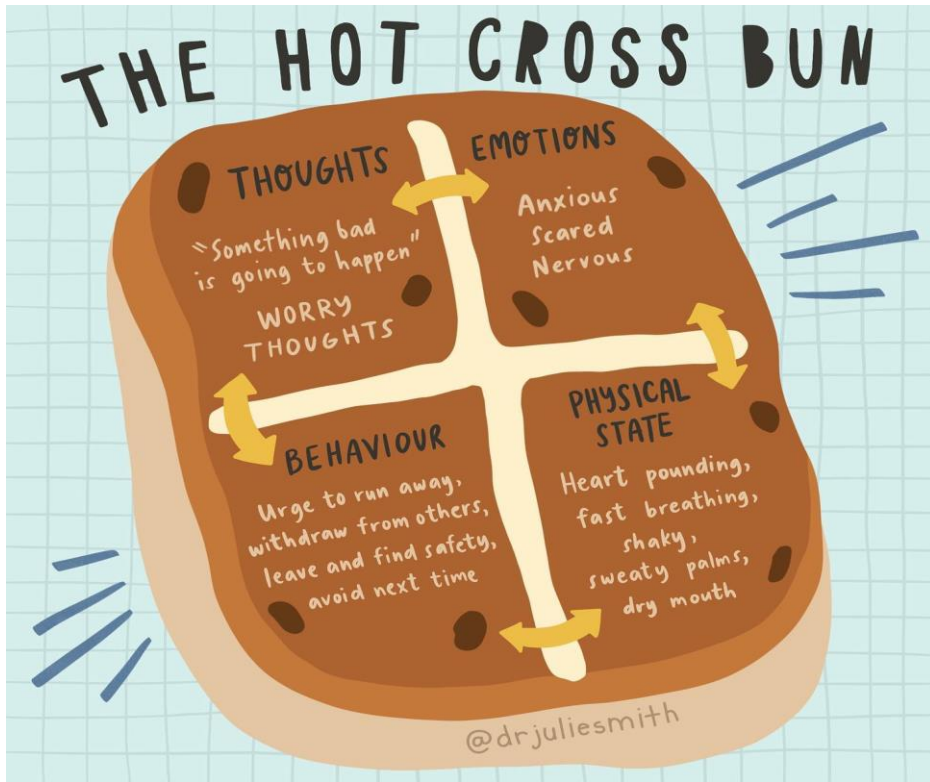
Worrying what might happen if you don't do well

Have you spotted any of these signs in your child?





CBT model (Cross sectional analysis)



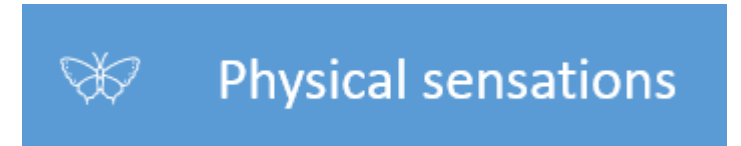
- Anxiety can show in different ways through thoughts, feelings, physical reactions and behaviours
- The experience differs for everyone
- Some people might experience anxious thoughts, while others might experience feelings or behaviours
- Some people experience different combinations of anxious thoughts, feelings, physical reactions and behaviours



UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

Scenario: Zara has a maths exam on Tuesday

I'm going to fail
I will never pass my A-levels
I am the dumbest one in my class.

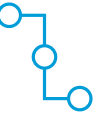


Avoidance
Procrastination
Making excuses to not revise



Overwhelmed
Worried
Anxious

Can't sleep well
Butterflies in tummy
Tired
Tummy ache



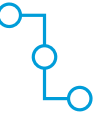
Effects of stress on
exam performance

How does stress affect exam performance?

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How does stress affect exam performance?



Effects of stress on
exam performance



Stress can have a positive or negative effect on performance depending on how we respond to the stress

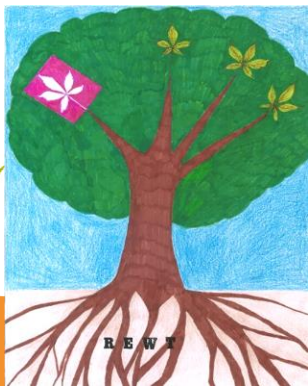


If we respond to stress as a challenge, it can have a positive effect on performance.

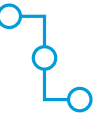


If we respond to stress as a threat, it can have a negative effect on performance.

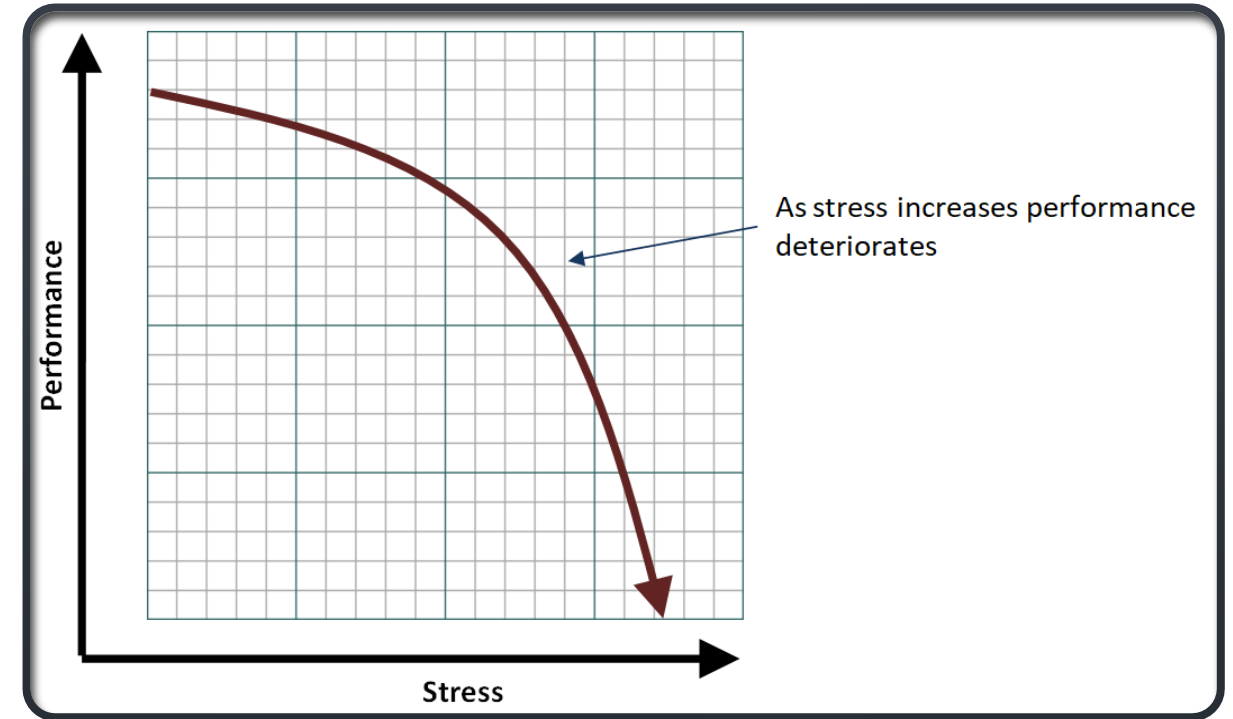
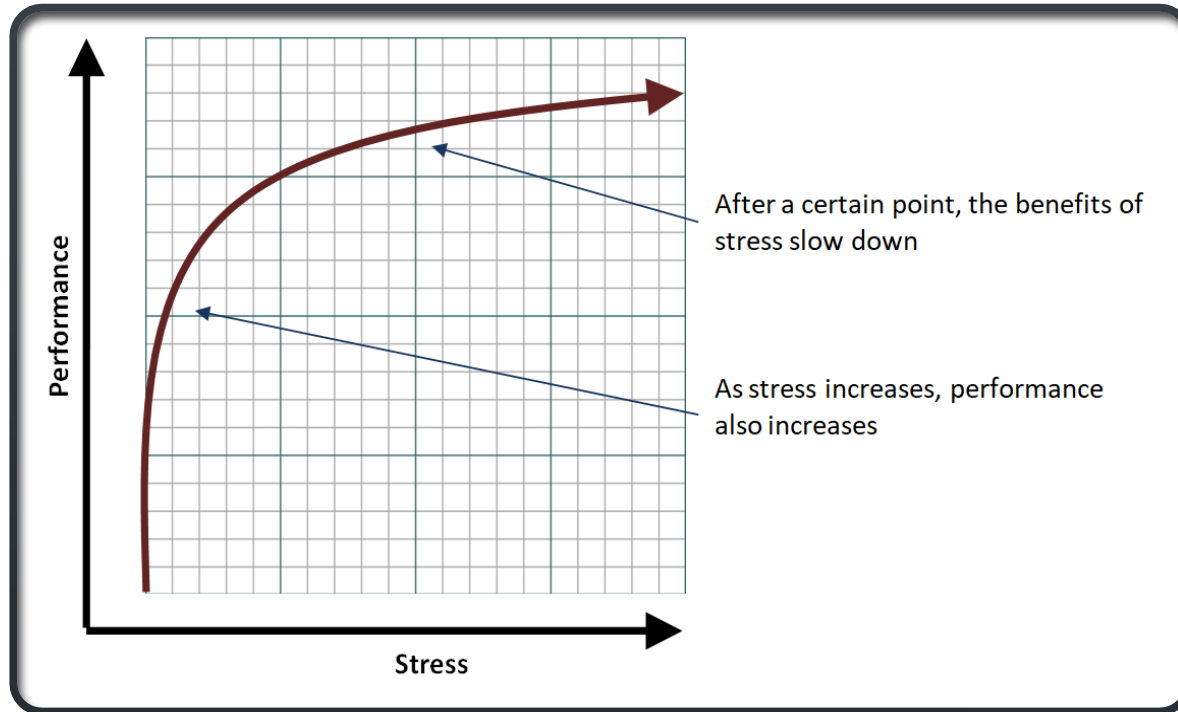
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How does stress affect exam performance?



Effects of stress on
exam performance



We can harness this to find the right balance.

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SEN and Exam Anxiety

- Exams can be a stressful time for any child, but for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the challenges can be even greater.
- SEN Students may have more difficulties with their learning and progress compared to other students, leaving them to feel frustrated and anxious.
- It is important to recognise the signs of stress and anxiety in your child. These can include changes in behaviour, sleep patterns, appetite and mood. Children with SEND may express their anxiety differently, so stay attuned to any changes that may indicate they're feeling overwhelmed.

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Talking to your child about
exams

Talking to Young People about exams

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Ways to talk about exams



Talking to your child about exams



Give time to hear their concerns



Let them know you are proud of them and accept them for who they are



Consider the messages that your child is hearing



Be encouraging



Be hopeful



Be understanding



What are your thoughts on these?
What barriers have you faced?

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Responding with Empathy



Talking to your child about exams

Support your children to get started!

- Procrastination prevents progress. Try setting a timer for 5/10 minutes.

Empathy

- The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Labelling emotions

- Noticing and putting a name to an emotion.

Validation

- "It's natural for you to feel like that" rather than "*You mustn't feel that way*"...

Acknowledge

- Reflect their words back to them, show them they are heard.

Normalise

- We all have mental health. We all experience anxiety and stress. It is ok not to be ok.

Supporting, not colluding!

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Strategies to build resilience

Strategies to Build Exam Resilience

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Coping Self Talk

- Coping self-talk is a strategy that we can use to help us get through anxiety provoking situations. It helps us to break stress up and involves focusing on positive rather than negative statements.
- Coping self-talk can encourage us and help us cope through distressing times.
- We can say these encouraging words to ourselves and be our own personal coach.
- We have all survived some very distressing times, and we can use those experiences to encourage us through current difficulties.



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Ways to calm physical responses

Deep
breathing

Progressive
Muscle
Relaxation

Visualisation



Deep Breathing



When we are anxious, we breathe faster than normal



This is called shallow breathing (breathing from the chest) and can make us feel tired, intensify worries, and even make us feel dizzy



Deep breathing involves breathing from your abdomen allowing you to inhale more oxygen and use less energy



The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath and anxious you feel

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Box breathing



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Progressive Muscle Relaxation

The idea behind muscle relaxation is that you tense up your muscles, so they are tightly contracted and hold them in extreme tension for a few seconds

You then release the muscles leaving them more relaxed

It can help us notice when we are tensing our muscles and are stressed and therefore can allow them to relax them



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Visualisation



Strategies to build resilience



Visualisation for **motivation** (e.g., picturing yourself receiving exam grades you are happy with)



Visualisation to **reduce anxiety** (e.g., picture yourself on a beach or in a safe and familiar place)



Visualisation for **self-confidence** (e.g., being able to answer a difficult exam question which initially scared you)

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Supporting helpful routines

Supporting helpful routines

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Supporting helpful routines



Maintaining sleep – regular bedtime, good quality sleep and the right amount for you.



Eating patterns



Taking breaks



Be flexible during exams



Encourage exercise and regular fresh air during exams

Supporting helpful routines

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Good revisers...



Supporting helpful routines

- Have a revision table
- Overcome procrastination by starting a task for just five minutes
- Spread out their revision
- Actively write their own notes
- Teach others (the protégé effect)
- Do past papers
- Use retrieval practice
- Revise in a quiet place (no music or TV)
- Put their phones away
- Drink water regularly
- Keep a diary to capture negative thoughts
- Consider a range of sensory input – visual, auditory – listen to a podcast, use mindmaps, record yourself on voicenotes and listen back.

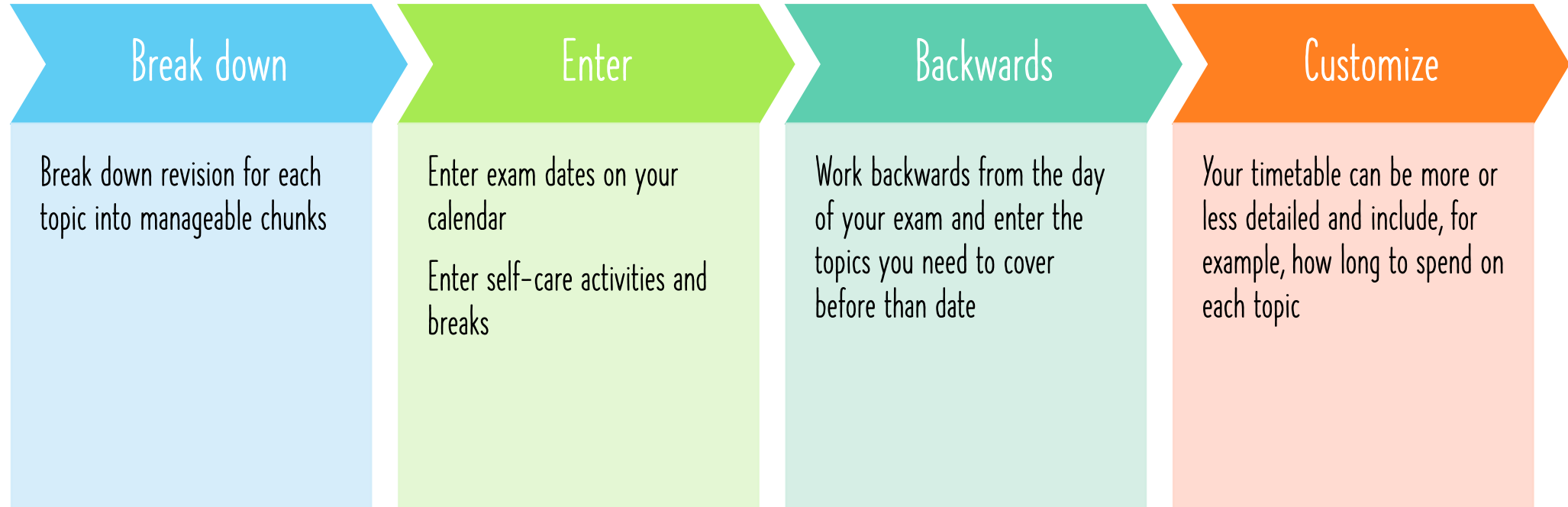


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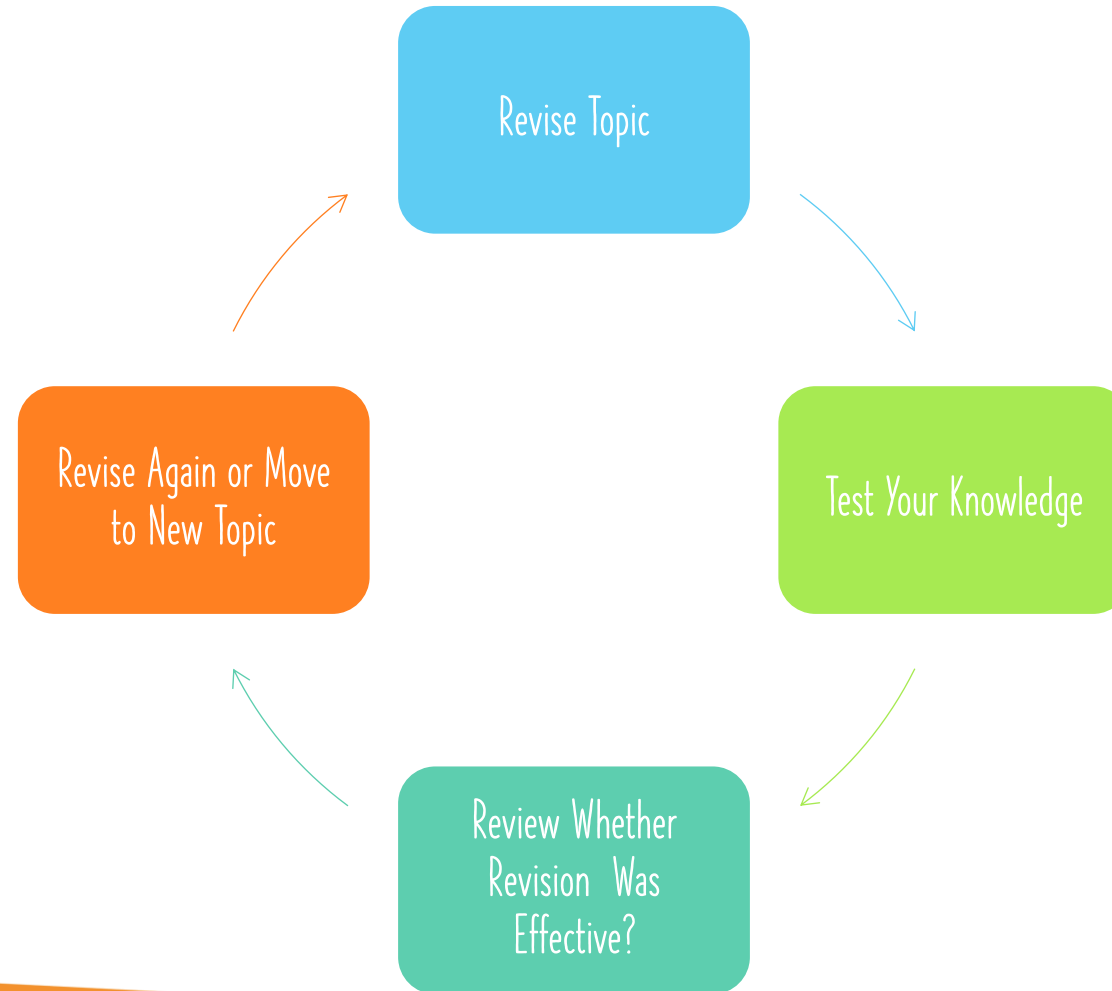
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Making a Revision Timetable



Revise, Test, Review



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Take home message



Supporting helpful routines

It is normal for a young person to be stressed about exams

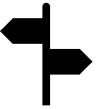
Recognizing anxiety is a good thing because you can start to work on it

Teach your children to view exams as an opportunity and not as a threat.

Use a toolkit of wellbeing approaches to build resilience and helpful routines.

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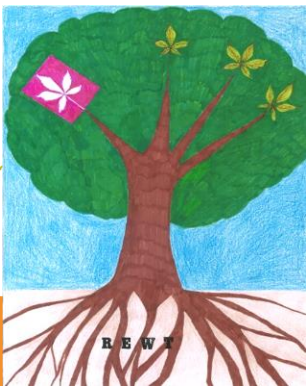




Signposting

Signposting

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Signposting



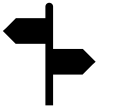
If you are worried about your child's wellbeing or behaviour you can talk to:

- your child's form tutor and head of year/pastoral lead
- Senior lead for mental health
- SENCo
- Redbridge Emotional Wellbeing Service (EWMHS)
- Educational Psychology Service or SEATTS
- Your GP



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Signposting

Resources

[Progressive muscle relaxation technique – YouTube](#)

[The Power of Visualization - **Must try this at home** - Tony Robbins – YouTube](#)

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-beat-exam-stress/>

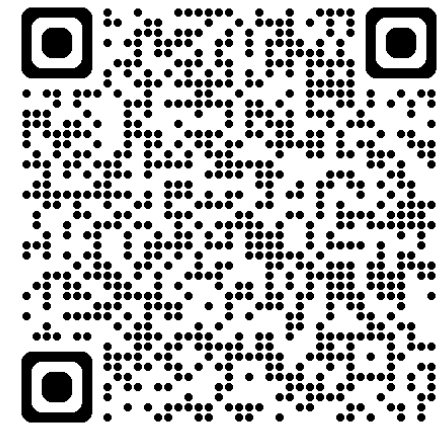
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

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Feedback
www.menti.com

Code: 1418 5346



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