

# Managing Exam Stress



# Claire Keen

- Designated Safeguarding Lead

*I've done lots of mental health training over a number of years.*

*I'm not medically/clinically qualified.*

*Speak to a GP or pharmacist.*



# Balance

- A small amount of stress is healthy.
- Everyone will feel some level of anxiety/apprehension before an exam.
- It's important to do your best.
- These exams are the culmination of years of hard work.
- Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.



- If you feel you've done badly in one exam, this doesn't mean all the other exams will go badly.
- If you don't achieve the results you're hoping for there are different routes to take.
- "It's not the end of the world."

# Signs of Stress

## Cognitive



Memory problems  
Poor concentration  
Poor judgement  
Negative thoughts  
Anxiety  
Worry  
Nervousness

## Emotional



Moodiness  
Irritable/Temper  
Agitation  
Feeling overwhelmed  
Loneliness  
Isolation  
Unhappiness

## Physical



Muscle tension  
Aches  
Stomach problems  
Nausea  
Dizziness  
Chest pain  
Racing heart  
Colds and allergies

## Behavioural



Appetite changes  
Sleep changes  
Social withdrawal  
Procrastination  
Avoid responsibility  
Substance abuse  
Nervous habits

# Self Care

## Healthy Body

- Eating and drinking regularly and healthily.
- Sleeping enough.
- Physical activity.

## Healthy Environment

- Appropriate place for your child to revise and study.

## Healthy Routine

- Work, rest and play.
- Revision timetable.



# Healthy Body

- **Hydration** - Drinking enough water.
- **Fuel** - Eating breakfast – cereal bars.
- **Nutrients** – Vitamin/mineral supplements.
- **Exercise** – Walks, fresh air, blood circulating.
- **Sleep** – More info later!



# Healthy Body

## Medical needs

- Exams take place in summer – hay fever?
- Period pain?
- Migraines?

## See GP in advance

- Medication can be signed in at school.
- Period products can be supplied.



# Healthy Body

## Symptoms of Serious Vitamin D Deficiency



Limit screen time

Drink less caffeine,  
no caffeine in the 4  
hours before bed

Regular exercise  
(not too close to  
bedtime)

Routine – same time to  
bed, same time up, try  
not to deviate too much  
on a weekend and in the  
holidays

Dark, quiet,  
clean,  
comfortable room

# Sleep

8 to 9 hours  
(55% of students  
at TCA don't get  
enough sleep!)

Herbal remedies,  
chamomile tea

Pillow spray,  
sleep balm,  
lavender

Body-mapping, guided  
meditation,  
ASMR,  
white noise,  
nature sounds,  
audio books

Magnesium spray  
on feet

Apps



# Breathing Exercises



## Box breathing

Hold for 4 counts



Benefits of box breathing:

1. Brings balance to your mind and body
2. Regulates your natural rhythm
3. Effective in dealing with stress, anxiety and anger

Inhale for 4 counts



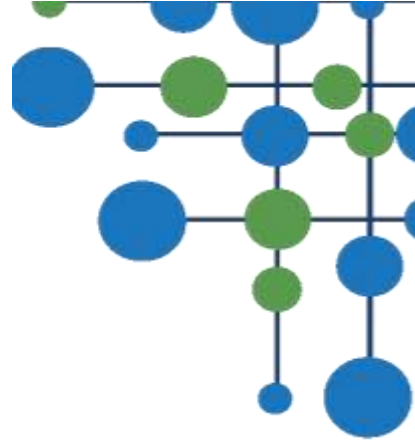
Exhale for 4 counts



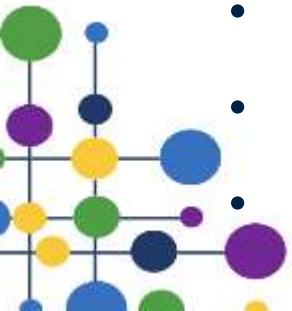
Hold for 4 counts



# Mindful Eating



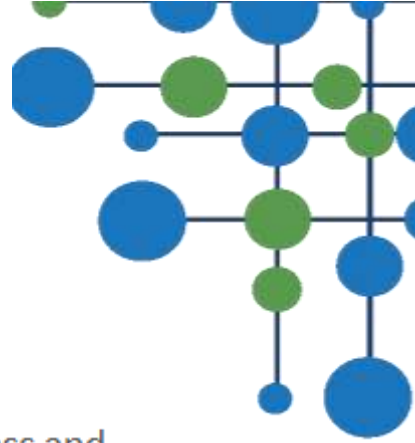
- Works best with a piece of fruit – apple, satsuma, banana.
- What does it look like – smooth, rough, shiny, dull, how would you describe the colour, is it marked?
- What does it feel like in your hand – smooth, cold, hard, squishy?
- What does it smell like?
- How does it feel to peel it? Can you take the peel off in one go?
- What does it look, feel and smell like without the peel?
- Separate the pieces – how does this feel and sound?
- Eat a piece. What's the texture like in your mouth? Is it juicy?
- How does it taste – sweet, sour, sharp?
- What does it feel like in your mouth?
- **As long as it takes!**





# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)



## Forehead

First, squeeze the muscles in your forehead. Hold this feeling for 10-15 seconds and notice the increase in tightness and tension in these muscles. Allow these muscles to release any tension while you count for at least 30 seconds, or until this area feels entirely relaxed.

## Jaw

Now tense the muscles in your jaw with your teeth together. Again you want to be holding this for 10-15 seconds so that you are able to notice the build in tension. Then slowly release the tension, counting to at least 30 seconds or until you are completely relaxed.

## Shoulders

This part should target both your neck and shoulders by bringing your shoulders up to your ears (or as high as possible in that direction without causing discomfort). Hold this for the same amount of time (10-15 seconds) and repeat the countdown, relaxing as you release the tension.



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)



## Arms

With both hands, form a fist. Bring your fists towards the centre of your chest and tense the whole arm in this position. After holding for 10-15 seconds, release the tension and count up to at least 30 seconds.

## Buttocks

Increase tension in your buttocks for 10-15 seconds. Notice the tension and then start relaxing like in the previous steps.

## Legs

Slowly and steadily increase the tension throughout your thigh and calf muscle groups, hold this tension for 10-15 seconds and then release while you count for 30 seconds. Notice new feelings of relaxation and the tension melting away.

## Feet

Tense your feet and toes, tightening your muscles as much as possible. After holding, relax and feel your muscles decrease let go of tension and tightness.

Hopefully at this point you will notice that your breathing has regulated more and you feel able to adjust back into your space, feeling more grounded and less overwhelmed by those difficult feelings.



# Self-Help



Relaxation

## Relaxation techniques

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Mindfulness

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Photography

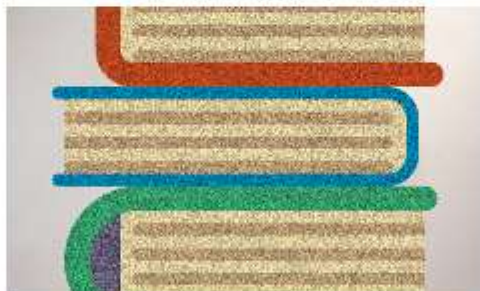
[Read more →](#)



Relaxation

## Colour therapy

[Read more →](#)



Talking learning

## Revision

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Hope box/Happy box

[Read more →](#)

# Self-Help



Hobbies and activities

## Listening to music

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Crying

[Read more →](#)



Social relationships

## Faith and religion

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Light therapy

[Read more →](#)



Relaxation

## Aromatherapy and fragrance

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Drawing or painting

[Read more →](#)

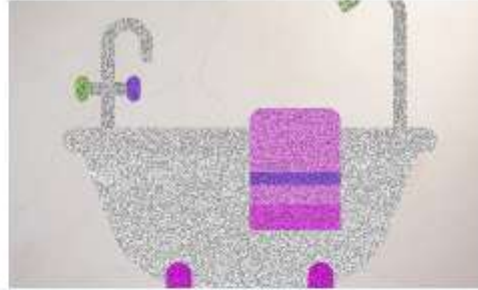
# Self-Help



Hobbies and activities

## Boardgames

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Warm bath

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Pilates

[Read more →](#)



Social relationships

## Activism

[Read more →](#)



Social relationships

## Spending time with supportive people

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Meditation

[Read more →](#)

# Self-Help



Hobbies and activities

## Creative writing

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Writing things down

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Gaming

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Eating a balanced diet

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Drama

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Youth Groups

[Read more →](#)

# Self-Help



Healthy living and physical health

**Homeopathy preparations**

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

**Listening to podcasts**

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

**Spiritual/energy healing**

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

**Going on day trips or holiday**

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

**Watching YouTube, TV or  
Films**

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

**Problem solving**

[Read more →](#)

# Self-Help



Hobbies and activities

## Making music

[Read more →](#)



Technology

## Virtual reality therapy courses

[Read more →](#)



Hobbies and activities

## Playing

[Read more →](#)



Thinking and attitudes

## Challenge negative feelings

[Read more →](#)



Healthy living and physical health

## Spending time in nature

[Read more →](#)



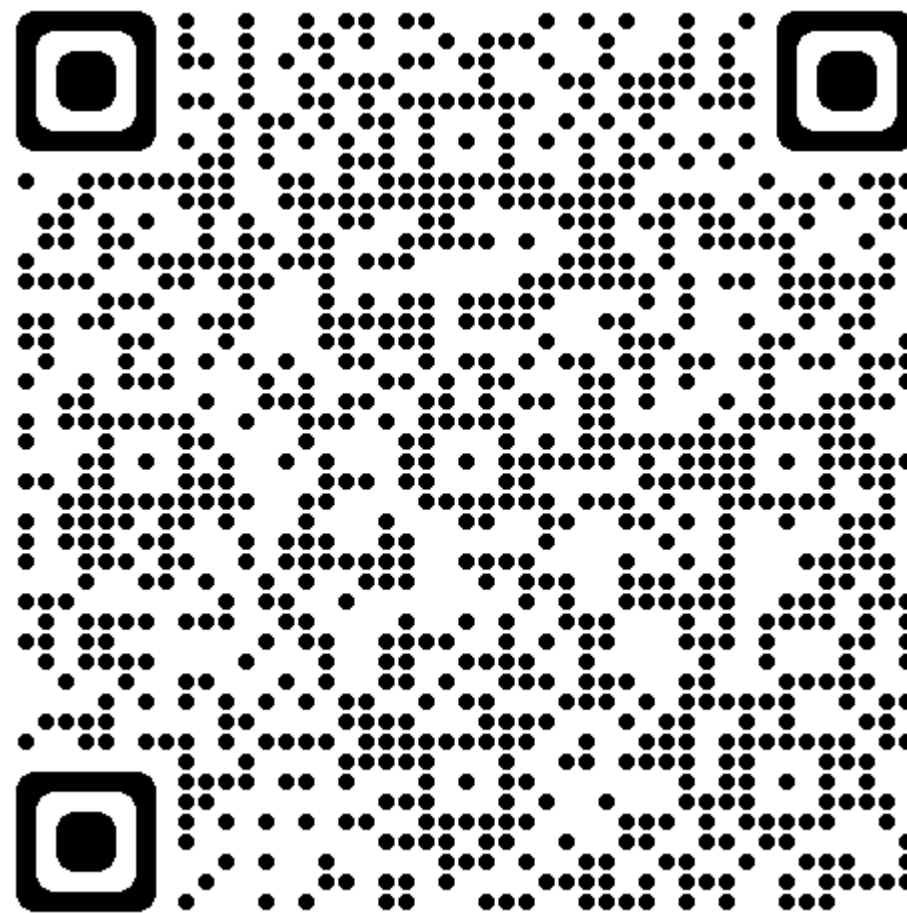
Social relationships

## Online chat or peer group support

[Read more →](#)

# Further Information

**YOUNG MiMDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

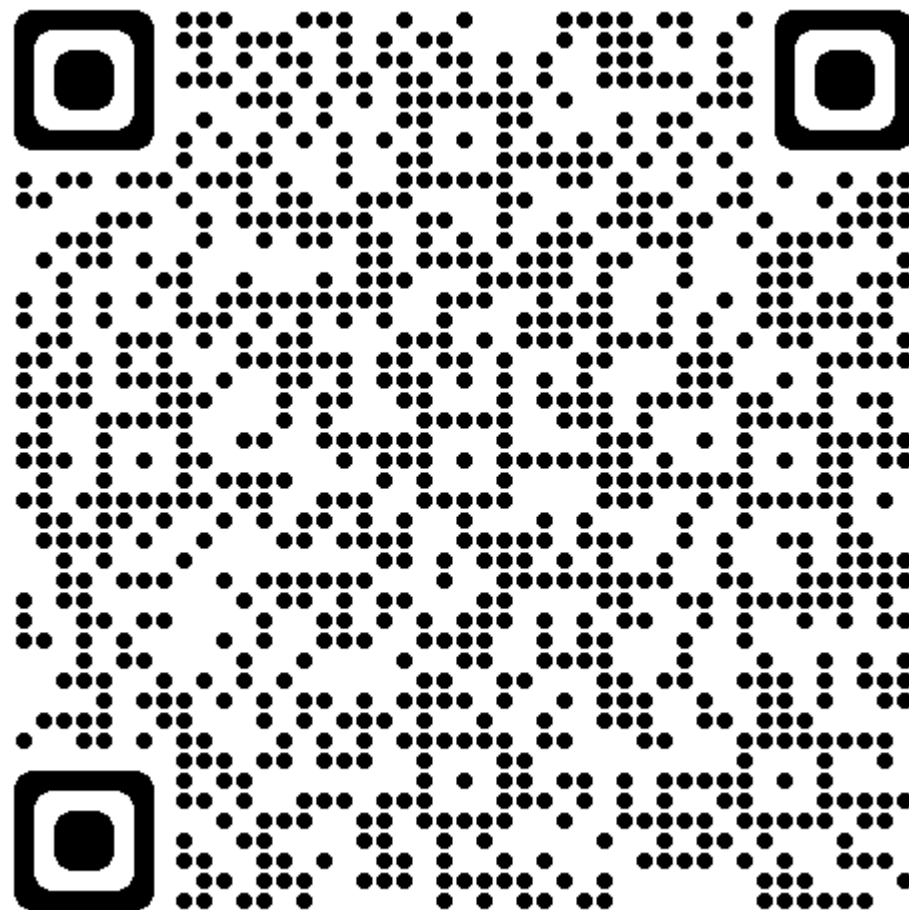


# Further Information



## For self care

Self-care is about the things we can do to look after our own mental health. Young people told us that when they are struggling they are usually told to see a professional. They don't often get much advice about how they could help themselves.



# Further Information

childline

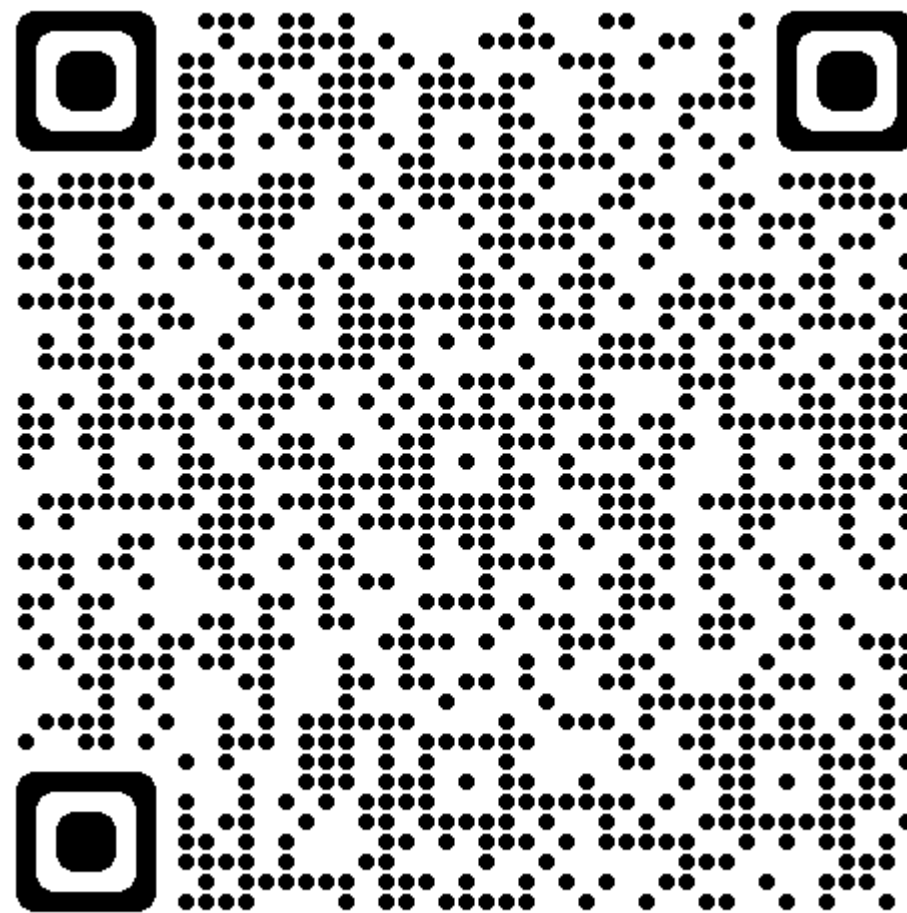
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

## EXAM STRESS AND PRESSURE

If you're feeling stressed about your exams, you aren't alone. Get advice and tips to help you cope.

### On this Page

- Worrying about exams
- Dealing with exam stress
- Coping with pressure
- Coping with other problems

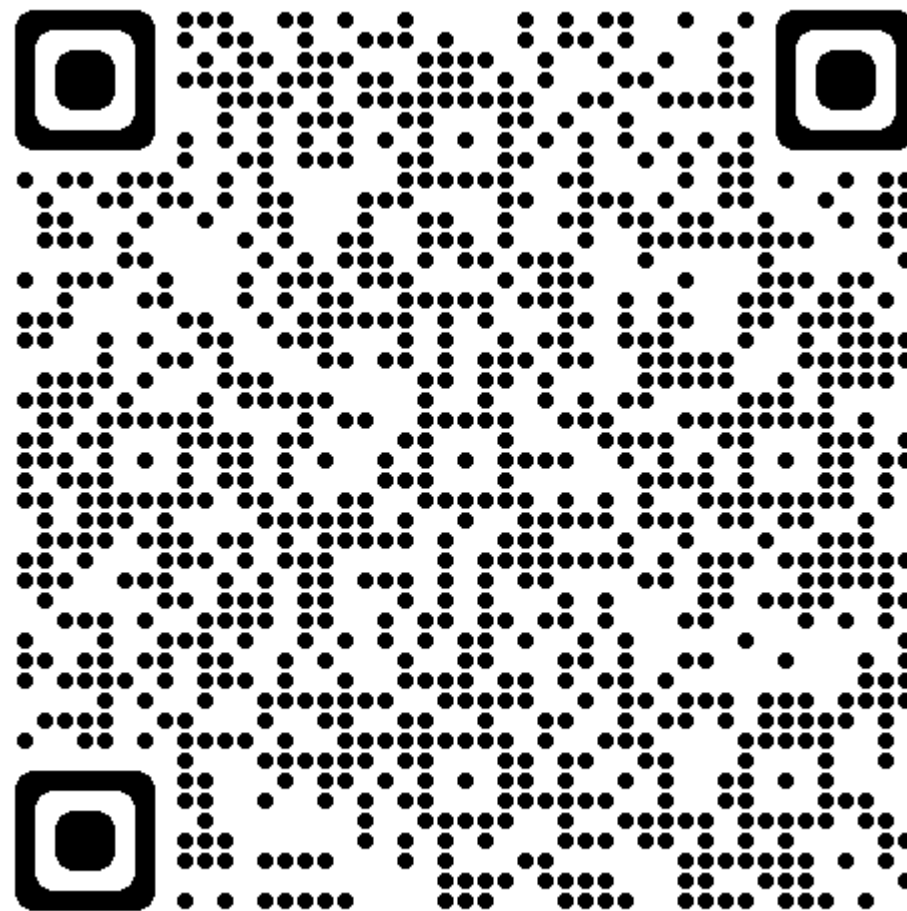


# Further Information



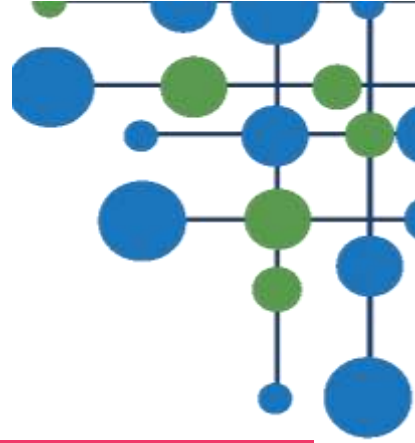
## Help your child beat exam stress

Tests and exams can be a challenging part of school life for children and young people and their parents or carers. But there are ways to ease the stress.



# Further Information

# www.kooth.com



**Free, safe and anonymous mental health support.**




- Chat to our team
- Helpful articles
- Community support
- Self-help activities

Whatever is going on in your life, the anonymous community on kooth and our team of friendly professionals are here to help support you.

Or if you'd rather not talk to anyone, we've also got a huge library of helpful content, plus self-help tools and fun activities.

Sign up today at [kooth.com](http://kooth.com)




**Thinking about exams?  
Feeling stressed?**

We're here to help.

Daily online counselling available. Monday-Friday 12-10pm, 6pm-10pm weekends. 24/7 access to self-help materials and forums.





**Collection**

**Coping with Exam Stress**

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