

15 to 21 May 2023



Mental Health Awareness Week



Mental Health
Foundation



[#ToHelpMyAnxiety](https://twitter.com/ToHelpMyAnxiety)

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 15-21st MAY 2023

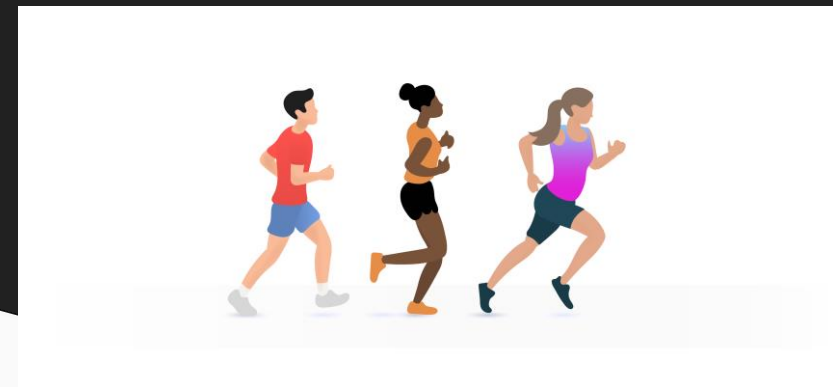
This year for Mental Health Awareness Week we are focusing on anxiety.

We all feel anxious from time to time. Anxiety is a natural response to the uncertain world around us. Exams and the pressures you are facing now are a big trigger for these feelings. It is important we recognise this and respond when we are feeling anxious or stressed so that our anxiety does not become overwhelming.



Watch this short clip to get an understanding of what anxiety is, and how our bodies and brains respond when we feel this way.

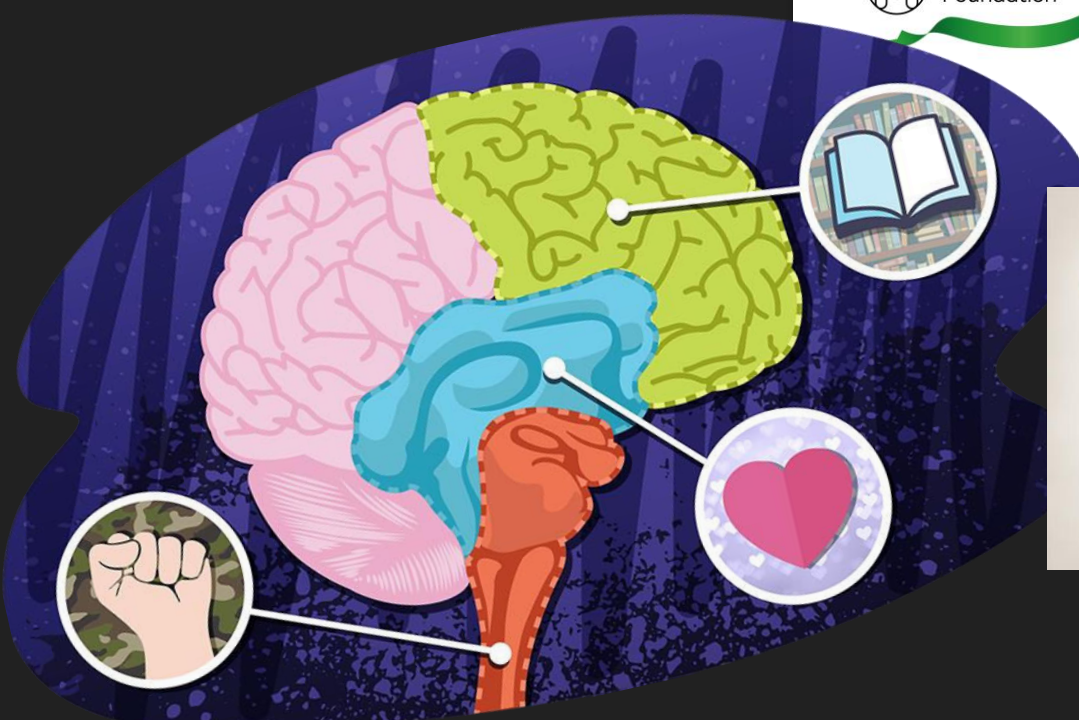
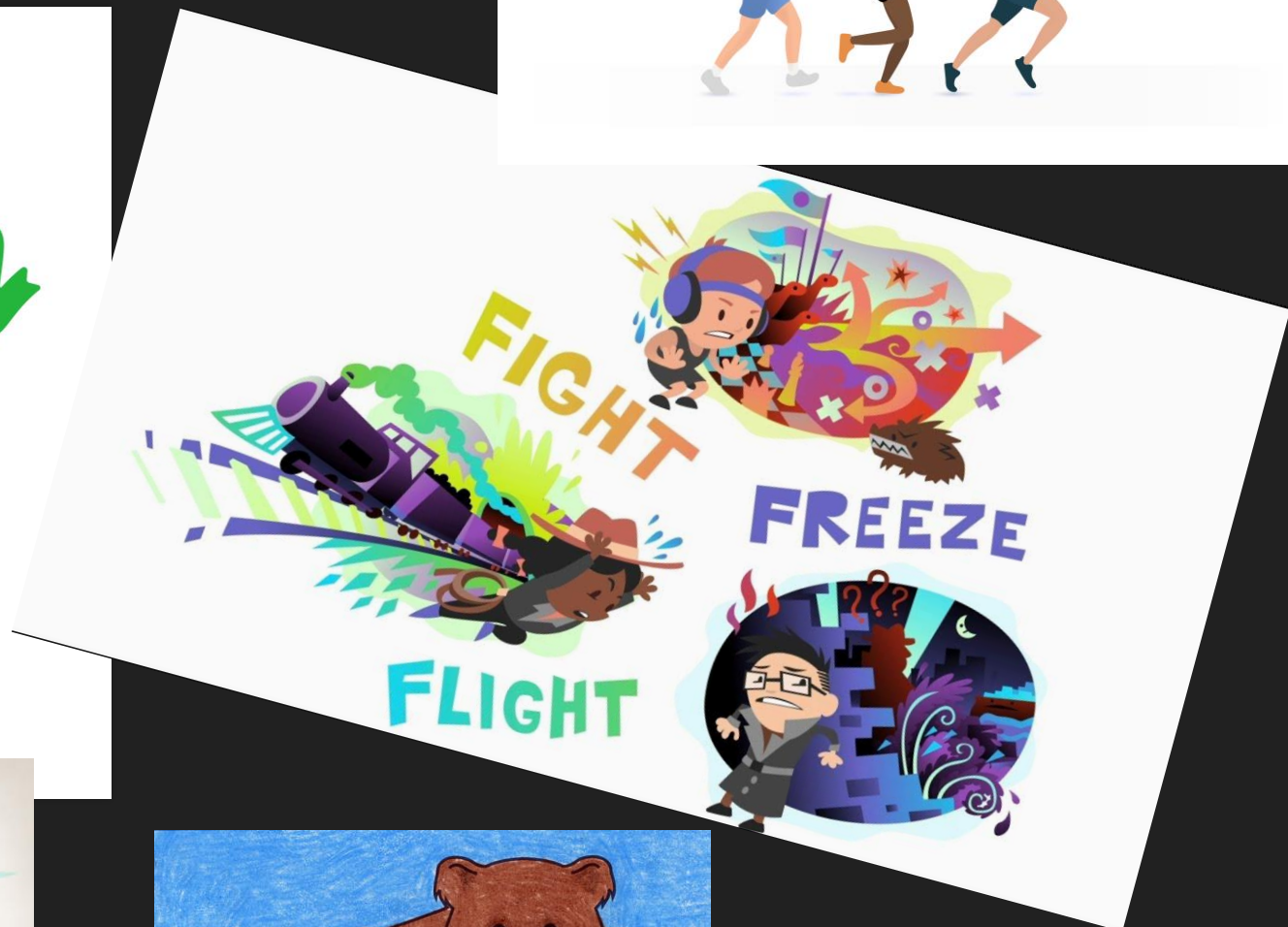
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpolpKTWrp4>



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Exam stress

Exam stress can start when you feel you can't cope with the revision, know how to revise, pressure from school or family and friends. You might worry you won't get the grades you need for the college you want.

It's important to recognise your stressors and be able to put strategies in place to manage these!

I don't know how to revise

I don't want to let anyone down

There is no way I'll pass

So much pressure

I just can't cope, it's all too much

Too much to revise – where do I start?



It's a good idea to write down what is causing you anxiety or stress. Be honest and seek the help and support you feel you need.

Speak to those who you know are there to support you both in school and at home.



What can you do to help reduce exam stress for you?



Think of how you can manage these feelings. Complete the self-care sheet.

Here are some key things to remember:

Take frequent breaks. Psychologists say we can only concentrate properly for 30-45 minutes. You could use a technique like Pomodoro, that helps you to take regular breaks. When you do take a break make sure you don't stay at your desk, you could go for a walk or even just make a cup of tea!

Eat well. Keep a good blood sugars level to avoid highs and lows of energy, by eating slow-release foods like bread, rice, pasta, fruit and veg. Drink lots of water. People often underestimate how much hydration helps!

Think about when and where you work best. Not everyone is a morning person, and some people don't find the library a productive place to work. There's no one best place or time to work - it's about what works for you.

Keep active. Even a short walk will do. Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de-stress. Fresh air will clear your head and perk you up.
Try to get about 8 hours' sleep a night. If you're stressed about not being able to sleep, there are lots of ways to aid a good night's sleep.

Continued...



Find activities that help you relax. Maybe it's a hot bath, watching a TV show, or a creative activity. Schedule this down-time into your timetable.

Don't set yourself ridiculous goals. Nobody can revise 10 topics in a day! Avoid setting the day up to be a disappointment.

Don't be put off by friends saying that they are doing huge amounts of revision. As already mentioned, that's probably not actually a productive or efficient way of working long term. One of the key reasons people feel exam stress is due to comparing themselves to other people.

If you can, discuss with your parents what they are expecting you to achieve. Parents with steep or unrealistic expectations will just add unnecessary pressure. It's helpful to let them know what you think you have the capacity to achieve, and to insist that the best way to get there is to have support from your parents, not pressure.

If you're feeling really worried or anxious, chat to a good friend, family member, or tutor. It helps to get it out of your system, and they may well be able to help think about practical strategies to deal with exam stress.

There are steps you can take to look after yourself while doing your GCSE exams:

TOP TIPS

- Be organised. Make sure you have all the information you need about each exam – date, time, place, what you need to take with you...and what subject it is! Have this available at home so the people you live with know what you're doing and when. The last thing you need is stress caused by not knowing what you're doing.
- Balance revision with rest. Don't neglect to revise, but don't overdo it. Rest is important. Sleep well, eat well, exercise and look after yourself – you won't shine in the exam hall if you're tired, hungry or stressed.
- Go outside. You don't need to be sitting in front of a computer or tablet in order to revise. Take your books and sit in the park in the sunshine; it's good for the soul and the fresh air will help you concentrate.
- During exam periods, experiencing some stress or anxiety is normal and is not necessarily harmful. To keep it manageable, take care of yourself and practise useful techniques like relaxation, mindfulness and breathing exercises.
- Talk to people. Express any worries or fears you may have as soon as they pop into your head – you'll be surprised at how many other people feel the same way; you're not alone. GCSEs should not be upsetting, and there will be teachers and others who want to support you any way they can – you only have to ask.



Healthy Schools
MANCHESTER



Remember

Simple steps to follow to help your mental wellbeing

- **Talk** – make sure you are still talking to friends and family. If you can use video call as seeing people's faces really makes a difference to how we feel.
- **Keep busy** – Learn something new, draw, colour, bake or cook something new or do some cleaning! There are lots of things you can do to keep yourself occupied.
- **Take time for yourself** – do something you enjoy like listen to your favorite song
- **Exercise** – try and get a little exercise each day, it doesn't matter what it is, it could be kicking a football in the garden, walking the dog or doing Joe wicks on Youtube. Exercise makes us feel better and it is good for you too!
- **Sleep** – Getting the right amount of sleep is important, I know it is tempting to stay up much later but this can cause other issues. No one is in the best place when they are tired, make sure you keep a good healthy sleep routine.
- **Additional support** – and if these don't help use some of the additional support sites listed further on this page.





Sites & Apps

- **MIND** www.mind.org.uk
- **Young Minds** www.youngminds.org.uk
- **NSPCC** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/mental-health-suicidal-thoughts-children/>
- **LGBT Foundation** <http://lgbt.foundation/>
- **Kooth** (Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people aged 10-25) www.kooth.com
- **Samaritans** (24/7 116 123) (**Manchester** - <https://www.samaritans.org/branches/manchester-and-salford-samaritans>)
- **Papyrus** (Prevention of young suicide) <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/> (HOPEline 0800 068 41 41)
- **Childline** <https://www.childline.org.uk/> (0800 1111)
- **The Mix** <http://www.themix.org.uk/> (information & support for under 25's)
- **Young Minds** www.youngminds.org.uk (Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544)

Apps to download

- **Clear fear** (Support young people with anxiety)
- **Calm Harm App** (Self-harm support/distraction app)
- **Headspace** (mindfulness/relaxation app)