

What is stress?

Stress is your body and mind's natural response to demands, challenges, or threats—whether real or perceived. For young people, stress can come from a variety of sources including social pressures, family expectations, exams or even navigating changes in their personal lives. Stress occurs when the demands placed on you feel greater than what you can manage.

When young people feel stressed, their bodies respond with the “fight-or-flight” reaction:

- The brain releases stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline
- Heart rate and breathing increase
- Muscles tense up
- Focus narrows to deal with the challenge

While this response can help in short-term situations, chronic stress can affect both physical and mental health. Recognising stress early and finding healthy ways to manage it—like talking to someone you trust, staying active, or practicing mindfulness—can make a big difference.

Exam Stress

Stress before exams is very common among young people and is a natural response to pressure and high expectations. A small amount of stress can be helpful, improving motivation and focus. However, too much stress can become overwhelming and negatively affect both wellbeing and performance.

There are several common signs of exam stress:

Emotional: anxiety, irritability, low confidence, mood swings, tearfulness, and feeling overwhelmed.

Physical: headaches, stomach aches, muscle tension, tiredness, poor sleep, and changes in appetite.

Mental: poor concentration, memory problems, racing thoughts, difficulty making decisions, and negative or self-critical thinking.

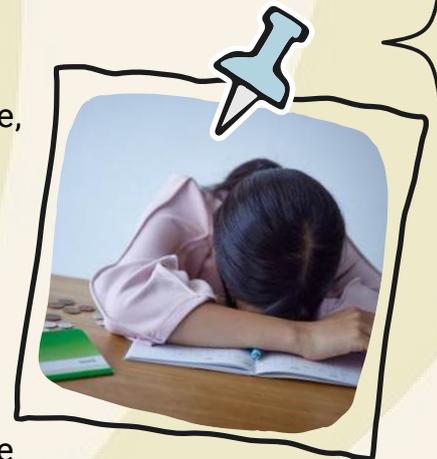
Behavioural: avoiding revision or procrastinating, over-studying without breaks, withdrawing from friends or activities, increased screen time, and changes in routine.

Stress becomes a concern when it is ongoing and begins to interfere with sleep, physical health, schoolwork, or relationships, or when a young person feels unable to cope or manage their emotions. In these situations, additional support from family, school staff, or health professionals may be needed.



Stress Management Society
from distress to de-stress

April is Stress Awareness month. For support and to access online webinars and resources, [click here!](#)



DID YOU KNOW?



A recent report by YoungMinds found that 15% of young people struggling to cope with exams stopped going to school and 13% had suicidal thoughts.

source: YoungMinds

EXAM SUPPORT

Click the images below to find support and advice for children and young people who may be feeling anxious or overwhelmed during exam time.



YOUNGMINDS

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BARNARD'S

Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness can be a helpful tool for young people to manage exam stress. It encourages them to focus on the present moment rather than worrying about past mistakes or future results, which can reduce anxiety and help them feel more in control.

During exam periods, students often experience racing thoughts, pressure to succeed, and fear of failure. Mindfulness helps calm the mind, regulate emotions, and respond to stress in a healthier way.

Key benefits include:

- Reduced anxiety and tension through slow breathing and relaxation
- Improved concentration and memory by strengthening focus
- Better emotional resilience, helping young people cope with pressure and setbacks
- Improved sleep by calming an overactive mind
- Greater self-confidence by reducing negative self-talk
- Simple practices such as taking a few deep breaths before revision or exams, short guided meditations, and taking regular mindful breaks can make a difference. Even a few minutes of mindfulness each day can help young people feel calmer, more focused, and better able to manage exam pressure.

Click on the logos to find mindfulness activities and resources to support young people.



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Check out our range of
mindfulness videos



Health | Well-being | School Sport | PE | Physical Activity
Supporting South Leicestershire Schools to provide opportunities for all young people

South Leicestershire Community Board



Introducing Healthy Leicestershire!

Healthy Leicestershire provides residents with the all latest information, top tips and useful links around health and wellbeing. Check out their dedicated Facebook page [here](#) to keep up to date with the support available across Leicestershire.

Click here →

EXAM ANXIETY

Simple ideas to help manage stress and anxiety

Make time for the things you enjoy
Find ways to release stress and celebrate your progress. You could listen to music, draw, cook, go for a walk, play a sport or enjoy a treat like a cinema trip!



Take regular breaks

Make sure you take regular breaks, as your brain cannot concentrate for hours at a time. Breaks from revision can boost your energy and motivation.



Take care of your physical health

Make sure you get enough sleep, food, water and exercise. A good diet and the right amount of sleep can help increase your energy and improve your concentration, focus, and memory.



Ask for help

Talk through your concerns with your teacher/tutor who can let you know what support your school can offer you. Let your family and friends know if you are struggling so they can support you too.



Keep things in perspective

Remember, you are more than your exam results. Exams are only a small part of the picture and don't define you.



KNOW THE SIGNS OF STRESS:

- Feeling irritable, angry, impatient or wound up.
- You might experience anxiety, feel nervous or afraid.
- Unable to enjoy yourself
- Depressed
- Uninterested in life
- A sense of dread
- Worried or tense
- Loss of appetite
- Neglected or lonely

- You might experience physical signs such as
- Headaches
 - Blurred vision
 - Feeling sick
 - Trembling
 - Feeling more tired than usual
 - Clammy or sweaty palms
 - Dizziness
 - Racing heartbeat

YOUNG MINDS HAVE MORE INFORMATION HERE

SUPPORT

If you do feel stressed or anxious, don't feel alone. There is lots of help and support available. Click on the logos to find out more:



Supporting you across Blaby, Gaddby & Wigston

WALKING NETBALL

JOIN OUR FRENDRY ACTIVITY

Wigston Academies Trust
Station Road
Wigston
LE18 2DU

MONDAYS 7PM - 8PM

No previous experience necessary

SCAN HERE

www.activeblaby.org.uk
0116 272 7703 info@activeblaby.org.uk

LET'S GET MOVING

teen health

11-19 service



Starting secondary school soon?

The Moving On Up! guide from Teen Health is packed with tips, activities and advice from young people to help you feel confident about the transition. Download the booklet [here](#)!