

TEST TROUBLES

How to support a child experiencing exam stress

Useful Apps:



SAM



FearTools



What's Up?



Fabulous - Daily Routine Planner



Stop, Breathe & Think Kids

TEST TROUBLES

How to support a child experiencing exam stress

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED?

It is typical for children and young people to experience worry and stress about tests and exams.

When to be concerned:

- If the degree to which a young person feels low appears out of context or disproportionate to the reason why they might be feeling low
- If episodes are more frequent or prolonged and cause the young person distress
- If it impacts on their ability to cope with everyday life such as going to school, seeing friends or taking part in leisure activities

WHAT TO DO:

- Normalise that anxiety is a natural emotion, the physical sensations of anxiety can be unpleasant but it will pass and won't cause any harm
- Let your child's school or college know how much they are struggling so they can offer help, support and advice
- Encourage looking after physical, mental and emotional help by ensuring:
 - Eating and drinking regularly
 - Following good sleep hygiene
 - Being organised, planning and pacing work
 - Taking regular breaks from revision and studying including having study free days
 - Engaging in leisure activities regularly including spending time with friends
 - Taking part in regular physical activity
- Watch a parent/carer workshop on how to support anxiety: youtu.be/EMJj9sHtlFQ
- Watch a parent/carer workshop on coping and resilience skills: youtu.be/K4OGOhNwML0
- There is a lot of information on the Sussex CAMHS website: sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/help-support/young-people/school-college-exams-yp/

WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

- Disrupted sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, early morning wakening)
- Persistent reassurance seeking
- Resistance to doing things; requiring a lot of cajoling or persuading
- Avoidance of anything associated with school/college
- Over-working; refusal to take breaks and resistance to engage in other activities especially leisure activities
- Becoming distressed or agitated when facing fear or even thinking about facing the fear
- Some repeated patterns of behaviour or routines which seem to help the young person but don't make sense to others (e.g. repeated checking or counting)
- Some episodes of panicking such as getting distressed, racing heart rate, quicker breathing, upset tummy, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint
- Demanding things be done in certain ways or requesting others to do things for them
- Families might also find themselves struggling to do things as they normally would as they may make adjustments to accommodate how the young person is feeling or responding

#Recipes4wellbeing



sussexcamhs.nhs.uk