

**Exam pressure – HELP!**

Our ability to deal with any challenge in life is directly linked to how much we believe that we CAN deal with it… So strengthening our self-belief is the key. One way to do this is by having a PLAN and some STRATEGIES to use when we feel wobbly as this can really help to approach any challenge with more confidence!

Our MIND – EMOTIONS – BODY are all inter-connected, each affecting the other. E.g. I have the thought “Got an exam tomorrow and I’m afraid I’ll go blank” is a scary thought which releases chemicals into the body which make me feel nervy and anxious, which in turn creates more scary thoughts of “I can’t cope!”

… A vicious circle we need to (and can) break!

Our BRAINS are complex and have different parts… in this situation; our emotional brain tries to bully our thinking brain into believing that the worst WILL HAPPEN!



 To keep our thinking brain “in charge” we can

 learn and practise a few useful strategies.

1. BREATHE! (In through nose for a count of 4, hold for 2 then out through the mouth for 6… repeat until you feel calmer).
2. GROUND yourself – feel your feet on the floor, visualise the Earth as holding you strong and safe! Imagine yourself as a strong tree or a mountain… solid, powerful.
3. BE BODY AWARE: Do a quick body scan, noticing what you are feeling in all body parts – from head to toes. (Tingles, butterflies, pain, jitters, numb etc…)
4. USE the 5 SENSES: Look around (outside of you!) to get you “out of your scary thoughts”- by going through each of the 5 senses in turn: What can I see (really look at colours, shapes, texture, light etc); Now… what can I hear? (Start with distant noises then move closer to finer sounds); What can I smell? What can I taste? What can I feel? (Clothes and air on my skin, floor under feet, chair on my body etc.)

**The big picture check-list:**

Have a go at working through these questions and taking time to answer them honestly for you. Then fill in the right hand column with what you can do to build your exam muscles!

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|  | **Question?** | **My answer…** | **What I could do…**  |
| 1. | Do I know when all my exams are? |  |  |
| 2. | Have I got a revision plan?  |  |  |
| 3. | Have I got a revision buddy? |  |  |
| 4.  | What do I do to relax? |  |  |
| 5. | Am I eating well (enough)?  |  |  |
| 6. | How/when am I sleeping?  |  |  |
| 7.  | What exercise am I doing?  |  |  |
| 8.  | How do I feel in my body when I get anxious?  |  | (See 1-4 above plus Grounding & other exercises on website) |
| 9.  | Who can I talk to when I’m feeling overwhelmed?  |  |  |
| 10. | Do I have an object or something I can use as a sort of “touchstone” to help me stay calm and grounded? |  |  |
| 11.  | What treat(s) can I plan for when I’ve finished an exam?  |  |  |
| 12.  | How am I going to celebrate when they’re all over? ☺ |  |  |

 **more …**

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| **USE the RESOURCES you’ve got!** E.g. Music/ friends/family/ Sport/ Humour/ Pets … for comfort, relaxation, down time, hugs, energy release etc. |
| **BODY CARE!** Healthy body healthy mind… Am I really getting enough sleep, good food and some exercise? Sleep tips: stop screens 1 hr before turning in; milky drink/snack, reading, bath/shower, lavender oil on pillow, grounding or relaxation CD. |
| **REVISION!** We’re all different – figure out what works best for you for how/when/ where you revise! Some people like being tested, others like reading things through, other people need to write things out or try recording notes and listening to them…  |
| POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS If you can identify the “negative”, nagging voices in your head, by saying the opposite message to yourself 3+ times a day, you can help re-write your sub-conscious programmes (deep beliefs) e.g.  **However hard I try,**  **it still won’t be good enough ☹**  **My best is good enough! ☺** |
| **NEW RESOURCES** to try out and download to your phone/Lap-top: Grounding/ Mindfulness/ Visualisation/Anchoring (See [www.imokyoureok.co.uk](http://www.imokyoureok.co.uk) – Resources page). Remember the more you DO something, the better you get at it… building a stronger neural pathway in the brain! So find a new calming strategy that works for you then do it regularly ☺ |

Remember you are not alone!

Find someone to talk to about things.

GOOD LUCK!