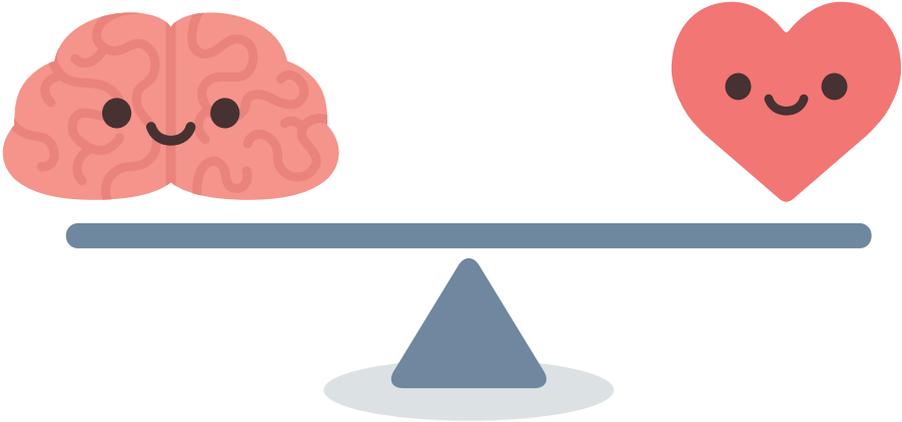




# ST. BEDE'S COLLEGE



## **Emotional Wellbeing**

Tips and useful resources for  
positive mental health



*Lord Jesus*

*You calmed the storm and said to be still, questioning why  
are we afraid.*

*Grow my faith, so that I have complete trust in your  
goodness and love for me.*

*Grow my faith, that my trust in you can shield me in times  
of trouble.*

*Thank you for promising me that you will never leave me  
and never forsake me.*

*Thank you that we can say with confidence that you are  
my helper, I will not be afraid.*

*Amen*

**God Said “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”**

**So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.**

**What can man do to me?”**

**Hebrews 13: 5-6**

# Emotional wellbeing

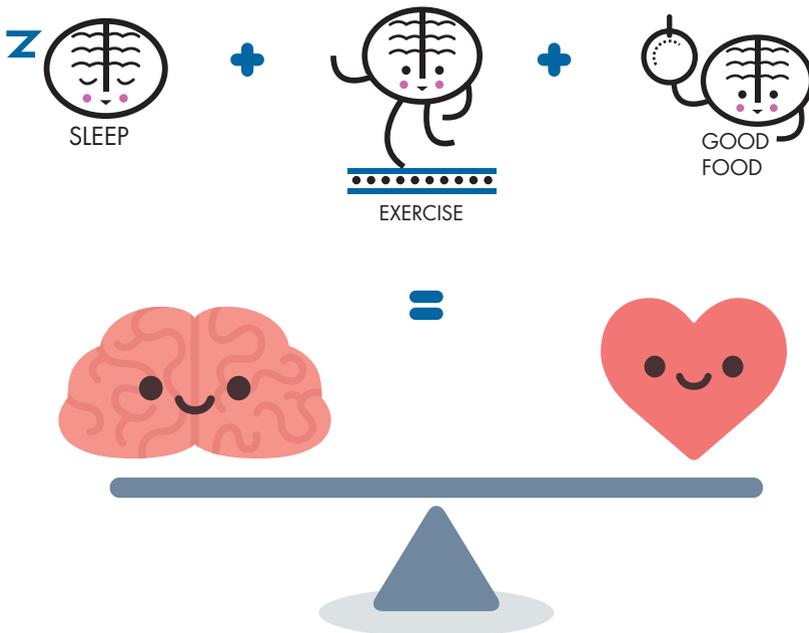
This leaflet is designed to provide pupils with resources, information and a toolkit to help promote emotional wellbeing for all.

This leaflet and the information within it are part of our commitment to promoting positive mental health and personal resilience amongst our young men and women.

We hope you find it useful. Please remember if you are feeling stressed or anxious, you must talk to someone.

## **You must look after yourself.**

Please do not forget that quality sleep, a balanced diet and physical exercise, no matter how gentle, are vital in ensuring your personal health and wellbeing.



## Stress busting

### Toolkit for **Positive Mental Wellbeing**

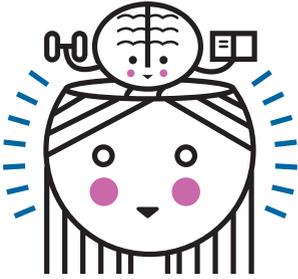
- Invest in relationships with those closest to you, importantly with yourself, at home, at school and in the community.
- **Be kind to yourself!**  
When your inner critic or outer critic finds faults, try and find truths and exception to what is being said. Nurture yourself, do the things you love, and take a few minutes each day to appreciate yourself.
- If you feel you have failed, don't beat yourself up. **Act as if you were your own best friend**, be kind and supportive.
- Build structure in your life, school /home life balance.
- **Make sure you get enough sleep**, (no screens 2 hours before bed).
- Talk to someone you trust, (teacher, parent, family member, support organisation).

**Positive emotions** can build up a buffer against stress

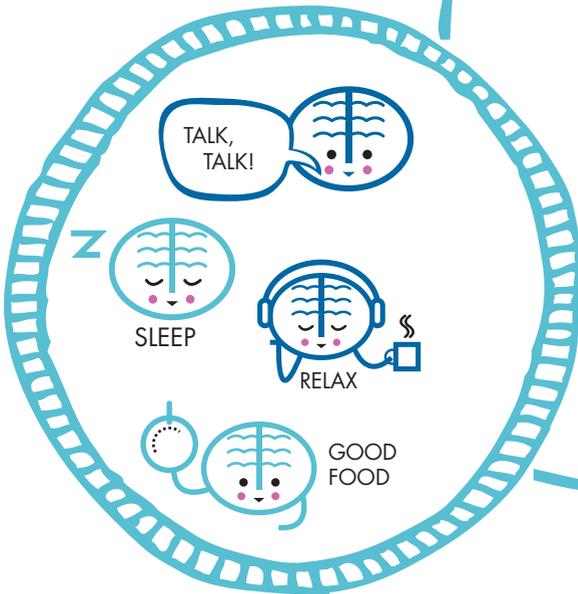
- *Notice what you're grateful for and focus on the good aspects of any situation*
- *Set aside time to have fun!*

- Ensure you **relax and have quiet time** at the end of each day. Try relaxation techniques, deep breathing, mindfulness, yoga or meditation.
- Build a **happiness hour** (20 mins to an hour) into your life each day, doing something that uplifts you.





- **Eat well**, drink plenty of water and reduce caffeine and sugar intake.
- **Be present!** It can be tempting to check your phone, social media emails when with family and friends. When with loved ones, switch off your screen and enjoy their company.



## 7 Magic Questions

*...to ask yourself if you're feeling anxious, which can really help you keep things in perspective*

- What would you like to happen?
- *OK, what out of that list do you have the power to change?*
- Who can help you with that?
- *How much of your time are you spending thinking about that?*
- What's the worst that can happen?
- *Now, crucially, what is the best that can happen?*
- What advice would you give to a friend who came to you with this dilemma?

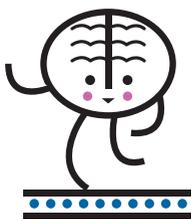
# Looking after yourself



**Listen to Music** This can be positive and productive by elevating your mood, encouraging you to study more effectively for longer. Classical music is considered to be the best to boost brain power, but ambient music can work too. Check out playlists on Spotify to find out what works for you!

## Take a quick walk

Research shows it can boost your memory and brain power.



## Play with bubble wrap or puppies

Pets can help relieve stress and anxiety, while popping bubble wrap can be another good stress reliever along with other fiddle toys/gadgets.



## Try to get enough sleep

Benefits of quality sleep are underestimated; sleep helps brains to assimilate new knowledge into long term memory so you can recall it when it comes to test day.

## Break free from distractions

You probably don't realise the number of times you check Facebook or Instagram! When you add it up, it amounts to a significant waste of time. Take a look at the self-control website blocker.



## Plan study routine

Many individuals benefit from developing a personal study plan.



**Meditation** An effective way to take a break and see your stress from a different perspective. Give your mind space.

### Let it all out

Sometimes you need to talk. Other times “shout from the roof tops”. Figure out what you’re feeling and then let it out. Talking to someone you trust can help to see the bigger picture and empower you to rise above the exam stress.



TALK,  
TALK!

### Eat dark chocolate

Dark chocolate of over 70% cocoa content fights the stress hormone cortisol and has an overall relaxing effect. Chocolate releases endorphins which act as a natural stress fighter.

### Seek advice

No matter how you’re feeling, there are people around who can help. There are lots of sources of advice and people to talk to. See [youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk) for lists of people to speak to for help and support with all kinds of problems.



See next page  
for some useful  
Health and  
Wellbeing apps  
to download

## Be app-y!

Some useful apps to keep body and mind happy and healthy...



### Change4Life Smart Recipes (Free)

Great, free way of helping everybody eat tasty, healthier meals.



### Mindshift (free)

Aimed at young people, helps tackle anxiety, fear and panic. Helps also to deal with worry and conflict.



### Good Blocks (free)

Based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy, this app plays games that train you to alter negative-thinking styles.



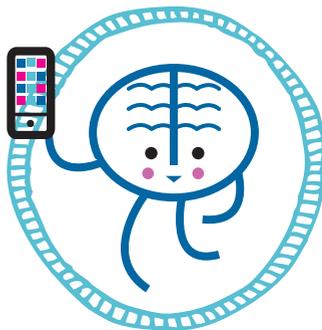
### Relax lite (free)

This app helps achieve a calm state of mind and relaxation by guiding you in how to control your breath.



### Headspace – (free)

Great app to help you begin a regular meditation practice; simple and easy, it's also been shown that 30 days of Headspace resulted in a 32% decrease in stress.



### MeeTwo (free)

An online peer mentoring app offering a safe place for you to ask questions and share problems – all posts are anonymous and every post and reply are checked before going live.



### 5 A Day (free)

Helps you track your daily fruit and veg intake and promotes healthier eating.



### Smiling mind (free)

Offers mindfulness and meditation programmes tailored to different age groups – 7-9, 10-12, 13-15 16-18 – to help you deal with the stresses and challenges of daily life.



### Thought Diary Pro (£4.99)

Helps to track negative thoughts to spot unhelpful thinking and encourage more positivity.

## Personal Resilience: Ten keys to happier living

Together they all add up to the  
Great Dream!

**G**iving – Do things for others

**R**elating – Connect with people

**E**xercising – Take care of your  
body

**A**ppreciating – Notice the  
world around you

**T**rying out – Keep learning  
new things

**No-one is  
perfect!**

- Be kind to yourself when things go wrong
- Shift the focus away from what you don't have and can't do, to what you **HAVE** and **CAN DO**



**D**irection – Have goals to  
look forward to

**R**esilience – Find ways to  
bounce back

**E**motion – Take a positive  
approach

**A**cceptance – Be comfortable  
with who you are

**M**eaning – Be part of  
something bigger!



# Coping with Exam Stress & Anxiety

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## Stress

Stress is a fact of life, and learning to cope with it will help you not just for your exams, but in life generally. Simply ignoring stress can cause it to snowball and take a physical toll on your mind and body.

Stress builds when events / situations accumulate on top of each other. The best way to reduce stress is to remove the things which contribute to it, whilst at the same time seeking activities which lighten your load.

The following tips may help you to manage how you react to stressful events, such as exams:



### Keep things in perspective regarding exams

- Exams aren't everything. Whatever happens in your exams, you can still be successful in life. Exam success doesn't define you as a person.
- Everyone copes differently in different situations and there's so much more to your personality than how well you can respond to an exam.

### Get organised

- Picture your exams as a time-bound project. Are the exams 60 days away? That's your 60-day challenge.
- Work out the basics: which exams you have, how the marks are allocated, and how much you have to learn for each one. Don't expect to learn everything; but having in mind where you'll get the marks can help you prioritise.
- Break your revision down into small chunks, and form a plan. Once you've got a plan, you won't have any more dilemmas at the start of the day about what to work on.
- Schedule in plenty of free time to relax and play; make sure you protect this time. Nobody can work all day, every day. If you give yourself plenty of rest you can do the same amount of work in half the time or less. Equally, it's ok if you go slightly off schedule - tomorrow is another day.

### Get into some good habits

- Take frequent breaks every 30-45 minutes. You could use a technique like Pomodoro, that helps you to take regular breaks. When you do 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. 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. Use some of the exercises below if you find your sleep is impacted in during times of stress.

- Find activities that help you relax. Maybe it's a hot bath, watching a TV show, or a creative activity.

### **Avoid bad habits**

- Leaving things to the last minute will add to your stress levels, work as best you can to schedule out as far as you can your revision plan. And don't set yourself ridiculous goals, nobody can revise 10 topics in a day.
- Don't cut out all the enjoyment from your life. It's tempting to decide you'll just knuckle down to work and "focus", but this is counterproductive - it's impossible to focus without giving your brain rest by doing other activities.
- Avoid stimulants. Caffeine, high sugar drinks impede your energy and concentration in the long term. It'll also make it more difficult to get that much-needed sleep.
- Minimise your smartphone / internet time because social media can be stressful!! Work to cut your screen time to a minimum as it will reduce your risk to stress.

### **Get support from friends and family**

- If you can, discuss with your parents what they're expecting you to achieve. It's helpful to let them know what you believe you have the capacity to achieve. The best way to get there is to have their support.

## **Anxiety**

Anxiety is something we all experience. Whilst it can feel uncomfortable, the best thing you can do to help reduce it is firstly noticing. When you choose to pay attention to your anxiety then you can start to reduce it; this is far more effective than ignoring it and hoping it will go away.

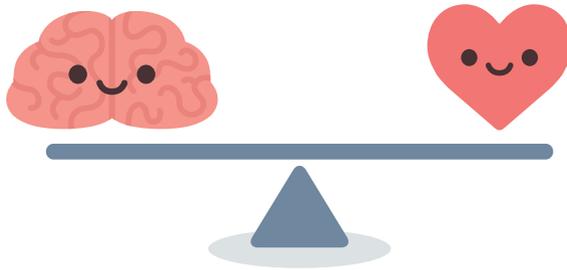
Whilst talking to a good friend, family member, or tutor will help reduce your anxiety you may find the following exercises can also have a positive effect. There are many different exercises, the following are just a few which have been proven to help. You may want to explore them and see which works best for you. Remember by following these practices you're equipping yourself with a powerful way to help to protect yourself from the effects of anxiety when in stressful situations.

**Breathing exercises** - a great, simple breathing exercise for calming both the nervous system is a timed breath where the exhale is longer than the inhale.

**Progressive muscle relaxation**– this is a graded muscle tensing and relaxation exercise where you systematically go through your body step by step. If done regularly this exercise may become a powerful ally to help you reduce and limit your anxiety.

**Mindfulness** – mindfulness is about stepping out from your thoughts and bodily sensations and watching them with a gently curiosity. A pamphlet has been included with this document to help you to explore mindfulness further.

Tom Keely  
[www.tomkeelycounselling.co.uk](http://www.tomkeelycounselling.co.uk)



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