

Exam Stress: What it looks like and how to cope

With the second round of PPEs having recently passed for our Year 11 students, it's important to take a magnifying glass to one of the most common causes of mental health issues with people our age – exam stress.

Exam stress is usually categorised as stress which relates to any educational-related problems that one can face – for people our age, this is more frequently related to PPEs and GCSE stress. It can manifest physically, emotionally or psychologically.

Before we take a look at the symptoms, it's important to know that this can affect anyone – not just Year 11s!

Physical effects of stress usually involve a change in the physical appearance of a person – this includes an increase in acne, being more tired more often, and an increase in infections or colds.

Emotional effects of stress usually involve a change in the ability to show or regulate your emotions – this includes having mood swings, having overwhelming frustration, and an increase in anxiety.

Psychological effects of stress usually involve a change in the behaviour of a person – this includes a withdrawal from social situations, over or undereating, and the starting of habits such as nail biting.

Although these effects may seem daunting, there are ways to combat exam stress as a whole. These include:

- Setting a routine for revision and sticking to it - this ensures that you don't end up procrastinating and cramming the night before, and actually makes sure you know the content! On top of this, having a space for revision can help as it physically separates distractions and also sets your brain into a learning mindset.

- Getting enough sleep – it may sound unrelated, however your brain struggles to cope with test-like conditions if it is already tired from a lack of sleep.

The most important thing of all, however, is to talk to someone if it all becomes too much – no-one should have to deal with exam stress alone.