



Lincolnshire Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

Exam Success

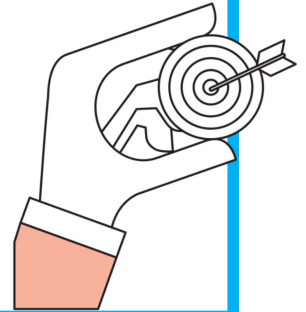


Name:

To be used in conjunction with the Exam Success Online Workshop which can be found at: <https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people/online-workshops>

Aims and Goals

- To understand stress
- To explore emotional wellbeing and how we can stay well
- To learn strategies to better manage our stress
- Revision tips
- To explore the use of relaxation and mindfulness.



What is Stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to feeling threatened or under pressure. Everyone feels stressed from time to time, this is a completely normal part of life, but we can often experience it in different ways. Stress can be motivating to help us achieve things in our daily life, and can help us meet the demands of home, school and family life.

But **too much stress** can affect our mood, our body and our relationships; especially when it feels out of our control. It can make us feel anxious and irritable, and affect our self-esteem.

Exam time, for most young people is very stressful, as we often have many pressures making us feel like we have to do well or we're a failure. Experiencing a lot of stress over a long period of time can also lead to a feeling of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, often called burnout.

If you feel the work's piling up, do you experience any of the following:

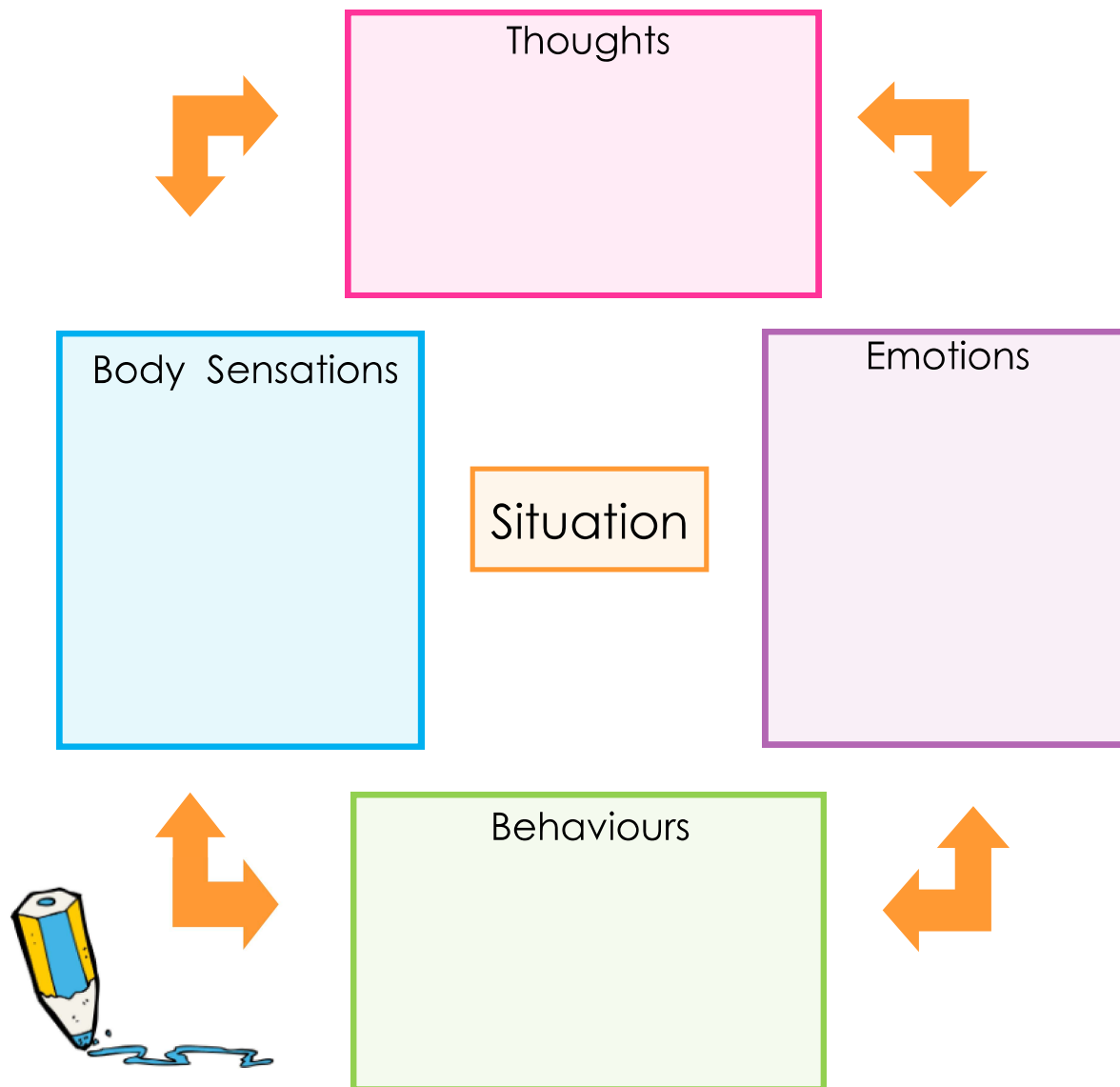
- Difficulty getting to sleep or waking up in the morning
- Forgetfulness
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Poor appetite
- Loss of interest in activities
- Increased anxiety and irritability
- Increased heart rate
- Migraines/headaches
- Blurred vision or Dizziness



The 5 Areas

This shows how our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and physical sensations link together. Using this method we can help you identify what is going happening and where you may be able to make changes.

Have a go at trying the 5 areas out for yourself! Think of a time where you may have been anxious, worried or stressed about exams, this will be your situation. How did the situation impact on your thoughts, your emotions, your behaviours and the physical sensations you experienced in your body?



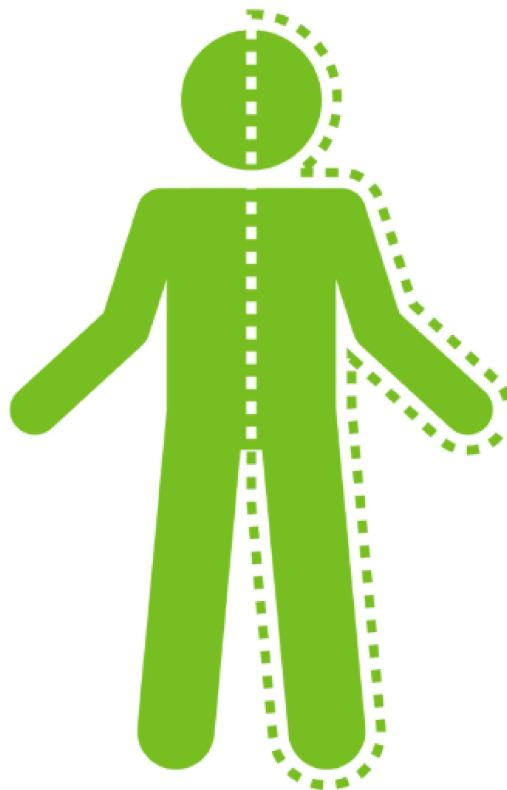
The 5 areas can become a 'vicious cycle' so it's important to identify what is impacting on you and find a way to break the cycle, by either managing/ challenging our thoughts or changing what we do (behaviours).

The Fight, Flight, Freeze Response

Anxiety/stress is one of the body's natural responses to a perceived threat. When we are faced with danger our bodies release adrenaline into the bloodstream, increasing our heart rate and breathing. This then leads to blood and oxygen to be pumped around the body to our muscles which enables us to 'fight, flight or freeze'.

We can often misinterpret everyday situations as a threat or something to be scared of which falsely activates the fight or flight response. The key is to recognise the symptoms when they occur e.g. heart beating faster and use these physical signs as a way to know you need to try and find a way to calm your body and mind back down.

What physical sensations occur in your body? Write them around the image below...



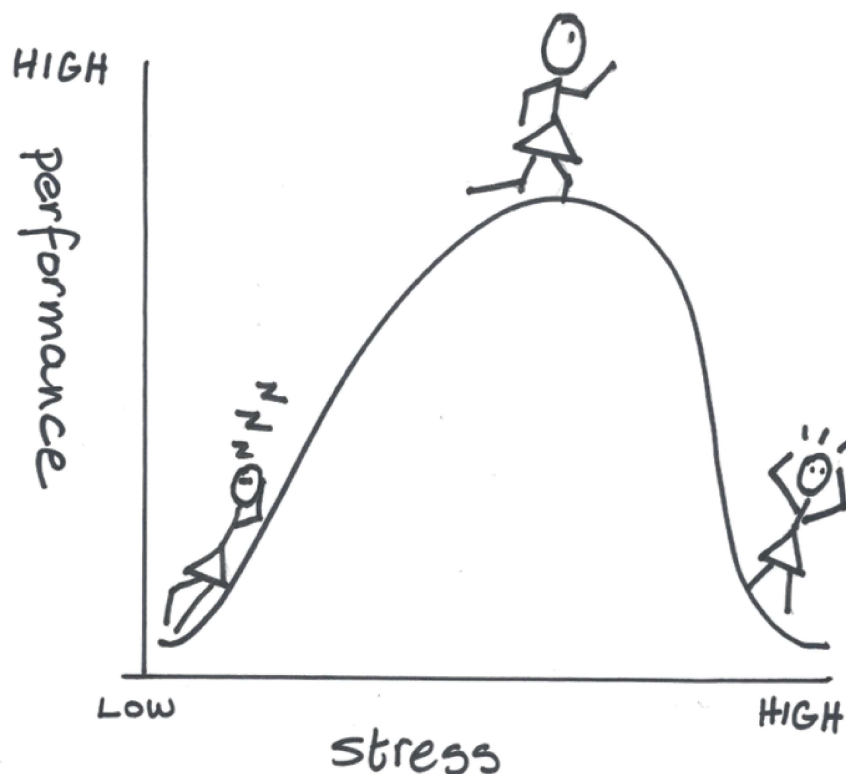
Temporary Stress

Stress can be really motivating, can make us stay on track. However, if we have too much stress it can affect our concentration. Don't lose sight of the fact that there is life after exams, your exams are only a short period of your whole year and best of all you have all summer to look forward to once they are over.

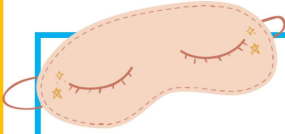
Remember: A little bit of stress can be a good thing as it motivates us to knuckle down, work hard and think faster and more effectively..

But exams can make stress levels get out of hand, which can stop us from performing our best. So, it's important to address it and get it back under control and most importantly once you've done an exam, try to forget about it. There's nothing you can do about it, and worrying won't change your mark.

When you are feeling stressed, try to check in with yourself and work out where on the stress curve you are feeling. Do you feel full of energy and ready to revise? or do you feel full of stress and in the need to re-focus and take a break?



Sleep, Diet and Exercise



Snoozing!

Sleep is an essential part of your physical and mental wellbeing. It allows you to concentrate better and to store things you have learnt that day, improving the efficacy of your studying and revision for exams. **Most young people need 8-10 hours sleep per night.**

- Get into a good routine. Have a regular bedtime and waking time, even at the weekends. Sleeping in at the weekend disrupts your sleeping pattern because it has a knock on effect on what time your body is ready to sleep.
- Have a bedtime ritual to give your body a sign that it is time to settle and fall asleep.
- Make your bedroom 'sleep friendly'. It should be cool, quiet and dark. Make sure your mattress and pillow are comfortable.
- Take a warm bath before bed to help you relax and clear your mind.
- Try to exercise regularly and go outside for some time every day. This can help you fall and stay asleep more easily.

Consuming!

A healthy and balanced diet is important to keep your body healthy and your mind active. Eating a range of healthy foods will help you to concentrate, be more productive, have more energy and improve your mood.

Top Tip: Each day also try to rate your mood, sleep and energy levels on a scale of 0-10 (0= Not very good and 10=Excellent).



Moving!

Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle in two ways: it helps keep your body healthy by building muscle and by keeping your cardiovascular system and immune system strong and it is good for your mental health. Exercising can help you to sleep better and to make you feel happier during and after sport due to the endorphins that are released. The NHS recommends that young people up to the age of 18 should exercise for **60 minutes a day.**

Keeping Yourself Well: Revision Quiz



QUIZ

Read each statement and consider if you think this is true or false.

1. **People who study in a way that supports their learning style can perform better on tests and improve their grades.**

True or False

2. **Bananas can help you sleep and reduce anxiety.**

True or False

3. **Energy drinks are harmless.**

True or False

4. **Drinking lots of water can help you concentrate.**

True or False

5. **Most young people need 8-10 hours' sleep per night.**

True or False

6. **It is recommended that we exercise for half an hour, 3 days a week.**

True or False

7. **Increased levels of exercise during the day can help you sleep better at night. Increased levels of even moderate physical activity can improve sleep quality among those who sleep poorly.**

True or False

8. **Skipping breakfast can help you think more clearly.**

True or False

9. **Being active is linked to better emotional wellbeing, reduction in stress levels and improved concentration.**

True or False

10. **During exam time you should stop doing everything you enjoy and just revise.**

True or False



Smart Goals

When creating a timetable it is important to create **SMART** goals.

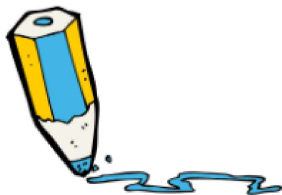
SMART Goals are:

- Specific: What topic do I need to study?
- Measurable: How much exactly do I need to study?
- Achievable: Do I have the resources I need? e.g. the time/ the workbook
- Realistic: Am I putting too much pressure on myself?
- Timely: Ensure revision is spread out, not leaving it all to the day before



Make time to enjoy yourself!

Create a list of things that you enjoy doing, this might be spending time with friends or family , watching TV or playing with a pet



Problem Solving

There are seven steps to help you to try and solve your here and now worries.
Why not give it a go below....

Step 1: Identify the worry you want to focus on

Choose one of the Here and Now worries that you would like to try and problem solve.



Step 2: Identify Solutions

Identify as many potential solutions as possible. At this stage nothing should be rejected, no matter how ridiculous some solutions may seem.

Step 3: Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each solution

Make a note of the main advantages and disadvantages of each solution. This may include the possibility of being able to undertake the solution, the resources you have and how you feel about carrying it out.



Step 4: Select a solution

Now choose one of your solutions to try out.

Step 5: Develop a plan

The solution you have chosen may require careful planning. Try to stick to the 'Four Ws' – what, where, when, with whom.



Step 6: Put your plan into action

Now that you have developed your plan, it is all about putting it into action.

Step 7: Review your plan

Maybe it worked a little or not at all. The advantage of problem solving is that other options always exist. If the plan worked then continue to use it, if not then pick another solution to try.



My Learning Style: Quiz

There are three basic types of learning styles. The three most common are visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic. Most people tend to use one of their senses more than the others. This quiz will help you determine which of these learning styles you rely on the most.

There is a series of 16 questions that are related to the three main learning styles. Read the question and select the answer that is the closest fit. After you answer each of these questions, calculate your total number of a's, b's and c's.

When you study for a test, would you rather...

- a. Read notes, read headings in a book, look at diagrams and illustrations
- b. Have someone ask you questions, or repeat facts silently to yourself
- c. Write things out on flash cards and make models or diagrams

Which of these do you do when you listen to music?

- a. Daydream (see things that go with the music)
- b. Hum along
- c. Dance to the music

When you work at solving a problem do you?

- a. Make a list, organise the steps and check them off as they are done
- b. Make a few phone calls or text your friends or someone you think may know
- c. Make a model of the problem or walk through the steps in your mind

If you are trying to concentrate what puts you off the most?

- a. An untidy room
- b. Noises
- c. People moving about

Having watched a film or television programme what do you remember the most?

- a. The scenes and what people looked like
- b. What was said and the music
- c. What happened and how the characters felt

How do you prefer to relax?

- a. By watching TV or reading
- b. By listening to music
- c. By doing physical activity such as sports or going for a walk.



In your English lesson you are learning a new story. How do you remember it?

- a. You draw pictures or a mind map
- b. You tell the story to a friend
- c. You make up actions as you go over the story in your head

You are learning to count in another language, what is best for you?

- a. Looking at cards and posters
- b. Singing the words
- c. Playing a game with the words

You need to remember a telephone number. What do you do?

- a. Imagine the pattern of numbers in my head
- b. Repeat the numbers aloud
- c. Learn the pattern the numbers make on the keypad

In a history lesson you are learning new facts. Which is the best way for you?

- a. Watching a video
- b. Listening to a tape or radio programme explaining what happened
- c. Taking part in a role play and acting out what happened

In a science lesson you are learning about the effects of a chemical. How do you prefer to find out?

- a. By looking at a diagram
- b. By listening to your teacher telling you
- c. By completing an experiment

When you meet new people how do you remember them?

- a. Mostly on how they looked and what they wore
- b. Mostly by what they said or their name
- c. Mostly by things they did or how they made you feel

In a PE lesson you are learning a new move on the trampoline. What is best for you?

- a. You look at diagrams of moves on flash cards
- b. Your friend explains how you do it
- c. You let the teacher support you through the movements so that you can feel how to do it.

You have made a cake before with help. This time you want to do it on your own how do you do it?

- a. You follow a recipe
- b. You ask someone to tell you what to do
- c. You just get started and remember what to do as you go along

If you have to learn a list of facts/things in order, which is easier?

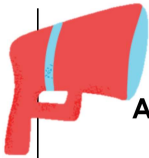
- a. You read over the list several times
- b. You make up a song or rhyme
- c. You act or dance them in a sequence

Quiz Outcome



Mostly A's =

Visual Learner

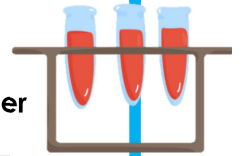


Mostly B's =

Auditory Learner

Mostly C's =

Kinaesthetic Learner



Visual learners learn best when information is presented in a written language format or in another visual format such as pictures or diagrams.

Auditory learners learn best when information is presented in a spoken language format.

Tactile/Kinaesthetic learners learn best when they can use their sense of touch and can move about.

Study Tips:

- Create diagrams and concept maps that use visual symbols to represent information.
- Include illustrations as you take notes in class.
- Use highlighter pens of contrasting colours to colour code different aspects of the information in your textbooks.
- When using flashcards, limit the amount of information on a card so that you can form a mental picture of the information.
- Watch videos about topics you are studying in class.
- Working a quiet place free from visual distractions.
- Write things down you are trying to learn.

Study Tips:

- Participate in study groups in which you can talk things out.
- Try using a recording device in lessons or when reading your textbook so you can listen to the information as much as you like.
- Work out problems aloud
- Repeat facts and definitions of words over and over to yourself with your eyes closed.
- Try studying with a friend
- Create musical jingles or songs to remember information.
- Look for books on tape or other audio materials when learning about a subject.
- Be certain that your study place is free of auditory distractions

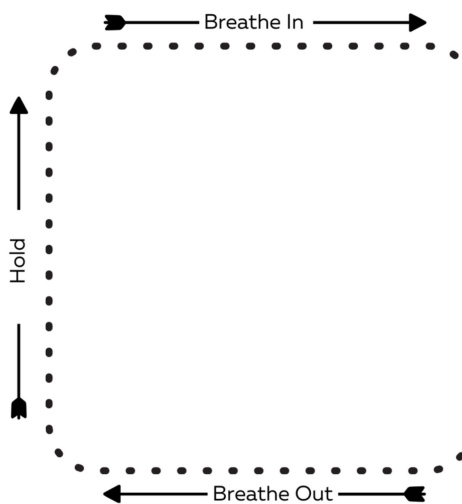
Study Tips:

- Be physically active while you study. Walk back and forth as you read the information out loud.
- Study in short blocks of time with frequent but short breaks.
- Do something physical as you study such as tapping a pencil or squeezing a stress ball.
- Use your finger as a guide while reading.
- Act out things you have to learn.
- Construct models of things you have to learn whenever possible.
- When trying to memorise, try closing your eyes and writing information in the air. Picture the words in your head.
- Make use of the computer, touching a keyboard will keep your mind active.

Relaxation

We can use relaxation methods to help calm strong feelings and re-focus our minds to the here and now. Here are a few methods to try...

Square breathing.



Step 1: Starting at the top left hand corner of the square, sit upright and slowly inhale through your nose for a slow count of four. Pay attention to the feeling of the air filling your lungs.

Step 2: Hold your breath for another slow count of four.

Step 3: Exhale slowly and deeply through your mouth to the count of four. Feel the air leave your lungs.

Step 4: Hold your breath for the same slow count of four before repeating this process until you feel calm.

Grounding.

When you begin to feel strong emotions, it is important to bring yourself back to the here and now, by distracting your mind.

Try using your 5 senses to name five things you can see, four things you can hear, three things you can feel, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.

When doing this try to notice things that you hadn't previously seen or give a brief description.



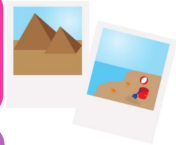
Self-Soothe Box

A self-soothe box is a useful tool to use when you are feeling lots of emotions including sadness, anxiety and anger. It is personal to you and can be kept throughout your life! Here are some ideas on what to include in this box...



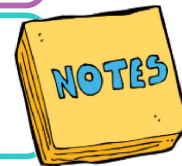
Sensory Items; e.g. fidget cubes/spinners or stress balls. These items can help restlessness.

Photos; of loved ones/pets etc. These can help to remind you of your close relationships and who is around to support you.



Hobby items; e.g. music, colouring, books. These can help to relax and distract you.

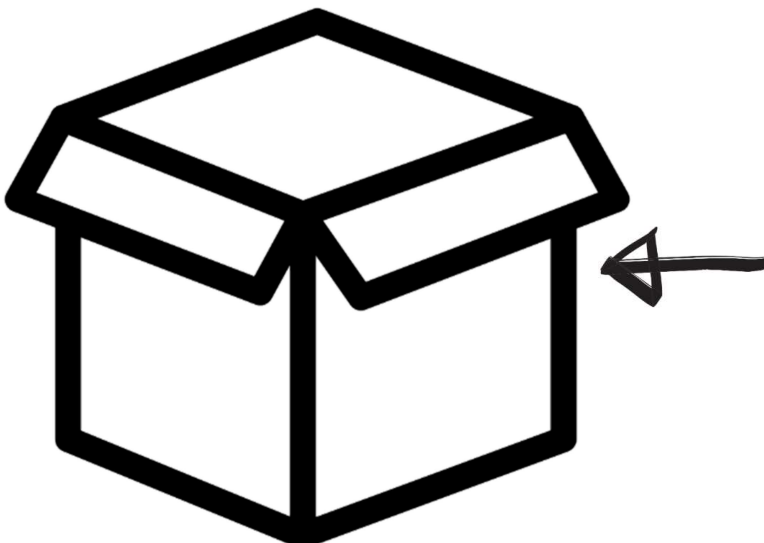
Notes; either from yourself or people in your support network. These can help provide reassurance and place things into perspective.



Relaxation; breathing and other relaxation techniques, that you may have found useful.

We recommend sourcing a shoe box and taking time to decorate this how you like, to ensure it's personal to you. Collect together items that are meaningful to you, or you know will be helpful. Make sure to keep it somewhere you can easily access it.

Why not have a go at making your own? Write some ideas below of what you would include...



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Shut your eyes if you're comfortable doing so. During this exercise pay special attention to the feeling of releasing tension in each muscle and the resulting feeling of relaxation. The idea of this technique is to intentionally tense each muscle, and then to release the tension. Let's practise with your feet...

1. **Tense the muscles in your toes by curling them into your foot. Notice how it feels when your foot is tense. Hold the tension for 5 seconds.**
2. **Release the tension from your toes. Let them relax. Notice how your feet feel differently after you release the tension.**
3. **Tense the muscles all throughout your calf. Hold it for 5 seconds. Notice how the feeling of the tension in your leg feels.**
4. **Release the tension from your calf, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs.**

Follow this pattern of tensing and releasing tension all throughout your body. After you finish with your feet and legs, move up through your torso, arms, hands, neck and head. When you have finished slowly bring yourself back to the here and now, opening your eyes and stretching your muscles.

Watch recorded relaxation activities on the Healthy Minds, MHST and CAMHS website.

[Young people :: Lincolnshire Young People \(lpft.nhs.uk\)](http://lpft.nhs.uk)



Handy Hacks

During the exam, have a calm read through the exam paper to find a topic you know well. Start by answering that question, to bolster your confidence, then move on to the trickier stuff.

Spray yourself with different scents for each topic you revise (including your clothes, revision cards etc.), when it comes to sitting your exam spray yourself with the same scent. The scent will trigger your 'smell memory' and will help you remember things you learned associated to that scent.

Get a good night's sleep the night before an exam, this will help concentration the next day. Try taking a calming bath or watching your favourite film the evening before.

Keep a box or suitcase in the corner of your room, every time you complete an exam remove all revision items/ books and place them in the box. Do this for each subject. As you place items in the box you'll be able to see the change in achievement and how close you are to reaching your goal (end of exams!), once all your exams are finished screw you timetable up and place it in the box.

Switch between subjects to avoid becoming bored.

Use Red, Amber or Green to colour code your confidence on the topics you need to cover. Start by revising the red topics, when you feel more confident with these move to amber topics, then the green.

Use a timer to help you stick to your revision timetable. These timers will let you know when it's time to take a break.



Useful Websites & Numbers

Websites:

- **Get self-help**—www.getselfhelp.co.uk
- **Young Minds**—www.youngminds.org.uk
- **KOOTH (11+)** - www.kooth.com
- **Mood Juice**—<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Numbers:

- **Here4You Advice Line:** 0800 234 6342
- **ChildLine:** 0800 1111
- **Samaritans:** 116 123
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger (Shout);**
SHOUT to 85258



Don't forget to check out our website, for lots of other useful information; such as our relaxation videos and our useful apps booklet!

<https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people>



We really appreciate your feedback so we can continue to improve our service for you!

Please don't forget to fill out the short feedback survey once you have completed the workshop;

[Home Page - Survey Application \(ratemy NHS.co.uk\)](http://ratemy NHS.co.uk)