



# MENTAL HEALTH Bulletin

28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Hello Everyone,

As we draw ever closer to the end of term, the end of year assessment period is almost upon us.

All students will complete assessments in each of their subjects on the work that they have covered this year. This no doubt leads to stress and anxiety for some students, so I thought it might be a good idea to look at how to look after your mental health and prepare for the exams.

## Tips for Students

### Preparation is Key

Once you know what days each of your assessments are on you can start to plan and prepare.

Your exercise books are your own unique personalised revision guides so make sure you keep them safe at home to refer to. You also have glossaries and sequence of learning sheets in your books at the start of each unit of work. These are an excellent starting point. Make sure you read and understand the specific meaning of the words used in each subject. Use the sequence of learning sheets to make a list of the topics you have covered this year.

Talk to your teacher to make sure that you are revising the correct topics and ask for tips on how to prepare for the exam. If time permits, put together a revision timetable leading up to the assessments. Be realistic! Revising for three hours per night every night is not good for your mental health and trying to stay focused for three hours on the same subject is not conducive to learning. Aim to work for 45min to 1 hour and then have a break. It may help to change subject. Don't work every night either. It is important to look after your mental health by taking time off to enjoy some exercise, socialising with family and friends, or following your hobbies or interests.

Remember to have all your equipment ready, with spare pens and pencils and a calculator where it is required. Get a good night's sleep prior to assessment days and always make sure you eat breakfast. No one performs at their best if they are hungry.

### Exam Anxiety

Everyone feels a bit anxious prior to going into an exam, it is a natural response. However, some students become very stressed and anxious. Regular assessments through the academic year and end of term tests, not only inform your teachers about how well you are doing, but they also help you to build up your resilience and enable you to get used to sitting exams. GCSEs are all exam based so, through regular assessments and practise, you are better prepared for the external exams in year 11.

There are many things you can do to help you with exam stress. Popular activities include breathing techniques, meditation and listening to music. Visualising going into the exam and feeling confident and positive about passing can help, especially if you start doing this a few days before the actual exams.

If you need any support with this, please talk to your PSM or staff from the Safeguarding or Mental Health Team. The student mental health ambassadors and peer mentors are also there to offer you support if you want to talk to them. They all wear the yellow and red mental health badges and will be happy for you to approach them for help.

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## Post Assessment

Once you have completed the exam there is nothing you can do to change anything so try to avoid going back over the questions and self-analysing. Instead, focus on your next exam and put your energy into preparing for the forthcoming assessments.

## Tips for Parents

Talk to your child about the assessments and how they are feeling about them. If they are anxious then talk to them calmly about what it is they are worried about. Look at strategies and activities that can help them reduce their anxiety and alleviate their fears. If you feel that you need advice or further support, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Helping them with a revision plan can be a good activity to do with your child but remind them that the plans can vary and change and that is OK.

During the assessment week, ensure that your child is getting a good night's sleep and is following a good sleep hygiene routine. Making sure they have breakfast before they go to school and that they have a water bottle to keep hydrated during the day are all things that support brain activity and help them to focus throughout the day.

After your child has sat assessments, ask them how they are and allow them to talk if they want to. Make sure that they have some time to relax after a day at school completing exams so that they have time to recharge and look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Most of all, reassure them that trying their best and demonstrating that they are making progress is what matters most.

The <https://youngminds.org.uk/> website has lots of advice for both student and parents if you want some further information. They asked young people to give some wellbeing advice for students as they prepare for exams, and I have attached their tips below.

1. Always take a moment just to breathe, whether in the exam, before or after.
2. Remember that school does offer support, just reach out and ask!
3. Keep your work balanced. Spend time revising, but socialise and relax too.
4. Keep a self-care routine so that your revision is the most productive it can be whilst you feel as good as possible.
5. Break up revision with food and exercise to make sure you stay energised.
6. Remember that results do not define you.
7. Find a revision space and style that works for you: silence, background chatter, music with or without lyrics.
8. Work to your own pace – everyone is different in how they work.
9. If you feel nervous about the time pressure of an exam, practice timing yourself when you revise, or try some test papers.
10. Plan in some treats to reward yourself, and celebrate when it's all over!

I hope these tips are useful for you. If you do want any further advice, please get in touch.

Have a good week everyone and stay safe and well.

Ms Corbett-Lees  
Mental Health Lead

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