

Managing Exam Result Anxiety

Waiting for and receiving your exam results can be extremely stressful, especially in these uncertain times! It is normal to feel some anxiety about your results, but if you are finding it hard to manage see below for some self-help tips and information on how to access Mental Health Support if you need to.

Knowing What to Expect

It could help to find a few details from your school website about when and how results will come out, as well as seeing what school staff could be available to support you afterwards.

Remember teachers, careers advisors and pastoral staff can offer guidance to you with your results if you need it. You won't have to think about next steps on your own

Making a plan as to what you would do and who you would talk to if your results aren't what you hoped can get you feeling a bit more in control



Calm your Body

Anxiety releases chemicals in the body that can have weird effects such as making your heart beat faster, your mouth dry and your palms sweaty. You might notice these or other body changes when you are thinking about your results. This is a normal bodily reaction, is nothing to be afraid of and will not last long. However, sometimes it can be good to know of some ways to get your body feeling calmer.

Relaxation exercises can help with this. They include breathing exercises, guided visualisations and progressive muscle relaxation.

There are lots of examples available online so try some out and find something that works for you. Keep a link/screenshot/note of it so you can access it easily when you need it.



Manage Your Worries

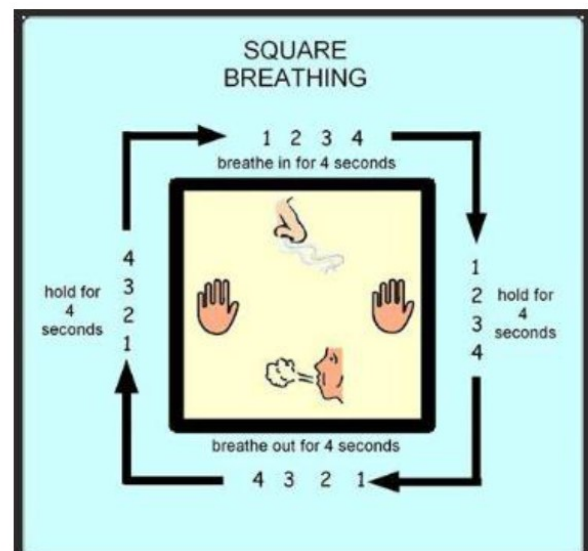
If you find worries about results are taking up time in your day and getting in the way of things you usually enjoy, try giving yourself a specific, short time to worry. This could be 10 mins or so in the evening when you have some free time.

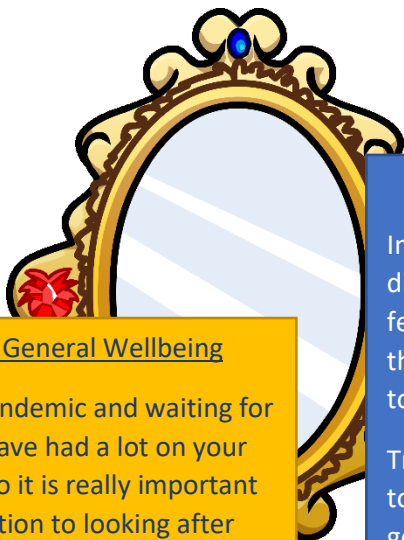
When worries about results come up outside of this time, note them down, maybe on a notes app on your phone or write them on paper and keep them in a box.

Then give yourself permission not to worry right now. Distract yourself with something that keeps your mind busy like messaging a friend or watching a video.

During your worry time you can revisit the notes in the day and spend time really thinking about these worries. You might come up with potential solutions or ideas of things that could help.

When your worry time is up, delete, rip up or put away worries and then distract yourself or do something calming.





Take care of your General Wellbeing

What with a global pandemic and waiting for exam results, you have had a lot on your plate this summer, so it is really important that you pay attention to looking after yourself.

Ever notice how when you're very thirsty it becomes hard to think of anything else? When we aren't looking after our basic physical needs the big challenges in life become much harder. So pay attention to whether you are getting enough water, sleep, nutrition and rest.

Take some time to look after your general wellbeing by following the "5 ways to wellbeing":

5 ways to wellbeing



Be kind to yourself

Imagine if your friend told you that you were a failure or didn't deserve good exam results, it would probably make you feel upset or angry. However, these are the kind of thoughts that we can easily have about ourselves. The way that we talk to ourselves matters and can impact our mood.

Try to notice when you are being particularly negative towards yourself and change that "self-talk" to something a good friend or supportive coach might say.

Some examples might be:

"Whatever happens, I know I have options"

"If I don't get the results I am hoping for, I will be disappointed but I know I can cope"

"I am proud of myself for this year at school, it's not been easy"

Remember that however hard you worked for these results, they do not define you! You will have lots of amazing qualities and skills that are nothing to do with results

Make time for activities that remind you of these qualities and make you feel good about yourself such as doing hobbies, sports or being with people you care about.

Know How to Get More Help

If you are finding that your anxiety is still having an impact on your life, affecting your happiness, your sleep/eating or making it harder to take part and enjoy things that you used to do these could be signs that you may need some more help.

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) are one service who can provide mental health support to young people experiencing anxiety or low mood. You can self-refer into the service via our website below or ask a parent or a member of staff in your school to help you:

<https://secureforms.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/mhst/>

Links:

[Childline: Coping with pressure](#)

[Young Minds: When exam results don't go to plan](#)

[A letter from Ella Purnell to her younger self for exams results day](#)

[Create your own summer self-care plan](#)