

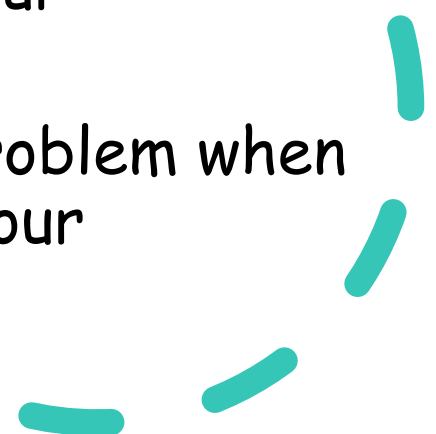
# Exam Stress

Sefton Mental Health Support Team



# What is stress?

- Stress is a normal emotion that everyone feels at some point in their life.
- We can feel stressed in our mind and body.
- It can sometimes be useful when it enhances our performance.
- It can become a problem when it interferes with our everyday life.



# What happens when we feel stressed?

- Think negative thoughts like *'I can't do this', 'I will fail' or 'I am stupid.'*
- Feel overwhelmed, sad or anxious.
- Different sensations in our body such as butterflies in our tummy, feel sick or have headaches.
- It can impact our behaviour (eat unhealthy foods, spend time alone, not getting enough sleep, stop doing things we like).
- This is because how we think, influences how we feel and behave.





# How to Help Stress - 5 Ways to Wellbeing

- **Connect:** talk to a friend, visit family - chatting with others helps us to connect
- **Be Active:** walking, dancing, running, sports - physical exercise helps!
- **Give:** offer kindness, random acts each day - helps us to feel good too!
- **Learn:** pick up an old skill, learn a new skill - helps to build our confidence.
- **Take Notice:** mindfulness or reflection - helps us to keep in the here and now

Doing things within these 5 areas will help to relieve your stress, empty your bucket and help you to feel better.



# Mindfulness

These can be useful for when you are waiting to go in the exam room or when you are sat waiting to start your exam paper



Practise mindfulness using the 5 senses:

- What can I see, hear, touch, taste and smell?
- A game of I-spy with yourself - items beginning with A, B ... or coloured items.
- 5 minutes of focused breathing -take notice of your breath
- Take notice of any tension in your body and relax - drop the shoulders, relax
- Enjoy the taste of your drink or what you are eating - savour each bite
- Look out of the window, notice nature, hear the sounds

# Anxious thoughts

It is really normal that people have anxious thoughts. It can be a struggle knowing what to then do with them. They can be sorted into the categories below:

## Practical

Worries that are a problem now and are about things that 100% will happen

"I have an exam tomorrow and I haven't revised"

"I have coursework and exams I need to revise for, and I don't know where to start"

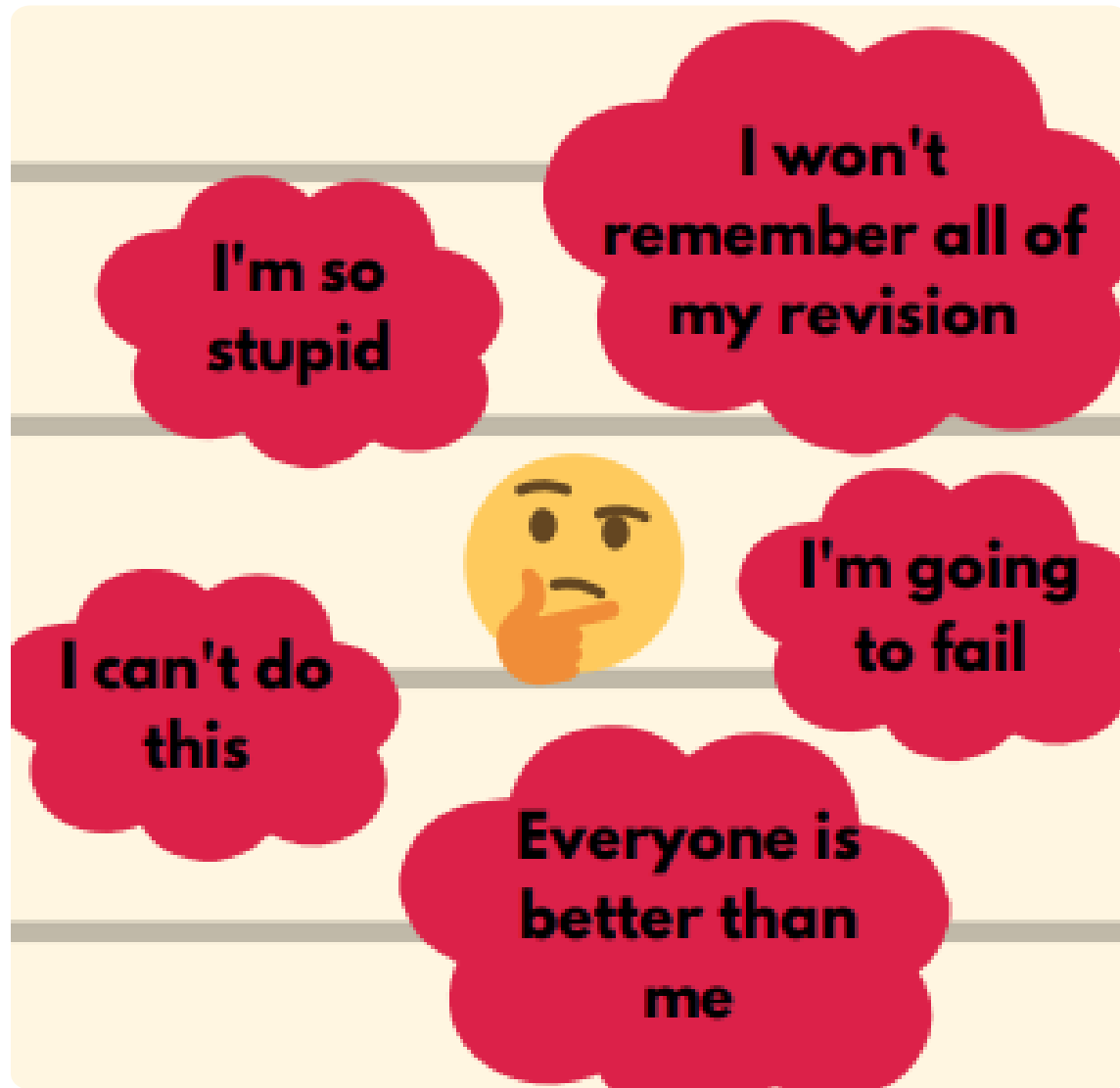
## Hypothetical

Things you're worried about that aren't something you can solve or do anything about because they might not happen.

"What if other people do better than me"

"What if I don't know the questions"

"What if I don't get the marks I need"



# Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs)

- When we feel stressed, we tend to have more negative thoughts about ourselves.
- They happen automatically and can seem to come out of nowhere and are almost always untrue!
- By noticing our thoughts, we can challenge and change them rather than just believe they are true.

## Negative thought

## Helpful thought

I'm going to fail my exam.

I have revised for my exam and will do the best I can do.

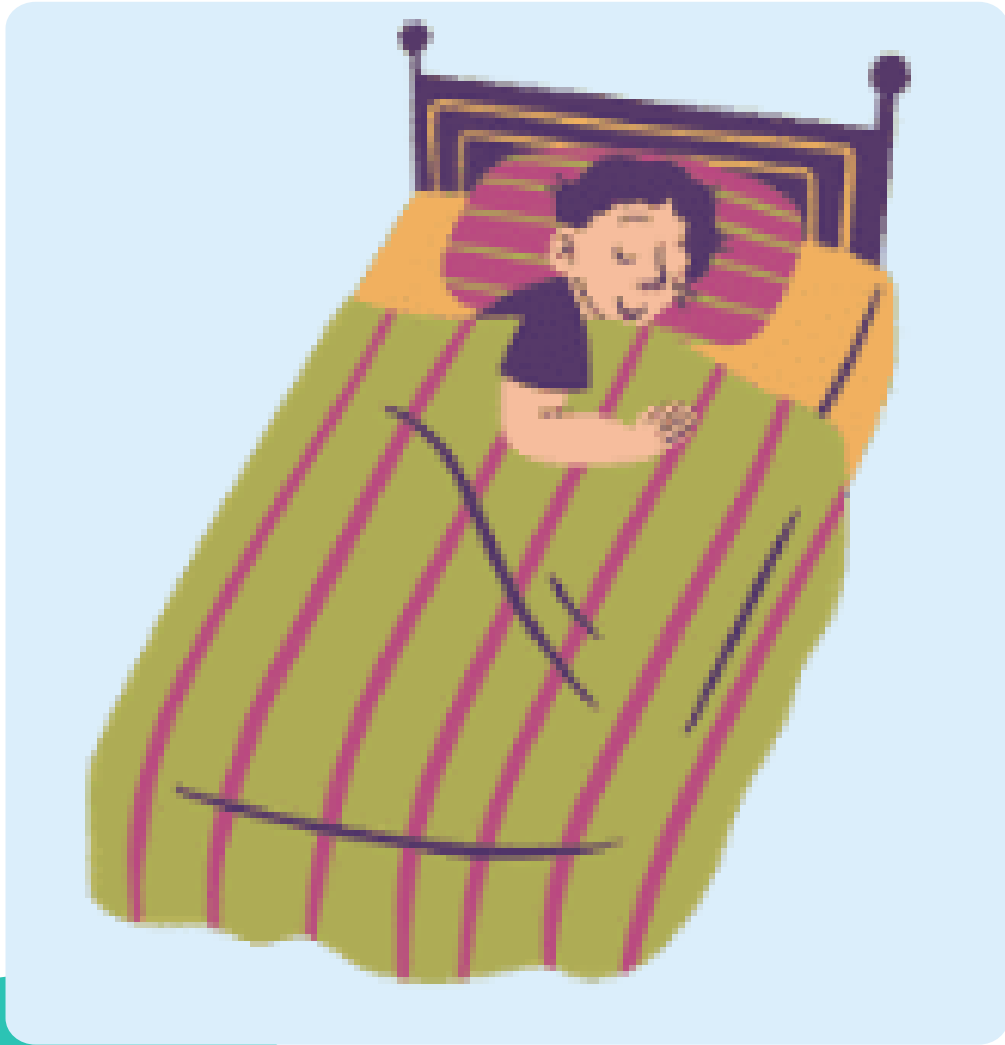
I'm so stupid.

There are many things that I can do well so I am no stupid.

Everyone is better than me.

Everyone has their own things they are good at. I am really good at drawing.





# A good night's sleep helps...

**Memory** - whilst we sleep information moves from our short term to our long-term memory so we can remember things that happened in the day better.

**Decision making** - our ability to think and make decisions improves when we sleep well

**Concentration** - while we sleep, activity in the brain improves a person's focus for the next day

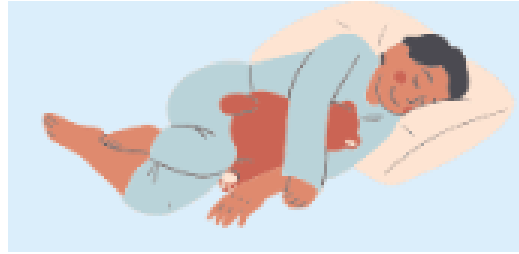
**Mood** - less likely to be cranky and stressed after a good night's sleep

**Immune system**- less likely to get colds and the flu when we sleep well.

# How to get a better night's sleep



Regular exercise



Dark, quiet room



No caffeine



Relax



No technology



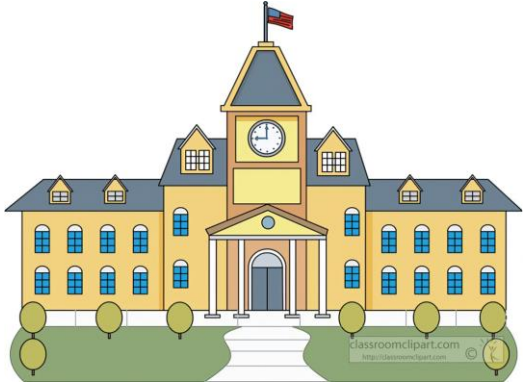
Don't revise just before bed





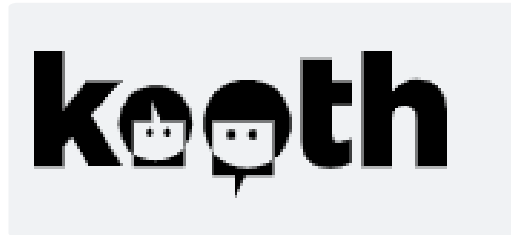
Thank you for  
listening.  
Any questions?





A member of staff

**shout**  
**85258**  
here for you 24/7



Online and via text

**YOUNG MINDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

Website

Need further support?



BBC Bitesize