

Coping with Exam Stress

What is exam stress and what are the impacts?

It is common for learners to experience some degree of stress, worry, or nerves about an upcoming exam or test. Exam stress can have a wide range of impacts:

Emotional: anxiety, panic, feeling overwhelmed or out of control, fear, depressed, tearfulness, mood swings, anger.

Cognitive: difficulty concentrating, going 'blank' or struggling to remember information, negative thoughts or beliefs about failure and the future.

Physiological: muscle tension, difficulty sleeping, feeling sick or dizzy, fast heartbeat, sweating, shaking, feeling run down or unwell.

Behavioural: changes to eating or sleeping patterns, withdrawing from hobbies or social activities, avoiding revision.

Exam stress can be worse if you:

- have had a negative experience of exams in the past;
- already experience mental health difficulties;
- have special educational needs; or
- are under a lot of pressure to perform well from yourself, your family, or your employer.

How you can help yourself

- Speak to someone you trust about your concerns - they will be able to reassure you.
- Ask your colleagues how they coped as you might receive some helpful tips that you may not have considered.
- Help yourself to prepare and feel more in control by creating a revision timetable and identifying different revision techniques.
- Find a distraction-free space to study.
- Make sure you take regular breaks from revision.
- Keep up with healthy routines as best you can, including eating well, staying hydrated, getting enough sleep, and doing some physical activity.
- Try different ways of relaxing, such as breathing exercises, mindfulness or yoga.
- Plan something to look forward to once exams are over
- Keep in mind that if you fail any exams, there is always a Plan B. Find out from your employer what your options will be if you are not successful.

How Tolley can help

Don't forget that your Tolley tutor can help if you are struggling with any particular topics, and if you are on the Apprenticeship programme, then you can speak to your coach. Alternatively, you can contact the Tolley Safeguarding team at concerns@lexisnexis.co.uk