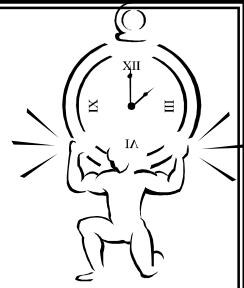
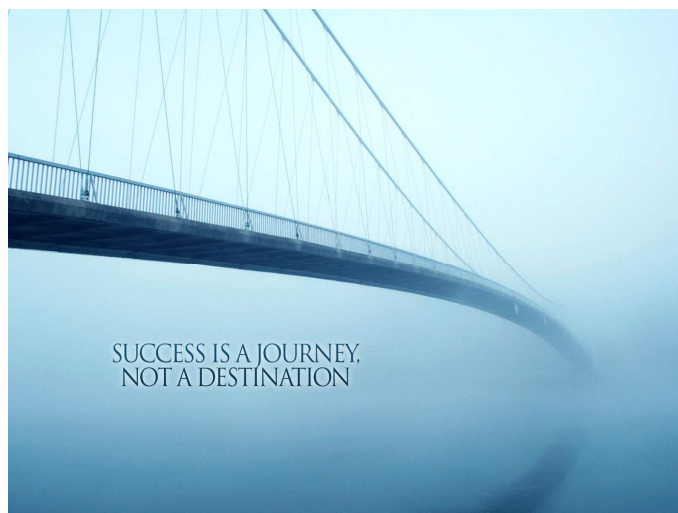




St Mary Redcliffe  
and Temple School



Dealing with exam stress:  
A Guide for Parents and Carers



**So why do you need a guide to dealing with exam stress?**

**It's not like you have to sit any exams... but your children do!**

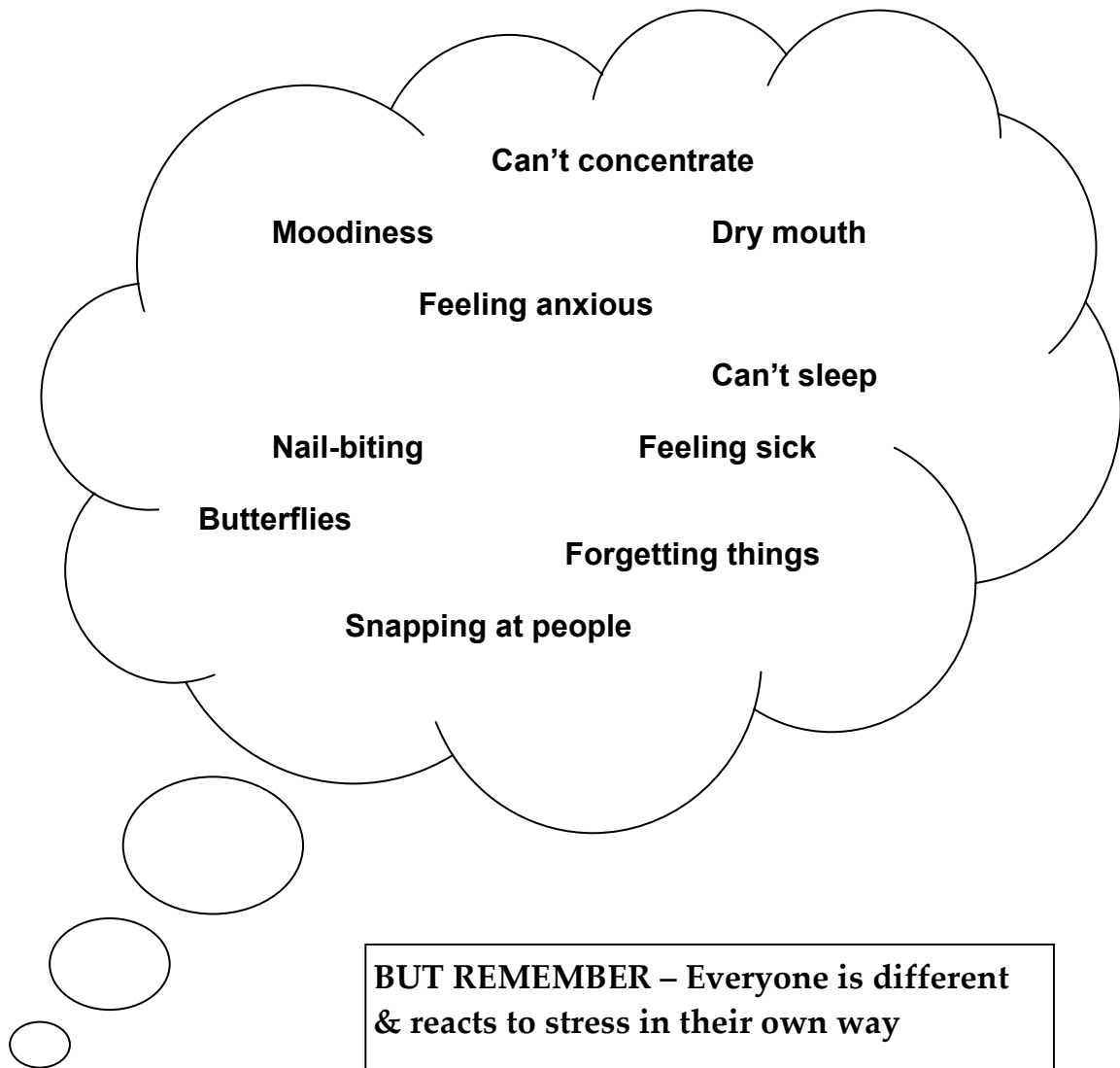


## **What is stress?**

- Stress is a reaction of the nervous system to protect itself from a real or imagined attack what is called 'fight or flight'.
- Adrenaline is released and if it goes unused the result is stress.
- Stress can be caused by many things by physical factors like pollution, extreme temperatures or injury or by psychological factors such as having an argument at home or studying for exams!
- As we know a lot of stress isn't good for you.

## **How can stress affect you?**

- A small amount of stress is necessary - it's part of our natural warning system, making us alert to danger and ready to run from threatening situations.
- In an exam situation, a small amount of adrenaline pumping through your body keeps you alert. If you have been on stage or involved in sport you will know what this feels like.



**BUT REMEMBER – Everyone is different  
& reacts to stress in their own way**

# **STRESS**

## **So what can you do to reduce this?**

There are a few simple things that you can do to make sure exams don't stress you out never mind your children!

### **Studying**

- Your son/daughter's school will support them in planning their study encourage them to ask for help if they are finding it difficult or don't understand something.
- Support your son/daughter to plan their study & stick to it.
- Remember everyone revises differently what works for your son/daughter's friends (or even what worked for you!) might not work for them.
- Remind them to take breaks & plan some 'time out'.
- Try to help them have some quiet space to study, this can be really hard if there are younger children in the house or they share a bedroom.





## Chill out

- Make sure that your son/daughter looks after themselves while studying.
- Taking regular breaks from studying & doing things that help them to relax will help immensely.



## Exercise



- Encourage your son/daughter to exercise, doing an activity that they enjoy aside football, swimming, dancing, going for a walk with a friend.
- If your son/daughter already participates in sport or activities, encourage them to continue while they are studying. However, if their sport/activity takes up a lot of their time, it might be sensible to cut back for a short time until exams are over.



## You are what you eat...



- It's difficult at the best of times to persuade teens to eat healthily try to help out by making sure that there's lots of fruit, veg, fresh food & healthy snacks at home.
- Your son/daughter should avoid lots of caffeine & sugar (e.g. high energy fizzy drinks & chocolate bars) as they won't help them to concentrate properly.
- Make sure that they eat a healthy breakfast before leaving the house for an exam.



## Get some sleep Ideal Relaxation

With your eyes closed, take a moment to create, in your mind's eye, an ideal spot for relaxation. You can make it any place, real or imagined. Perhaps it is a sunny beach, a favourite room or a peaceful meadow. Once you have created it, close your eyes & go back there whenever you feel the need to relax.

**And remember, it might not seem like it some days,  
but there is life beyond exams!**

Although exam results are really important to your son/daughter, let them know that you support them & you know that they are going to do their very best (even when that doesn't mean getting 'straight A's').

Young people have so many options for education and employment that there will be life beyond the exams they are sitting, whatever their results (honestly!) There are also so many pressures on young people to achieve that it might just help for you to remind your son/daughter that you're not another source of that pressure!

**Quick relaxation tips**  
**(for your stressed out teen... or for you!)**

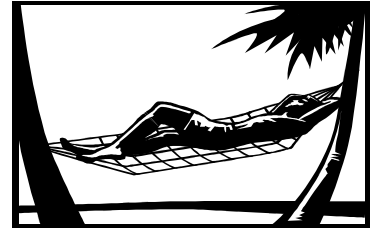
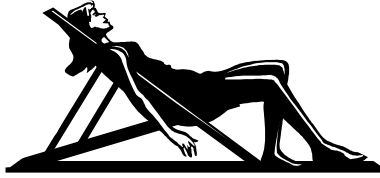


**Tense-release**

Tense yourself all over, one part at a time. Pull your toes up as if to touch your shins & hold. Tense your calves... your thighs... all the way up your spine... tense your arms & your hands. Take a deep breath & hold it. Clench your jaw & hold your eyelids tight. Hold yourself tense all over for four or five seconds then let go all at once. Feel the tension leave your body.

Cool air in, warm air out

With your eyes closed, shift your attention to the tip of your nose. As you breathe in, become aware of the air coming in your nostrils. As you breathe out, be aware of the sensations of the air passing back out. Continue for several breaths.

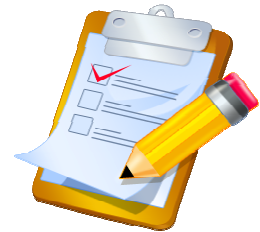


### Ideal Relaxation

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## SUMMARY

- ◇ Manage your studying
- ◇ Eat properly & get some exercise
- ◇ Good sleep is vital
- ◇ Ask for help if you need it
- ◇ Focus on yourself, not on what anyone else thinks or does
- ◇ Do your best – it's all anyone can ask of you!



## USEFUL WEBSITES



### NHS

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/childhealth6-15/pages/examstress.aspx>

### CHILDLINE

[http://www.childline.org.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/BeatExamStressPDF\\_wdf56569.pdf](http://www.childline.org.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/BeatExamStressPDF_wdf56569.pdf)

### FAMILYLIVES

<http://familylives.org.uk/advice/tips-handling-exam-stress>