

Coping with anxiety during unsettling times: *Advice from a Clinical Psychologist*



Advice from Dr Helen Care



How to be okay when schools are closed



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We spoke with Dr Helen Care (Clinical Psychologist) and she shares some advice for students and teens as schools are closed and upcoming exams have been cancelled.

Read on for more details about what Dr Care has to say about coping at this time.

It is an unsettling time for everyone at the moment, and with exams cancelled, then you are probably finding things particularly uncertain. As the world is facing a crisis that most people will have never experienced before, it is completely normal to experience a whole range of emotions. These may be new emotions that you have never felt before or might intensify existing feelings that you may have already had. These emotions may include loneliness, anxiety, panic, anger, and many more. The news that exams are cancelled might be a relief to some, but almost everyone is bound to be feeling weird, confused or just uncertain with everything at the moment. It is extremely important to know that you are not alone and there is help out there for you should you need to seek further support (see links right).



If you feel that you or someone you know (be they a parent, child, teacher or young person) are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others, then it is important to seek immediate professional help.

Seek an emergency GP appointment or call 999 if you or someone you know is at immediate risk.



Some other great sources of information and guidance on **worry, anxiety** and **youth mental health** are:

- [British Psychological Society](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Anna Freud Centre](#)

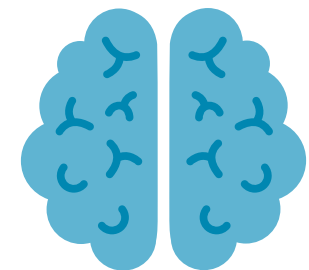
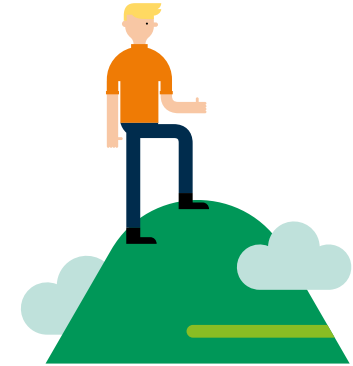


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As plans for what will happen with schools and exams become clearer over the next few weeks, there are things you can be doing to cope with uncertainty and take care of your wellbeing:

- 1 Keep active** – in any way you can. The current government guidance ([What you can and can't do](#)) states that it is okay to go outside for exercise. Make the most of it. Go for a walk or a run, but just steer clear of crowds and stay two metres away from other people. There are also lots of online activities, exercise classes and fitness challenges popping up all over the place that you can do at home, so find something you might enjoy and have a go!
- 2** The normal signals that tell your body and brain that things are alright with the world and keep you healthy are going to be slightly harder to come by at the moment. Be a bit creative though, and you can still get them: **daylight, exercise, food, sleep, social interactions (with family/people you live with or virtually through video calls with friends/family) and positive attention from ourselves and others.** Try to maximise these things to create a sense of normality and reduce feelings of uncertainty and isolation.
- 3 Keep your brain active.** You have been gearing up to exams for at least the last two years and now your brains are ready to go! Make sure to keep them busy and learning. All the knowledge you have now might still be useful to you, even if you don't have to sit an exam in it, so don't let it slip away.





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4 Keep learning – learn something new. Whatever it is, set yourself challenges and have a go. This is a golden opportunity to do things you might not have had a chance to do otherwise. You know that skill you have always wanted to learn but never got around to? Or that thing you feel curious about and want to know more? Now is the time to get stuck in and find out more! Try out a language learning app, learn to cook, learn to code, there are so many to choose from. There are lots of great opportunities to learn new things via the internet, so have a search for something that interests you and get stuck in.



5 Remember this will end. Life will continue, even if we don't yet know exactly when and we may have to go through a few phases of social distancing before full normality might return. You won't be at a huge disadvantage to other people your age, because this has happened to everyone. But you do want to be ready for when life carries on.

