

# SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH EXAMS



## The Teenage Brain

From the ages of 12-24 huge changes take place in the brain.

During this time, it is normal for teenagers to:

- Engage in risky behaviour. This promotes the development of creative problem-solving.
- Have the need to engage with peers and develop independence.
- Have an increase in emotions. They tend to feel things incredibly keenly.



## The Impact of Covid

Covid has decreased opportunities for risk taking, to be with peers and to develop a sense of belonging and identity through social interactions. Control and choice have also been limited. These are central to the development of autonomy and contribute to young peoples' overall wellbeing.

## Online Interactions

Online learning has been shown to be highly stressful for some young people. Young people are also exposed to extreme comparisons between themselves and others from all over the world through social media. These unrealistic images and projections of others' lives are inescapable for young people.

## Too Much Stress Can...

- Interfere with learning, by impacting working memory and the ability to take in new information.
- Contribute to low self-esteem, low self-belief and poor mental health.
- Contribute to negative thinking such as "I can't do it" or "I don't have enough time to revise so I won't do well".
- Lead to poor exam performance.



## What can I do to help?

### Normalise...

1

...young peoples' responses. Sitting exams now is a different experience to sitting them before covid.

### Validate...

2

...how young people are feeling. Listen and accept how difficult things might be right now.

### Individualise...

3

...how we support young people. Help them create their own study plans which work for them.