Positive Mental Health When Facing Exams

Heather Tocher & Karen Smith

School Counsellors

How do young people present?

- They tell you!!
- Somatic complaints
- Time off school
- Inattentiveness
- Excuses to leave the classroom
- Over working
- Rigidity
- Withdrawal
- Insomnia
- Panic attacks
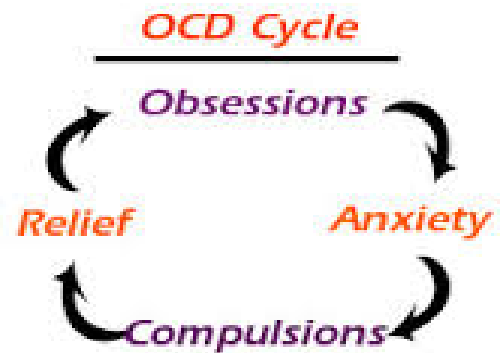- Depression
- Weight loss

Normal to feel

- Sadness at times

- Low mood in relation to disappointments or loss

- Tiredness after coughs and colds

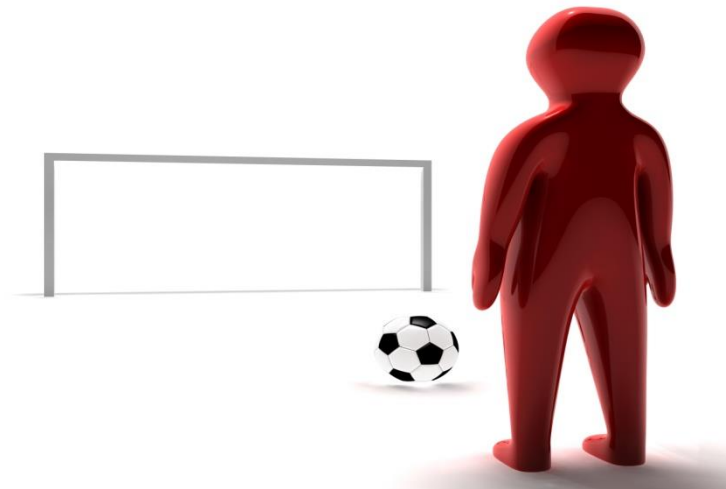- Stress anxiety before exams

Aspects of anxiety

What they may do!

OCD Cycle
Obsessions
Relief   Anxiety
Compulsions

Too Good For Tobacco, Alcohol & Other Drugs

Face the fear

Fight and Flight

Physical symptoms

Breathe

Relax

1. SIT ON A CHAIR.

2. SCRUNCH UP YOUR FACE... THEN RELAX IT.

3. TENSE YOUR ARMS... THEN RELAX THEM.

4. TENSE UP YOUR SHOULDERS AND CHEST... THEN RELAX THEM.

5. TENSE UP YOUR LEGS... THEN RELAX!
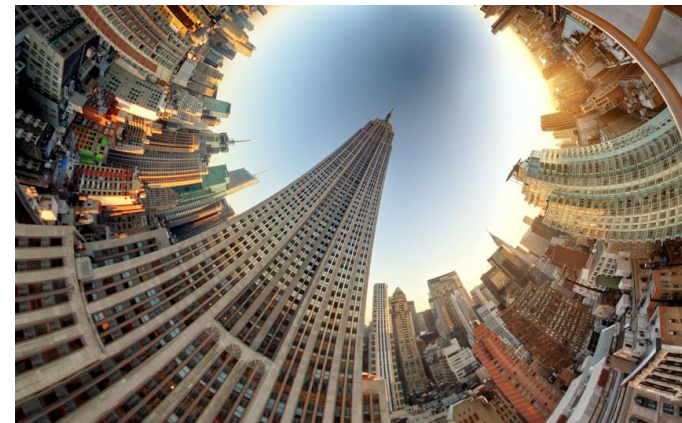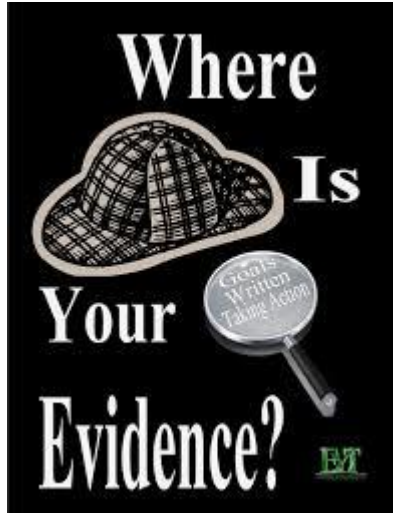
6. BREATHE IN RELAXATION... BREATHE OUT TENSION.

Aspects of anxiety

Challenging worrying thoughts

Challenging

Where Is Your Evidence?

Pros | Cons

TREAT YOURSELF AS IF YOU WERE YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND

Examples of unhelpful thoughts

- Being judged negatively by others:
- They think I'm useless
- They won't like me

- Being able to cope:
- I'll make a fool of myself
- I'll have a panic attack

- Something terrible happening:
- What if I don't get my grades

Some Thinking Traps

Catastrophising

Predicting the future

What if

Over generalising

Mind reading

Should statement

Start the Day Right

- "The body needs glucose first thing in the morning."
- "Studies show that a child that has eaten breakfast performs better."
- "Eating breakfast can also boost your mental performance."

What about a Drink?

- Many Children do not drink enough
- Lack of fluid may cause
- Headaches
- Risks of Infections
- Constipation

Importance of Sleep

- Adolescents need at least 9.2 hours of sleep
- Lack of sleep impacts on everything from a persons ability to pay attention in class to his or her mood.
- Sleep deprivation can impair memory and inhibit creativity
- All night revision before an exam may actually hinder your memory.

How Much Sleep Do I Need?

Teens need at least 8.5 to 9.25 HOURS of sleep each night

NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION

What can you do?

- Set a regular bedtime
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid stimulants
- Relax you mind
- Unwind by keeping the lights low
- Don't nap too much
- Avoid all-nighters
- Create the right sleeping environment
- Wake up with bright light