

FACT SHEET • SECONDARY

Helping Your Young Person Manage Stress

Secondary school brings exams, friendships and a packed timetable all at once, and a young person's stress response is easily triggered because the part of the brain that sounds the alarm matures faster than the part that calms things back down. What looks like overreacting, or shutting down completely, is often a nervous system that hasn't yet learned to settle itself. These five tips help you support that without taking over.



TIP 1

Name the feeling out loud

Simply saying "that sounds really stressful" calms the brain's alarm system faster than trying to fix the problem straight away. Save the solutions for once they feel heard.

TIP 2

Break big worries into pieces

A mountain of coursework feels impossible; a list of small, specific tasks doesn't. Help them write down just the next step, not the whole exam or the whole term.

TIP 3

Build in proper downtime

A packed week of school, clubs and homework needs real gaps in it, not just screen time between tasks. Protect at least one evening where nothing is scheduled at all.

TIP 4

Watch for the physical signs

Stomach aches, headaches and trouble sleeping often show up before a young person can put their stress into words. Take these seriously as a signal, not just a symptom to treat.

TIP 5

Model calm, not panic

Young people pick up on how the adults around them handle pressure. Let them see you take a breath and think something through rather than react, and they'll learn to do the same.