

How to Support
Your Child this
Exam Results Day

Understand the impact of exam results

Data from Kooth, the UK's largest online digital mental health provider for children and young people

- **44%** of exam age students are presenting with issues around anxiety/stress
- Almost **10%** of exam age male students presented with anger issues, an increase of more than **67%**
- **12%** of exam age females are presenting with eating difficulties
- There has been a **26%** increase in the number of students presenting with anger issues from last year to this year
- More than **10%** of all exam age students are presenting with eating difficulties, a sharp increase of **54%**
- **15%** of exam age students are presenting with depression issues as compared to **11%** of non-exam age students
- Feelings of self-worth have affected **14%** of exam age students, an increase of **7%**
- Lack of motivation has been presented by **6%** exam age students. This is especially prevalent among girls of exam age, up by **97%**
- Demand for Kooth's services has increased by **15%** amongst young people.



Introduction

After months of hard work, late-night revision sessions and copious amounts of coffee, the long wait is (almost) finally over for the hundreds of thousands of teenagers across the country waiting to find out their exam results.

Of course, it's no secret that the run-up to exam results day can be extremely stressful for all those involved – students, parents and teachers. Finding the right balance between supporting your child and contributing to their anxiety can be tricky. You may worry that you'll be saying or doing the wrong thing or just want to know how best to help without contributing to their anxiety levels.

The good news is that there are plenty of ways you can help support your child on exam day – whatever the results may be.

Here are our top tips...



Plan Ahead

Talk to your child in advance to see if they want you to be with them in person to collect their results.

“It may be useful to talk about how you can support them if something doesn’t make sense on their statement, just in case they have misunderstood or overlooked something,” says Anne-Marie Yates, Learning and Development Lead in XenZone’s Clinical Team.

If they prefer to go and get the results alone, give them space, and don’t take offence! **“Don’t be offended if they don’t want you to go with them; there are a lot of different pressures and feelings associated with results,”** explains Dr. Hannah Wilson, Head of

Clinical Governance and Clinical Psychology Lead at XenZone. **“It doesn’t mean that they don’t care, or that they don’t need your support!”**

Anne-Marie also suggests trying to plan something nice for the afternoon or evening, e.g. a favourite meal, so your child will have something to look forward to and know that you’re on their side no matter what the results are.



Know your options if things don't go according to plan

If your child doesn't achieve the results they were expecting, it's important to reassure them everything will be ok.

Let them know that failing is not the end of the world and that you are proud of them regardless of what grades they have achieved. **"You may have your own thoughts or frustrations about your child's results, for example how much revision they did or if they did their homework,"** says Dr Wilson. **"Try not to bring that into the day, as this can add to everyone's anxiety or cause arguments."**

Don't panic as there will be always be a number of options available. **"Remind yourself that you and your child you have time to think everything through and this can help slow down the panic reaction,"** says Anne-Marie. Remember your schools are there to help you and your child talk through any next steps and suggest other routes, such as retakes, apprenticeships or alternative courses/colleges.

"Taking some deep breaths and acknowledging that 'we are where we are' can be helpful – accepting the current situation and focusing on what the next steps are, instead of getting drawn into blame or shame," says Dr Wilson.



Give them space

Seeing your child disappointed or angry may be difficult.

Try to accept all their feelings at the time and not offer any 'immediate' solutions as they will need time to process any frustration or anxiety.

“They may find it difficult to talk to you about their results initially,” says Anne-Marie. **“Let them know that you understand how upset and disappointed they are, but you are here when they feel ready to talk,”** says Anne-Marie. Also, don't be quick to brush off any disappointment as they might be feeling embarrassed that they have let you down.

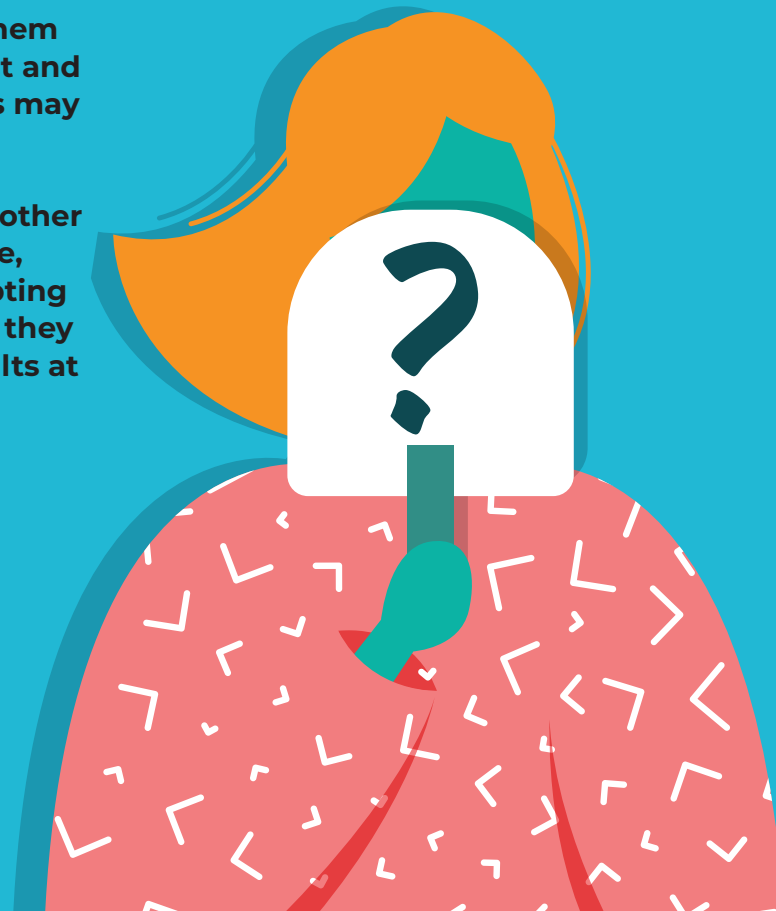
“It's also important not to make assumptions about their reactions or feelings in response to the results,” says Dr. Wilson. **“Sometimes we can put ourselves in their shoes, and think we know how they are thinking and feeling, but we may be wrong!”**



Don't Compare

“It is normal behaviour for young people to compare results, especially with peers/friends, however, try to help them understand that everyone is different and comparing with all friends and peers may not help them,” says Anne-Marie.

“It can be helpful to remind them of other strengths and abilities they may have, however not at the expense of accepting and sitting with the disappointment they may feel around their academic results at that moment,” adds Dr. Wilson.





Keep calm and carry on

Make sure that you schedule time for yourself during this hectic time. Try to plan some support for yourself via a friend or family member.

Talking it through will help you release pent up stress and could help you to find a solution to the problem.