

## WHEN TO REACH OUT FOR EXTRA SUPPORT

Be gentle with yourself and remember that you don't need to have all the answers for your teenager's needs. It's perfectly okay to seek professional help to support them. Professional assistance extends beyond just counsellors and psychiatrists, although both can be beneficial.

Consider the various professional options available, including:

Teachers and staff at school – they can assist academically by helping your child grasp subjects better, act as tutors to develop effective study methods outside of school, or serve as pastoral experts to address emotional concerns.

Some schools offer independent counsellors who provide a safe space for your children to talk in confidence, ensuring that the information shared remains private and is not communicated to the school.

Peer support networks – these can be particularly valuable, as discussing issues with someone of a similar age can feel less intimidating than talking to an adult. Additionally, older peers who have recently navigated similar experiences can offer reassurance.

Charities – many now provide both online and telephone support. This anonymity can make it easier for your child to share their problems and worries without the pressure of face-to-face interaction.

If your teen is exhibiting multiple signs of anxiety regularly (several days a week) over an extended period (several weeks), it's important to seek help from external support services. A good starting point could be a visit to your GP.



Woolwich Polytechnic  
Sixth Form

### Focusing on effort rather than outcomes

A common reason for teenagers being anxious is the expectation their parents/carers have and the worry that they cannot live up to that and will let everyone down. You may unwittingly be putting pressure on your child by being positive about how well they will do.

You may think you're being reassuring by saying, "of course you're going to pass every exam" and expressing your faith in them; they may misinterpret what you mean and take it that if they don't pass every exam you'll be disappointed and think less of them.

That's why it's a good idea to focus on effort rather than outcomes: "I'm really impressed that you finished your revision this afternoon" gives positive reinforcement for something good that's been accomplished, rather than "Well done, all that revision's really going to help you pass your exams" which sets an expectation for a future event yet to be achieved.

### There are other options

As an adult with your own life experience, you know that doing well in exams will open doors and provide lots of opportunities to succeed. You're keen to make their life easier. But exams are not for everyone, and if your child doesn't do well in theirs, there are plenty of other options and lots of routes to success. Keep this front of mind so you don't give them the impression the world starts and ends with their exams.

