

# 3 Emotional and Mental Health

## Recognising and balancing emotions

### In this topic you will learn about:

- emotional health and how to recognise it
- the usefulness of personal support networks.

### You will explore:

- the eight main types of emotions
- ways to expand social life and friendships.

### ACTIVITY

#### Emotionally healthy?

1. If you were asked to describe a physically healthy person you could probably provide a good list of features; for example, eats a balanced diet, has good energy levels, etc. If you were asked to describe an emotionally healthy person, what would that list of features include?

**Emotional health** is as important as physical health, but we generally don't talk or hear about it in the same way. Recognising our range of emotions and learning how to keep them in balance is one way of opening up discussion about our emotional health.

There are different points of view about how many main emotions there are – but eight are universally recognisable, as shown in the photos below. Each of the eight could be called a 'main emotion', and within each of these there will be different degrees of feeling; for example, degrees of anger might include fury, annoyance, hostility, etc.

### Source 1 The eight main emotions



Anger



Fear



Sadness



Enjoyment



Love



Disgust



Shame



Surprise

**How do you know?**

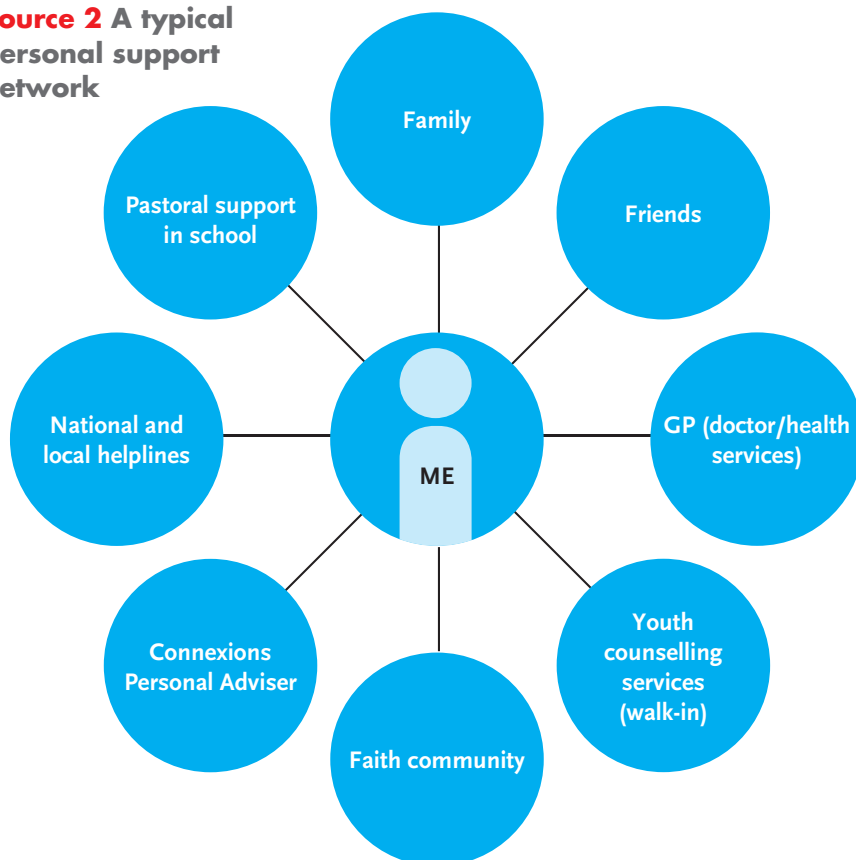
2. Look at Source 1, which identifies the eight main emotions.
  - a) What characteristics in each facial expression represent the emotion?
  - b) Can you identify a word that describes the degree of feeling being shown?
  - c) Compare your answers with someone else – did you see similar degrees of feeling?
3. a) Choose one or two of the eight main emotions and create a collage of examples from photos, film or art that illustrate it. You could use the internet, magazines, books and films in your research.
  - b) On your collage explain which emotion is represented by using evidence from the facial expression, tone of voice, body language, etc. In your explanation try and use different words to describe the degree of emotion being used. It may help to brainstorm these first.

Recognising and understanding our emotions is the first step in looking after our emotional health. The next step is to understand that being emotionally healthy isn't necessarily about feeling 'happy' all the time. Good emotional health will be about achieving balance and recognising when things are out of balance and how to restore equilibrium.

For example, it is natural to have some worries or concerns about all sorts of things, such as

new or difficult tasks, upcoming examinations or unfamiliar social situations. But if the worries and concerns start to take over your thoughts and you find yourself constantly thinking about them or changing your daily routines to avoid them, then you may need to find a way of restoring the balance.

An example of one technique for restoring balance and achieving equilibrium is to know and use your 'personal support network'.

**Source 2 A typical personal support network****Who would I include?**

4. Look at Source 2. Not everyone will have eight types of support on their personal network. What would be the two or three key strands that you would include on yours and why? Discuss your answer in pairs or small groups.

## Friendship

Many people rely on friends for support, but some people find it difficult to make friends because they find it difficult to communicate. Source 3 gives some tips on how to communicate effectively.

### Source 3

#### THE 5-POINT FRIENDSHIP PLAN

Some people make friends effortlessly. This isn't because they're any nicer or better than those who don't. It's because they know how to make conversation. If you feel like you never know what to say, this is for you.

##### 1. Talk to everyone

What you say doesn't have to be original – it just has to be something! E.g. next time you buy something, say 'Thanks, have a good day'. Practice really does make perfect, so try to say something to everyone you meet.

##### 2. Use body language

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. If you seem approachable, friendly and relaxed, people will want to talk to you. How to do this? Make eye contact and smile.

##### 3. Choose your friends wisely

At school there are cliques and tribes and everyone's supposed to know their place ... but there will also be people who are open to communication and new ideas and won't judge you. These are the people who often make the best friends.

##### 4. Be a good listener

You don't have to be fascinating/beautiful/hilarious for people to want to talk to you. Listen to what people say, remember their names and their likes and dislikes, and just take the time to learn more about them.

##### 5. Have the courage of your convictions

Don't say things you don't believe to make people like you. It won't work. Instead, believe in the value of your own opinions – and don't apologise for them. Having a good conversation doesn't mean everyone has to agree with everyone else.

[www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice/facfile\\_az/problems\\_making\\_friends](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice/facfile_az/problems_making_friends)

#### ACTIVITY

##### Stepping stones

5. Discuss why each of the points in Source 3 is an important part of making and keeping friends.
6. If you knew someone who wanted to make more friends, or expand their social life, what steps other than those mentioned in Source 3 would you suggest they could take?

#### ACTIVITY

##### Emotional idol

7. Who is the most emotionally healthy person you know and what makes them so?

# Stresses, pressures and exams

## In this topic you will learn about:

- common physical and emotional signs of stress
- why good sleep habits are essential to managing pressures.

## You will explore:

- ways of managing stress and anxiety
- recommended routines for dealing with exam pressures.

There is so much to deal with ... one thing on top of another, such as:

## body issues

spots

bullying

friendships

drugs

dating – or not

school work

exams



## Coming to get you!

ACTIVITY

1. Imagine a scene from a science fiction film where a monster is chasing one of the characters. The character is unarmed and defenceless against the unremitting onslaught.
  - a) How would they feel?
  - b) What physical and emotional signs might signify that something scary was happening?

Sometimes it feels like everything's happening at once and that's stressful. But this stress doesn't have to pile up until it feels out of control. Taking time to acknowledge each issue and recognise what's happening can be helpful – so can being proactive and creating an action plan to use in those difficult times.

## If only there'd been more time

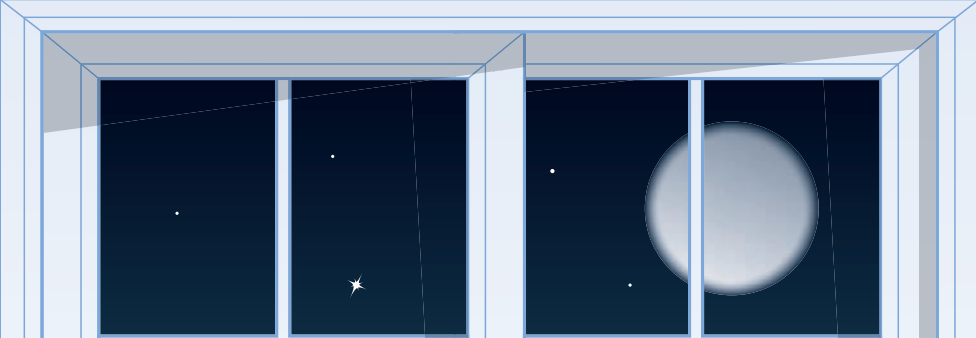
ACTIVITY

2. Most young people have different tips or techniques they use to reduce stress. What three methods to beat stress and anxiety would you pass on to a friend?

## Sleep

One method of combating stress and anxiety is to make sure you get enough sleep in order to function well during the day. However, as Source 1 illustrates, sleep can be a problem for some young people.

### Source 1 Sleep facts



- 'Even though there is an epidemic of tiredness in society, people don't view sleep as a priority.' (Gordon Cairns, Govan High School in Glasgow)
- 'Sleep is crucial to repair, growth and the consolidation of knowledge and memory. It's no magic revelation.' (Jane Ansell, Director of Sleep Scotland)
- Two-thirds of children are not getting enough sleep, with some getting as little as five hours a night. They say they feel sleepy, but don't make the connection with the need to go to bed earlier.
- Going into bedrooms at a decent time is not sufficient if children stay awake for hours watching television, playing computer games, texting or surfing the internet.
- 'Media invasion has a severe social and neurological impact. Flash images from the computer, TV or mobile phone screens interfere with the body's production of melatonin, a chemical that helps trigger drowsiness.' (Mandy Gurney, Millpond Sleep Clinic, London).
- Sleep is a learned behaviour. Just as there have been improvements in healthy eating behaviours, so good sleep habits can become the norm.

#### ACTIVITY

**Zzzzzzzzzzz**

3. Most sleep advisers recommend that in order to get a good night's sleep you should follow a routine of winding down before bedtime, and that bedtime should be calm without too much stimulation. Use the outline to the right to create a plan that will lead to a good night's sleep and help combat some of the problems outlined in Source 1.

TIME	ACTIVITY
Arrive home from school	
Two hours before sleep time	
One hour before sleep time	
Sleep time	Get into bed and go to sleep!

## Exam pressures

In this topic so far you have thought about ways to deal with stress/anxiety and also to improve sleep habits. Now it's time to address the big one – exams! Source 2 gives some suggestions for preparing for exams and keeping stresses at bay.

### Source 2 What works best?

	IDEA	SCORE OUT OF 10
1	<b>Design an exam calendar</b> Use large squares for each day of the month and write down the dates of upcoming exams. Work out and plan how much preparation time is available.	
2	<b>Display each month's calendar page on the refrigerator</b> It will remind you to study a little each day and your family can refer to it as needed to offer you help and support leading up to the exam.	
3	<b>Don't just cram before the exam</b> The brain can only absorb so much information in a 24-hour period. Waiting until the last minute to cram for the test will just make the stress and pressure worse.	
4	<b>Use quotes, photos and music for inspiration</b> For example: 'Your entire future is not riding on one test.' 'Forget past mistakes. Forget failures. Forget everything except what you're going to do now and do it.' 'I'm not telling you it is going to be easy – I'm telling you it's going to be worth it.'	
5	<b>When you get into the exam room – don't panic</b> Read the instructions carefully. Scan the questions before beginning. Work out how long it will take to answer each one.	
6	<b>Think how you'll use your time</b> Consider answering the questions you have a solid command of first but don't forget to allow time and then go back to answer the others.	
7	<b>You can control your nerves</b> If you find yourself tensing up, getting clammy hands, or if your mind suddenly goes blank, close your eyes and slowly count to four until the stress eases. You may have to do this two or three times.	
8	<b>Talk about how you're feeling</b> Open up about your worries and allow others an opportunity to give you ideas on how you might overcome the stress. Remember you don't have to do everything that everyone suggests – but they may have ideas you haven't thought of.	
9	<b>Get plenty of sleep</b> Recent research from The National Centre on Sleep Disorders says that teenagers should get at least nine hours sleep a night. They found that 17-year-olds were only sleeping for 6.9 hours, affecting their performance in school.	
10	<b>Eat a healthy breakfast before taking the exam</b> Sensible eating keeps the brain alert and energy levels up.	

#### ACTIVITY

#### Pulling it all together

4. Look at Source 2. What do you think of the suggestions for preparing for exams and keeping stresses at bay? Score each suggestion out of 10, with 10 being 'yes, that really works' and 1 being 'not much use'.

#### ACTIVITY

#### Top tip

5. What is your top tip for facing stresses and pressures in the weeks leading up to examinations?