Supporting teens through exams

Your 6 Ways to Wellbeing

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Supporting a teenager through exams can be stressful, emotional, and exhausting - for both of you. It's completely normal to feel a mix of pride, pressure, and worry.

Inspired by the West Lothian 6 Ways to Wellbeing, this guide offers small, practical ideas to help you look after your own wellbeing while also supporting your child through this intense time.

You can't pour from an empty cup, so these steps are here to help you feel more supported, balanced, and connected.

You can explore the Six Ways in any order - there's no right or wrong place to start. Take your time, and choose the areas that feel most relevant to you right now. Here, we've included some simple ideas and suggestions to help you build the Six Ways into your everyday life.

Read on to find out more and try them out for yourself.

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Your Wellbeing Traffic Lights

For each of the 6 Ways to Wellbeing, think about how you feel right now. Then choose a colour below:

Red		**This is an area I find difficult or I'm not doing much of at the moment.**
Amber		**I'm doing some things in this area, but there's room for improvement.**
Green		**I feel confident and positive in this area.**

Focus first on Red or Amber areas. Small steps-like checking in with a friend or taking a short walk-can grow into something meaningful over time.

There's no right or wrong answer. This is just a tool to help you reflect and take positive steps for your wellbeing.

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Your Wellbeing Traffic Lights

Feeling in control of money reduces stress. This could mean making a budget, getting advice, or taking small steps to plan ahead.

Paying attention to what's around us helps us feel present. You might notice nature, savour a meal, or pause to breathe.

Building strong relationships helps us feel supported. This could mean spending time with family, friends, or joining a group.

Learning new things keeps our minds active and builds confidence. Try a new hobby, recipe, or skill.

Moving our bodies boosts mood and energy. It doesn't have to be sport - it could be walking, dancing, or stretching.

Helping others gives us purpose and joy. You could volunteer, offer your time, or do something kind for a neighbour.

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Finacial wellbeing

Keep your spending on exam prep realistic – support doesn't have to cost much.

Exam season can bring unexpected costs, including tutoring, supplies, travel, and time off work. Financial stress is common, and it is okay to feel it. Taking small steps to manage money helps you feel more in control.

Financial Wellbeing

- Set a modest budget for exam-related extras and try to stick to it.
- Make the most of free resources. West Lothian libraries offer quiet study space, past papers and computer access.
- Check if the school, youth club or community centre is running study sessions or exam drop-ins. Many are free in West Lothian.
- Discuss limits with your teen honestly and calmly. Saying "We cannot do that right now" is okay.
- If money feels tight, you can get guidance locally. West Lothian's Advice Shop and Citizens Advice can offer confidential support.
- Build in small, low-cost ways to unwind such as
- a walk, a chat or watching a favourite show together.

Financial wellbeing worksheet

Reminder

You are not alone. Budgeting and asking for advice can ease pressure and give a sense of control.

Use this space to think about ways to feel more in control of your money and reduce stress.

- How can you explain limits to your teen in a positive way?
- Which free or low-cost resources could help support your family during exams?

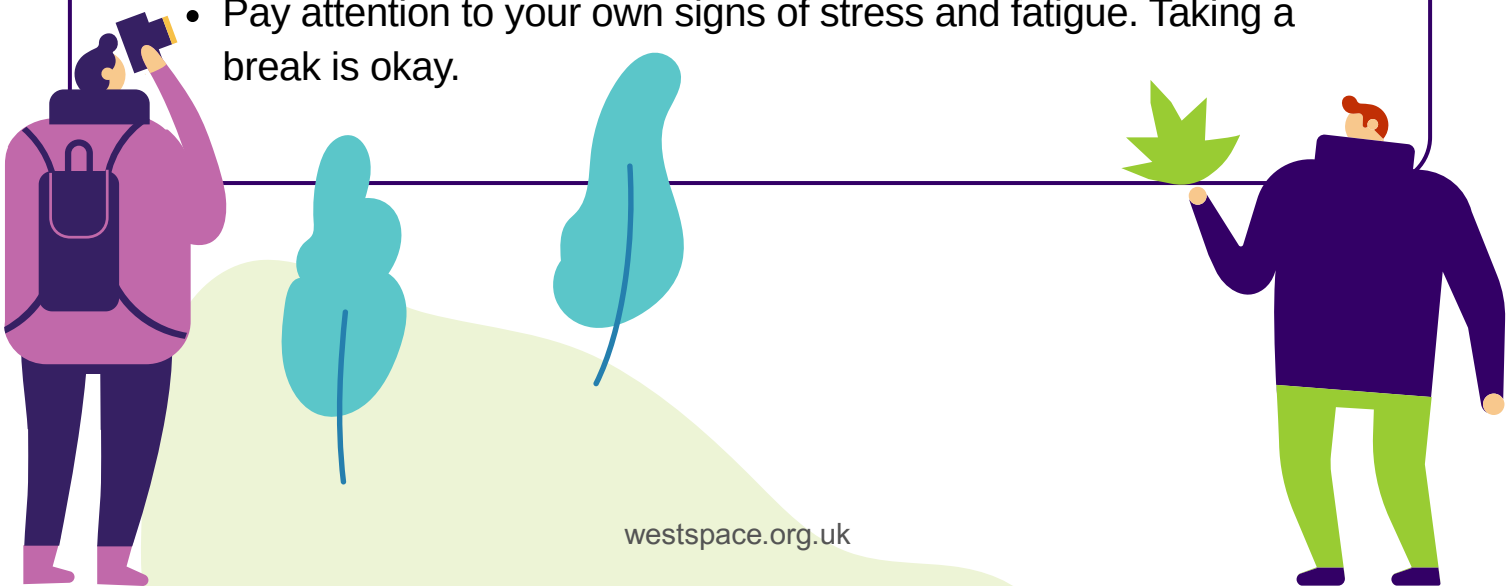
Take notie

Notice their stress levels and your own - both matter.

Exam stress can make you operate on autopilot, reacting rather than responding. Taking a moment to notice your feelings and surroundings helps you stay calm and respond with intention. It also models healthy awareness for your teen.

Take Notice

- Try noticing what is going well, even if it feels small. For example, “You sat down and tried. That matters.”
- Take a slow breath before responding to your teen, even in a tense moment.
- Notice something positive today, such as a kind word, a beautiful sunset, or a quiet moment with tea.
- Step away briefly if emotions rise. A walk to the garden or another room helps gather your thoughts.
- Share one simple moment together each day, such as making a cup of tea, walking to the shop, or sitting quietly in the same room.
- Pay attention to your own signs of stress and fatigue. Taking a break is okay.



Take notice worksheet

Reminder

Noticing your feelings and environment is an act of self-care. It helps you respond calmly and support your teen better.

Use this space to explore ways to be more mindful and aware of the present moment.

- What is one small moment today that brought you calm or joy?
- How does pausing before reacting change the way you respond?

Connect

Stay connected – a listening ear means more than perfect advice.

When your teen is going through exams, it is easy to pour all your energy into supporting them. But staying connected to others helps you feel less alone and reminds you that your feelings matter too. Connection does not need to be long or complicated.

Ways to Connect

- Notice when your teen makes an effort, even if the outcome is not perfect. A simple “I saw you trying today” can mean a lot.
- Spend a quiet moment with your teen, asking how they are feeling without trying to fix everything.
- Find small ways to laugh or relax together, such as watching a funny video or sharing a joke.
- Suggest your teen connects with a friend for a short chat or shared study break. Feeling supported by peers matters.
- Reach out to other parents for a chat, sharing tips or simply how you are feeling.
- Take five minutes to message a friend or family member just to check in.

Connect worksheet

Reminder

Connection does not have to be long or deep. Warm, consistent contact helps you feel grounded and supported.

Use the space below to explore ways you can connect with others. Think about what works for you and add your own ideas.

- Who can you reach out to this week for support?
- What small moment of connection could you share with your teen today?

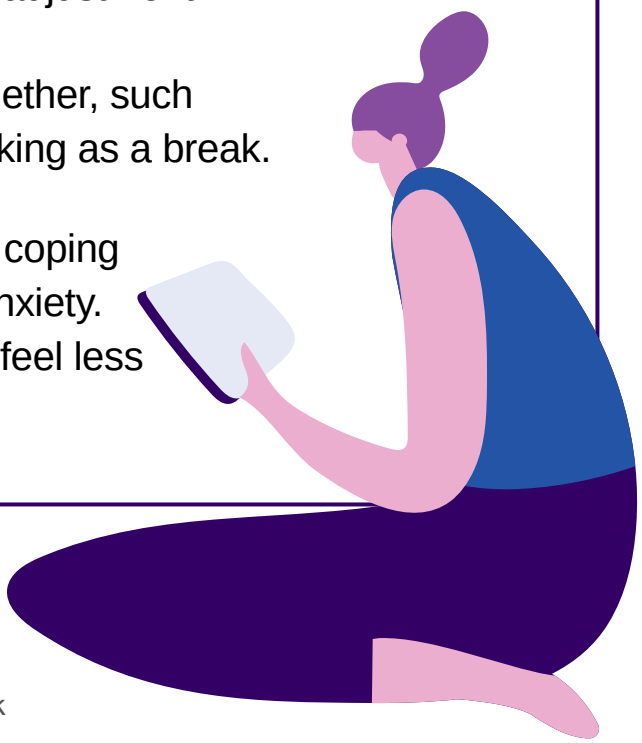
Keep learning

Every exam is a learning curve, not just for them but for you too.

Supporting a teen through exams is a learning experience for parents too. You are discovering new ways to manage stress, communicate, and support your child without overloading yourself. Recognising your learning helps you feel more capable.

Keep Learning

- Read a short article or listen to a podcast about supporting teens through exam stress.
- Learn one calming technique, such as grounding exercises, breathing, or meditation.
- Ask your teen what they are learning about themselves during revision. They might notice what helps them concentrate or how long they can work before needing a break.
- If something does not work, see it as a lesson, not a failure. Every family finds what fits through trial and adjustment.
- Explore creative coping strategies together, such as journaling, mindful colouring, or baking as a break.
- Look at West Space for resources on coping skills, sleep support, and managing anxiety. Exploring together can make support feel less intimidating: westspace.org.uk



Keep learning worksheet

Reminder

Even if it feels messy, you are learning and growing. Acknowledge your efforts and resilience.

Use this space to think about ways to try new things and keep your mind active.

- What is one new strategy you could try this week to support yourself or your teen?
- What coping techniques have worked well in the past that you could use again?

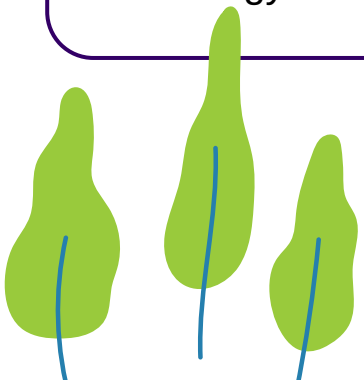
Be active

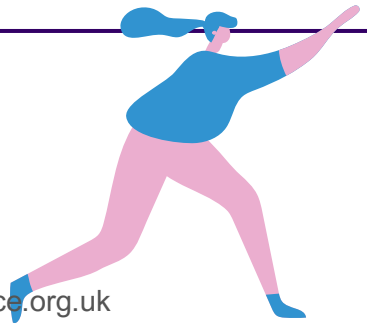
Encourage breaks, walks, or a stretch - movement helps clear the mind.

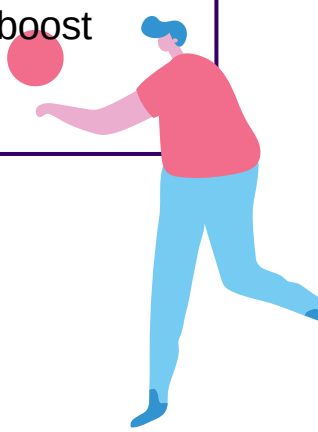
Stress often shows up in your body through tension, fatigue, or restlessness. Gentle movement can help release that pressure and bring your mind and body back to balance. You do not need a structured exercise routine to benefit.

Be Active

- If your teen is revising at home, suggest “movement minutes.” Stand up, roll shoulders, stretch arms, or walk around the room every 45–60 minutes.
- Explore local paths or greenspaces in West Lothian when you can. Places like Beecraigs, Almondell and Calderwood or your nearest community park can offer quick, calming walks.
- Take a short walk after drop-off or before starting your day. Consider it a reset moment.
- Dance to a favourite song in the kitchen or living room. Enjoy it without worrying about performance.
- Spend time outdoors, even a few minutes in the garden, park, or on your street.
- West Space lists local community groups and activities across West Lothian. Trying something new can help reduce stress and boost energy: westspace.org.uk







Be active worksheet

Reminder

You do not need perfect gear or a full routine. Small movements remind your body it is safe, strong, and supported.

Use this space to think about ways you can move more and stay active.

- What movement today helped you release tension or feel lighter?
- Which activity might you try with your teen that is fun and stress-relieving?

Give

Offer reassurance, patience, and praise - these small acts mean a lot.

You are already giving a lot to your teen, emotionally, mentally, and practically. Giving does not have to mean doing more. Your presence, calm, and kindness are powerful gifts.

Give

- Leave a short note with encouragement or reassurance for your teen.
- Offer encouragement focused on effort rather than results, such as “I can see you’re working hard today.”
- Offer a warm drink or snack during revision as a small act of care.
- Normalise stepping away to rest, walk outside, or have a snack; these pauses support focus and wellbeing.
- Give attention to your own needs too. Caring for yourself helps you stay steady when supporting your teen.
- Share helpful tips with another parent; your experience may support someone else.

Keep learning worksheet

Reminder

Kindness does not have to mean overextending yourself. Small acts for yourself and your teen make a meaningful difference.

Use this space to explore ways you can help or support others.

- How can you show kindness to yourself today?
- What small gesture could you give your teen that would make them feel supported?

The 6 Ways to Wellbeing

Final Thoughts

This is a challenging time, but perfection is not required. By taking small, kind steps for your own wellbeing, you will be better equipped to support your teen.

Sharing this guide with another parent can be helpful. When we support each other, everyone benefits, and wellbeing grows stronger.

And don't keep it to yourself! Share this guide with friends, family, or neighbours. We all face challenges, and sometimes just knowing someone else is trying too can be incredibly reassuring. When we support each other, we build stronger, more compassionate communities - and that's good for everyone's wellbeing.

For more ideas, local resources, and community support, visit:

Your thoughts...

This space is yours. Use it to jot down ideas, reflections, or anything that comes to mind as you explore the Six Ways to Wellbeing.

There's no right or wrong way to do it. It's simply a space to pause, reflect, and capture whatever feels helpful in the moment.

Your thoughts...

Stay in touch

@WestSpaceTweets

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