

# Maintaining Resilience Around Exam Time: College Counselling Blog #11

Do you find the exam period particularly difficult? Do you often feel overwhelmed and struggle to cope?

Some people are better at coping with the stress and pressure that exams bring than others and this can depend on how resilient we are.

Resilience is basically the way in which we can adapt our behavioural, mental and emotional flexibility, based on life challenges, whether they be happening around us or inside of us. Or in other words, it's how we manage, how we cope...

Physical	Spiritual	Emotional	Social	Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep</li> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Taking breaks</li> <li>• Breathe</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Awareness of energy levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-care menu</li> <li>• Be true to yourself (core values)</li> <li>• Look for purpose or meaning</li> <li>• Connection</li> <li>• Make time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of emotions</li> <li>• Gratitude</li> <li>• Know when to ask for help</li> <li>• Use techniques to manage feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundaries</li> <li>• Use support system</li> <li>• Positive role models</li> <li>• Talk with someone you trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of negative thoughts</li> <li>• Realistic goals</li> <li>• Positive self-talk</li> <li>• Journaling</li> <li>• Mindfulness</li> <li>• Challenge</li> </ul>

Above are some examples, of things that you can do to work on and monitor your resilience.

## Physical

**Sleep** – Making sure that you are getting enough sleep is vital to your physical, mental and emotional health. You should be aiming for an average of 6–8 hours per night and it's even better if you are able to stabilise your body clock to regular times. Find out more here: [Sleep Hygiene – The Sleep Charity](#)

**Nutrition** – Ever heard the saying ‘You are what you eat’? Our bodies and our minds need food and water, just like a car needs petrol and oil to get going! Have you noticed how your mood changes if you haven’t eaten in a while? Check out: [Nutrition for Mental Health and Well-being \(activitywalesevents.com\)](http://activitywalesevents.com)

**Taking Breaks** – Making sure that you get some fresh air in between revising is just as important as the revision itself. Every 30 mins to an hour, stand out move about, get some water, change your environment and take decent breaks. Get some ideas at: [How Long Should You Revise Before Taking a Break? \(senecalearning.com\)](http://senecalearning.com)

**Breathe** – Have you ever noticed that you’re holding your breath? Or how good it feels when you suddenly take a deep breath in and out and felt your whole body sink down and relax...finally! Practising mindfulness, can be a great de-stressor and help with things such as clearing your mind and anxiety. Try this first thing in the morning or last thing at night: [Beginner’s Guided Mindfulness Meditation \(5 Minutes\) No Music – YouTube](#)

**Exercise** – A great stress releaser and can also help with that low motivation! Exercise isn’t for everyone, but there are lots of different types to try. Why not start with some light yoga: [10 minute EASY & SIMPLE Yoga Flow for All Levels – YouTube](#). Explore your local surroundings; walk, run, ride a bike or skateboard! Don’t forget to check out your local leisure centre and find out if there’s anything that takes your fancy.

**Awareness of Energy Levels** – Get to know your body, listen to what it needs. We can all be guilty of overdoing it and feeling burnt out. Know when to take a rest! At the same time, some of us struggle with motivation to get up and go, sometimes we just need one big push to get us going!

## Spiritual

**Self-Care Menu** – [Susannah Winters: Self Care: What It Really Is | TED Talk](#)

**Be True to Yourself** – Be aware of your own morals and values, what’s important to you? We can sometimes get soaked into the people around us and what they believe, how they think. Pay attention to yourself, listen in!

**Look for Purpose or Meaning** – Sometimes we can feel a bit lost and unsure of what we are doing with our lives. Try setting your self-tasks or goals to achieve each day. Noticed what you managed to achieve each day, did you make someone smile or laugh? Did you try something new? Were you able to accomplish something you had been stuck with previously?

**Connection** – Become connected to yourself and to those around you. This may be spiritually or through religion or simply allowing yourself to connect with someone socially.

**Make Time** – We are often quick to make excuses as to why we can't do something or be somewhere. Too busy for this or too busy for that! Make time for what's important to you, for the people you love or simply when you just need time for yourself!

## Emotional

**Be Aware of Your Emotions** – Notice what you're with from time to time, welcome your emotions and spend time with them. They are usually there for a reason and often need to be listened to and sometimes need assistance. Mindfulness can be a useful tool to help you with your emotions

**Gratitude** – We quite often forget to notice the small things in our lives that make all the difference. For example, the way the sun shone through the window today, the person that held the door for you or how good your lunch tasted! We can get so bogged down with the negatives, try switching your focus: [How to Start a Gratitude Journal + Tips for Keeping It Up | Cake Blog \(joincake.com\)](https://www.joincake.com)

**Know When to Ask for Help** – Sometimes our emotions can become too overwhelming, and we need help to be able to cope with them again. Sometimes all we need is to talk to a friend or a family member. Don't forget college has lots of student support including a well-being team and counsellors:

**Manage Your Feelings** – [9 Tips on How To Manage Your Feelings And Emotions | Kristin Nicole \(kristinnicoleonline.com\)](https://www.kristinnicoleonline.com)

## Social

**Boundaries** – Learning when to say ‘no’ can be the best thing you’ll ever do! Learn how here, (P.S say yes to this one!): [30 ways to set boundaries: a guide for people-pleasers – Jason Connell](#)

**Use your Support System** – Often people feel that they can become a burden on others. But if your loved ones and friends knew how much you were going through a difficult time, they will want to be there for you! Get to know who you can trust and who you can reach out to for a friendly chat.

**Positive Role Models** – Spend more time around people that inspire you. Notice which friends have the best impact on you, the ones that make you happy, or the family member that you always look up to. Be aware of who you are using as inspiration on social media, ask yourself does this have a positive impact on me and my mental health?

**Talk with Someone you Trust** – Reach out to your positive role models for support. This may include your tutors, someone at student support, a helpline or a friend. Check out: [Samaritans Talking Saves Lives Appeal 2022 | Donate to Samaritans](#)

## Thoughts

**Be Aware of Negative Thoughts** – These affect us all from time to time, become aware of yours! How often are they there and how much do they affect your daily life? Is it time to get some help on how to manage them? [Challenging negative thinking – MindWell \(mindwell-leeds.org.uk\)](#)

**Set Realistic Goals** – Don’t set yourself up to fail! Take small steps that you know are achievable...it’s a marathon not a sprint.

**Positive Self-talk** – We all have that inner critic, and for some of us, we turn it up to full volume. Try turning it down by challenging it with some positive self-talk, we can be our own worst enemy sometimes. Try noticing 3 positive things about yourself each day, celebrate yourself. [Positive Self-Talk: Benefits and Techniques \(healthline.com\)](#)

**Journaling** – Journaling can be a great way of becoming aware of your mental health. It also acts as an outlet for your thoughts and emotions and

can help you process. Get tips here: [How to Journal | The Ultimate Guide | Your Visual Journal](#)

**Mindfulness** – Have you ever recognised the power of taking a few deep breaths in and out? Mindfulness is a great way to help you feel grounded and relaxed but also to become aware of what is happening in your body and allow you to become present. Try these: [Short 5 Minute Guided Meditation for Mindfulness – YouTube](#)