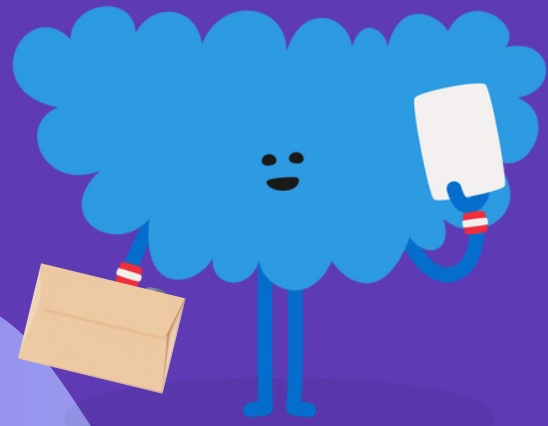
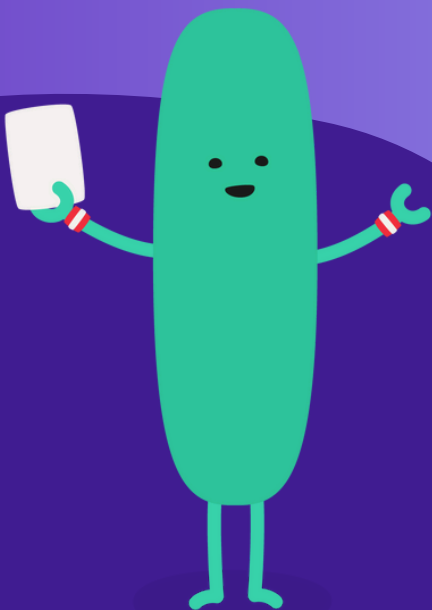


# Managing Anxiety and Taking Steps to Celebrate Success


A guide for Exam Results Day



stem4 has  
comprehensive  
advice to support  
you this results day



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## Statement from stem4 Founder and CEO, Dr. Nihara Krause MBE

When it comes to important moments in the education year, few carry that potential mixture of happiness and excitement or upset and anxiety as Exams Results Day. stem4 have annually provided young people with support on results day.

To provide this support, we started where we always do at stem4, by listening to what young people wanted help with. Blending our insights from young people, educational establishments, together with our new developments in social listening, we have created a series of blogs that cover everything from effective support for feelings of anxiety, to more complex issues such as how you tell people your results, and practical support on next steps. We hope the blogs help face the changes that inevitably arise post-results, be they joyous or disappointing, and provide young people with ideas and tips to be resilient for their futures.

Hold onto what you value in yourselves, remember you are not 'your result'. We wish all young people, their families and educational establishments, every success, and for those disappointed, we hope we can help you to find the best way to move forward, there are always alternative routes to getting to your goals and ambitions.

Regards,



Dr Nihara Krause  
Founder and CEO at stem4

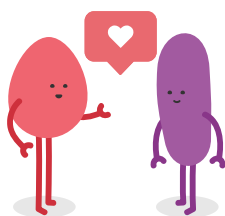
# How can I stop worrying about results day?

Firstly, most people are scared of getting their exam results, even if they hide it. Why?

No matter how hard you've worked, you never know exactly what you are going to be examined on, so whilst sometimes you get the questions you prepared for, at others, you may find yourself caught out.

The outcome of exam results can have a big impact on your life. Results of big exams like GCSEs and A-Levels or Degree results are more public, and have more consequences than other assessments, so waiting to find out how you have fared can raise more worries than usual.

## The importance of perspective



All in all, it can be a lot of pressure for a young person. Although exams are not the only way of assessing how great you are, they have become a core part of education (though you can sometimes find courses which take a different approach).

Feeling scared of results isn't necessarily helpful, though. If you can change the way you look at the outcome of your performance, results can become less scary or intimidating and you can start to see them as an opportunity to grow.

So, if you are worrying about exam results day and getting more nervous as the day approaches, here are some tips to help you.

# Tips to manage worrying about your results- Dr Graham

**1**

## Go easy on yourself

Remind yourself that it is completely normal to feel tense and anxious when you are waiting to face something unknown. It can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't last forever.

**2**

## Practice being more present

Try to focus on the present, the here and now, instead of thinking about the future and 'what ifs'. To bring yourself back to the present, try this simple activity: focus on 3 things you can see, 2 things you can hear, and 1 thing that you can smell or feel. Keep noticing each of these things and use this as a method to ground yourself.

**3**

## Foster positive thoughts

Don't just focus on the negative things that could happen, but think of the positive outcomes too. Balance your thoughts by writing down 3 positive things that could happen when you get your results.

**4**

## Talk with those you trust and are comfortable with

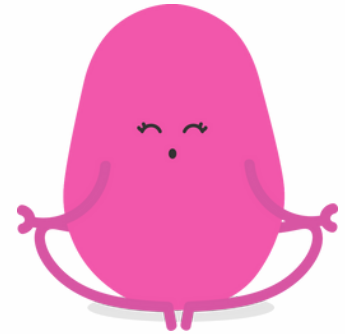
Tell those close to you about your hopes and fears. Try and start the discussion well before results day. This will help them know how to be there for you and support you on the day.

# Tips to manage worrying about your results- Dr Graham

5

## 'Take5' and breathe

Practice feeling in control of your anxiety by using powerful breathing exercises. Try stem4's Take5 Breathing Exercise [here](#).



6

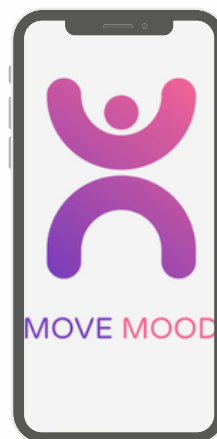
## Try the [Clear Fear app](#)

For more activities and information to support your anxiety, use stem4's free Clear Fear app. You can boost your resilience with Clear Fear's 'Grit Box' and 'Clear Your Fear' with the many in-app tools and activities that help overcome your worries.

7

## Do something enjoyable

Use the [Move Mood app](#) for activities that can boost your mood and keep you inspired. You deserve a great summer.



<https://www.clearfear.co.uk>

<https://www.movemood.co.uk>



# Tips to manage worrying about your results- Dr Krause MBE

1

## “You are not a time traveller”

Leave what you have done behind you and what you don't know ahead of you. You can't go back in time to change it or travel forward to prevent it. Instead, focus on your ability to bring about change in managing your worries in the present, and the ability to deal with the outcome of what you might face, once you know what the outcomes are.

2

## Focus on what you can control

Rather than focussing on what you can't control, focus on what you can. Do some favourite activities, keep your daily routine, notice the positive results.

3

## “Shrink your fears, enlarge your facts”

Fears can grow out of proportion whilst you wait for results. Rather than building up a disaster case for yourself, focus on the facts about you and your performance up to now.



# How can I cope with results day?

It's not surprising that many (if not all) young people suffer from results day anxiety. It's completely normal, but it can feel uncomfortable.

So here is our guide to help you reduce that results day anxiety, and start to think more clearly about those important next steps.



## Look after yourself

Try your best to have a good sleep the night before so that you can manage your anxiety better in the morning. Make a plan for the day so that you are not left without anything to do after you collect your results. Decide on whether you prefer collecting results on your own or with a friend or family member who is supportive.



## Manage social media

It's usually a good idea to have a break from your phone on the day, so you don't find yourself either constantly checking to find out how others have fared or if you don't want to keep answering people's messages on how you've fared.



## Talk it out

Talk to someone (like your parents, friends, or teachers) about how you are feeling and to help you with any backup plans. If you speak to them in advance, this will help them know how they can support you on results day itself.



# How can I cope with results day?

It's not surprising that many (if not all) young people suffer from results day anxiety. It's completely normal, but it can feel uncomfortable.

So here is our guide to help you reduce that results day anxiety, and start to think more clearly about those important next steps.



## Ground yourself in the present

Focusing too much on a future that you can't control will only make you more anxious. So instead of fixating on 'what if?' questions about the future, try to focus on the present, the here and now. To bring yourself back into the present, focus on 3 things you can see, 2 things you can hear, and 1 thing that you can smell (or feel).



## Learn and practise a calming technique

stem4's Take5 Breathing Exercise is a simple exercise to help you manage anxiety, and all you need is your fingers. Watch [this simple instruction video](#) for a powerful way of achieving calm whenever you need it.



## Talk it out

Talk to someone (like your parents, friends, or teachers) about how you are feeling. This will help them know how they can support you on results day itself.

# How can I cope with results day?

4

## Practise worry management

Try stem4's clinically-developed app [Clear Fear](#) to manage and overcome your worries. You can personalise the app and track your progress to notice changes (and improvements!).

[Clear Fear](#) is an app developed for teenage mental health charity [stem4](#) by Dr. Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and uses the evidence-based treatment CBT to focus on learning to reduce the physical responses to threat by learning to breathe, relax and be mindful as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.

5

## Research your options before A-Level results day

Whether your A-Level results end up being better or worse than expected, or even just right for your firm offer, it's still a good idea to know your options before results day itself. Have a look at the UCAS website to learn about clearing and what your options might look like. This will help alleviate any extra stress on the day in case it doesn't go as planned. For overall practical support and advice for results day, check out TSR's [nine ways to be totally prepared for A Level and BTEC results days](#).



# Didn't get the results you wanted?

1

## Find ways of distracting yourself to stop stressing over an exam result

If you don't get the grade(s) you thought you would, talk it through with your teachers to decide whether the results should be sent back to be checked. In the meantime, try and keep busy.



2

## Remember that exam results are not a measure of your worth

Exams are a measure of your school work and ability to sit tests. They are not a statement about who you are. So, do your best to ditch negative thoughts about yourself. Each time you think something negative, try and replace it with a positive statement about yourself. Just because your results may be disappointing, it doesn't mean that you are too.

Try Dr. Nihara's Toothbrush Thought to give yourself a chance to think positively about yourself.

3

## You will get many more chances to shine

Exam results are just one part of a long journey to get to where you want to be. If you can learn from your mistakes, with hope and determination, you can still get there and achieve what you hope to.

# Didn't get the results you wanted?

4

## Do what's right for you

Sometimes you end up doing better in a subject that you don't like that much, and not so well in a subject that you're interested in and want to continue with. You may then feel a pressure to stick with the subjects you are most successful in. Be sure to talk through your options with teachers and family to make sure you're making the best choice for yourself.

5

## Different paths

It can often feel like there is only one path to get to where you want to, but there are often alternative routes, such as through work or apprenticeships. These can give you experience that will be very desirable in the future. Universities are often seen as brands to attach to your profile, but the reality is that it is not where you get to, but what you do when you are there.

6

## Beware of 'the house of mirrors' effect

You know yourself, and your individual talents and abilities, better than anyone else. Exam results can be like those mirrors that reflect back a distorted version of you. So check with yourself if your results feel like a true reflection of you. But also be open to new abilities that you may have developed, such as doing well in an area you weren't sure of before.

# How can I tell people my exam results?

One of the challenges of results day is thinking about how you are going to share your exam results with parents, family, friends, the list goes on. Oftentimes, getting great results will feel easier, but if you have friends with disappointing results, it can feel a bit complicated. On the other hand, if you are disappointed with your results, it may be difficult seeing friends getting good results.

But, with a little planning, you can make results day more manageable for yourself.

## stem4's top 5 tips for sharing exam results



### Be mindful of how you speak to yourself

Find a comfortable and balanced way of thinking about your results to try and avoid hating yourself if you are disappointed—this will also help you share your news. Exams involve so many different factors, including some luck (like if the right questions came up for you!). So, it's good to understand what worked and what didn't, without letting extreme feelings take over. If anxiety does get the better of you, resources like stem4's free [Clear Fear app](#) can help you perform better next time.

[Clear Fear](#) is an app developed for teenage mental health charity [stem4](#) by Dr Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and uses the evidence-based treatment CBT to focus on learning to reduce the physical responses to threat by learning to breathe, relax and be mindful as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.

# How can I tell people my exam results?

2

## Remember that people love you as you are

It's all too easy to think that your parents and friends want you to be some perfect version of yourself, and one that gets amazing results. But they've known you for a long time, and know how hard exams are. Even if you get disappointing results, remember that they will still love the person you are.

3

## Share your hopes and fears with someone else

It takes courage to tell someone before results day what you're hoping for and what you are worried about. But if you can open up to someone, they will be there, able to support you, when you do get your results—they'll be able to share both excitement and disappointment with you on the day.

4

## Decide in advance how you will share your results

It is easy to broadcast news on social media, but you can't know what impact it might have on your friends. So think about what might be the best way of sharing—whether that's in person, via a messaging app, or in a family chat—so you can get and give support.

5

## Whatever happens, celebrate

No matter what your results, you have worked hard and have taken major exams. That is an amazing achievement and, whatever your results, you deserve a celebration for doing your best through these difficult times. Go and enjoy the rest of the summer holidays!

# How do I support a friend who got better or worse results than I did?

**1**

## It's okay to keep your results to yourself

If you are not happy sharing your results with your friends, you shouldn't feel bad about keeping them to yourself. Give vague responses that your results were better than / not as good as expected, and let your friends know if you need some time.

**2**

## Give yourself space

Delay talking to potentially insensitive friends until you feel you can provide a rehearsed response.

**3**

## Avoid the 'humblebrag'

Don't have false modesty if you've done really well. Saying 'I don't know how I got all 9's when I didn't put in much effort' or 'I only did well because the exams were easy' will only put down those who haven't done well and make them feel worse.

**4**

## Be mindful on social media

Think about the impact posting your results on social media might have on your friends who had a bad exam, and think carefully about the comments you make. As well, try not to let anger or jealousy spoil a friendship if your friends have done better than you. You might find it easier to take a step back from social media on results day.

# How do I support a friend who got better or worse results than I did?

**5**

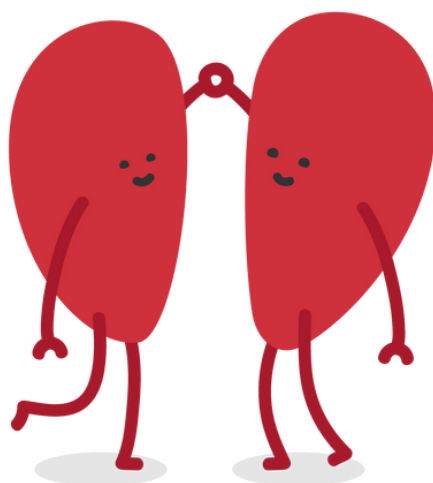
## Be there for an upset friend

If a friend hasn't done so well, give them time to talk about how they feel, and listen. Try not to offer reassuring comments that neither of you quite believe, such as 'It's only an exam.' Instead, ask if you can help with next steps. Brainstorm with them but don't necessarily give advice.

**6**

## Think about the person behind the results

Whatever their results, stay connected with your friend(s) and don't fall into gossiping about who got what results. A lot can change very quickly after results day, so make an effort to keep in touch with your friends—they may need a friend, and so will you.

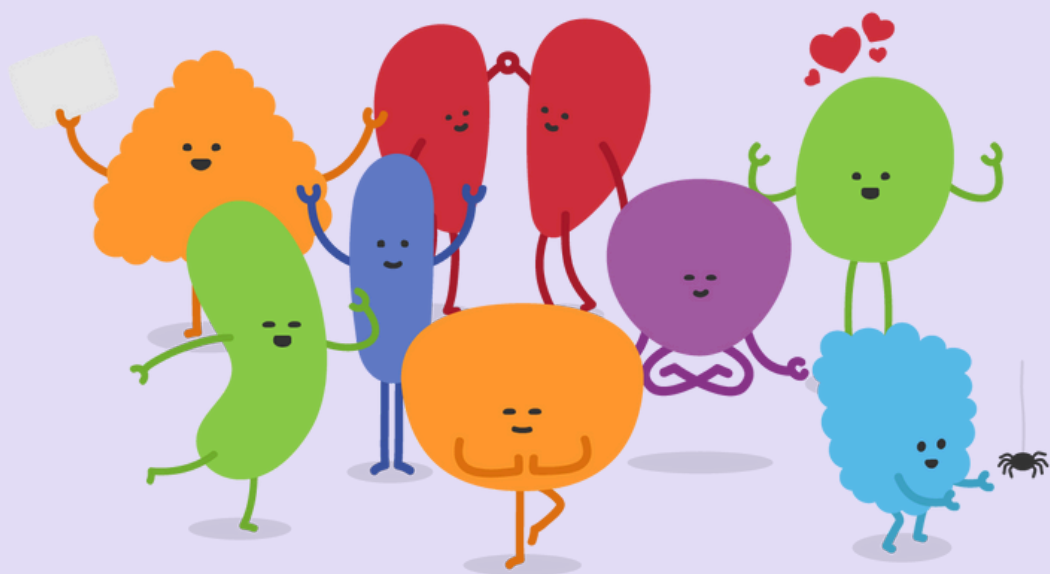




Feeling scared about the unknown is a shared anxiety. Try and talk to supportive friends, family or other people you know help. You can also calm symptoms of anxiety or panic using stem4's Clear Fear app.

Whether you'd like someone to talk to or just some information and guidance, head to our [Further Advice](#) page for a list of helplines and resources that you may find useful. Please note we are UK based so the information is for UK users.

If you are finding it difficult to control your anxiety, or experience an anxiety disorder, we also recommend talking to your GP / mental health professional but please note this is not an emergency solution.



# stem4's mental health apps



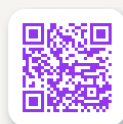
A free app to help teenagers resist or manage the urge to self-harm  
[www.calmharm.co.uk](http://www.calmharm.co.uk) • @calmharmapp



A free app to help children and young people manage the symptoms of anxiety  
[www.clearfear.co.uk](http://www.clearfear.co.uk) • @clearfearapp



A free app to help teenagers manage low mood and depression  
[www.movemood.co.uk](http://www.movemood.co.uk) • @appmovemood



A free app to help families and friends provide mental health support  
[www.combinedminds.co.uk](http://www.combinedminds.co.uk) • @combmindsapp



A free app to help young people manage negative body image, poor self-worth,  
and related early-stage eating difficulties or disorders  
[www.worthwarrior.co.uk](http://www.worthwarrior.co.uk) • @worthwarriorapp

stem4's award-winning apps are available to download from the App Store and Google Play.



Please note that these apps are an aid in treatment but do not replace it.

**stem4**  
supporting teenage mental health

[www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk) • @stem4org

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