ANSA HEALTH | CAIRNMILLAR STUDENTS

Thrive Through Exams

Stress less. Focus more. Feel ready.

You don't need to feel perfectly calm to take the next useful step.

01 Put pressure in perspective

Notice where pressure comes from: expectations, comparison, deadlines or your own standards.

Ask: "What is within my control today?" Choose one action, such as reviewing a topic or checking the exam format.

An exam matters, but it does not measure your whole ability, worth or future.

02 Name it, then reset

Notice your body's signals: tension, a racing heart, restlessness or a blank mind. Name the feeling: "I'm anxious because this matters to me."

Try a brief reset: feel your feet on the floor, release your shoulders and take a few gentle breaths. Notice three things you can see. Then return to one manageable task.

Practise before exam day so the reset feels familiar.

03 Plan around your energy

Break revision into specific tasks: "Answer two practice questions" is clearer than "Study psychology."

Use focused blocks with short breaks; try 25 minutes of study and a 5-minute pause, then adjust to suit you.

Test recall without your notes, explain ideas aloud and practise applying concepts to examples. Revisit topics across several days.

Plan meals, movement and rest alongside study. A realistic plan includes room for life.

04 Respond to your inner critic

When "I'll fail" or "I'm behind everyone" shows up, pause before treating it as fact.

Ask: "What is the evidence? What would I say to a friend?"

Try: "I'm noticing the thought that I'll fail. I can't predict the result. I can prepare for the next question."

You can feel uncertain and still act in line with what matters to you.

05 Protect the person studying

Keep a regular sleep routine, eat regularly, drink water and make time to move. Include something that genuinely recharges you.

Use your strengths: curiosity can help you explore a concept; organisation can help you make a plan.

Name your support team: a classmate, friend, lecturer, student support contact or mental health professional. Ask early when you need help.

ON EXAM DAY

Check the time, location, permitted materials and online requirements in advance.

Read instructions carefully. Allocate time to each question. If you get stuck, reset and move on where the format allows.

Afterwards, take a break before analysing every answer.

My exam toolbox One next step: _____
A reset I'll use: _____ Someone I can contact: _____

Need more support? Contact Cairnmillar student support or access the ANSA Health student wellbeing program (virtualclinic@ansahealth.com or 1300 920 904). Ask your course team early about adjustments or special consideration if needed.

Adapted from the five-module overview of ANSA Health's Thrive Through Exams course (by psychologist, Tiarna Chesser), with practical examples for students. General education; seek individual support if distress is persistent or affecting daily life.

Explore the course: ansahealth.com/thrive-through-exams

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