



Mental Health: Invisible Foundation of Education Success

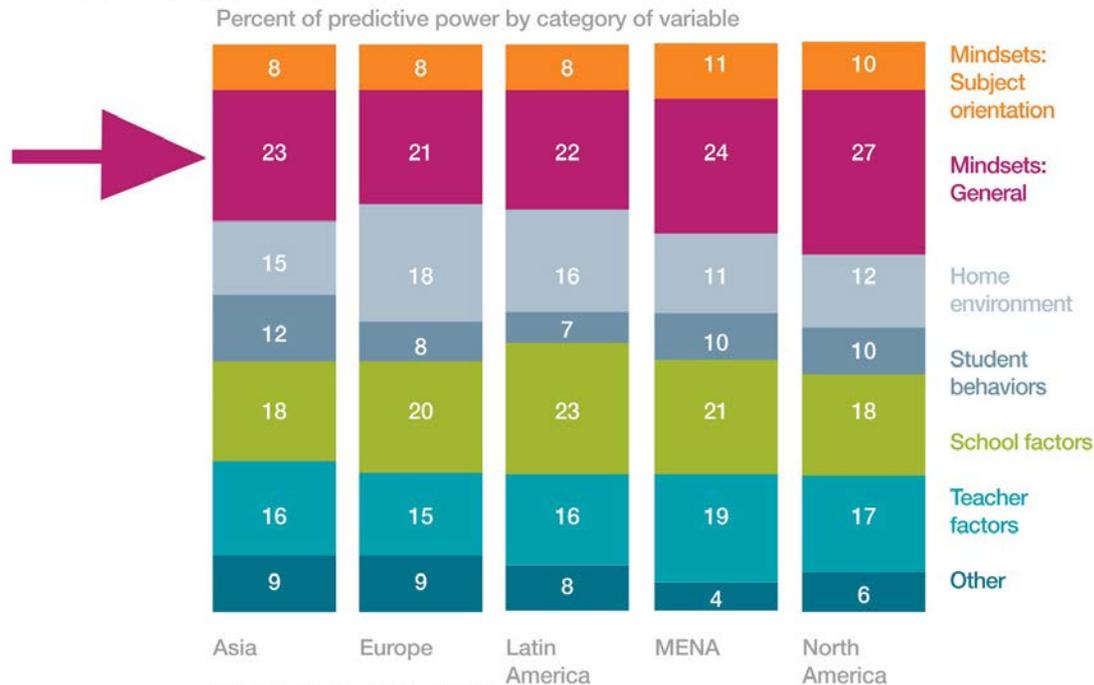
**Net Buddies' Exam Preparation
Skill Session - 2023**

■ Motivation and self-belief drive education success.

A worldwide study, tracking millions of 15-year-olds since 2000, reveals that a student's mindset is the foremost determinant of educational outcomes.

How to Improve Student Educational Outcomes: New Insights from Data Analytics

McKinsey & Company, September 2017



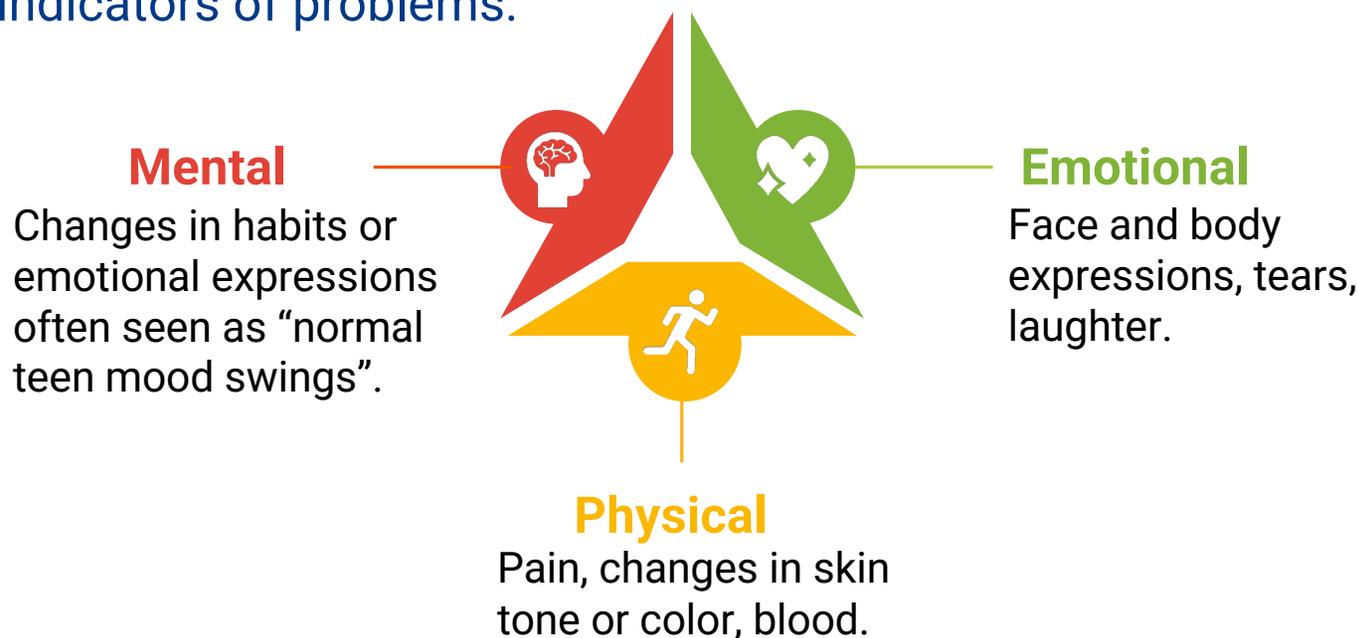
Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding
Source: OECD PISA 2015, McKinsey analysis



Like 3 legs of a stool, success requires mental, physical, and emotional strength.



External indicators of problems:



SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING.

If you think your friend may be suffering, reach out for help on their behalf.

Even unseen, mental wellbeing affects every aspect of our lives.



Don't neglect mental your wellbeing's significance and the necessity for consistent actions. Net Buddies can help each other manage all aspects of their wellbeing.



01

Stay Active

Exercise releases endorphins which are natural feel-good chemicals that can help reduce stress and anxiety.



02

Get enough sleep (8-10 hrs per night)

Insufficient sleep triggers mood swings, anxiety, and depression. Quality sleep is **crucial** for teenagers' brain development and body recovery.



03

Eat a balanced diet

Healthy eating enhances mood and energy levels. Make the most of daily school meals. Prepared, packaged, or fast food, while often culturally valued as "fancy," is typically not nutritious.



04

Practice Mindfulness

Awareness of negative thoughts helps manage stress and anxiety. It is important to acknowledge emotions and thoughts rather than ignore or discount them.



05

Build Connections

Positive relationships with family and friends foster connection and support. Handling conflict situations through communication is crucial in maintaining healthy relationships.



06

Seek help when needed

Avoid internalizing feelings of sadness, anxiety, or other mental challenges. Instead, seek support from a trusted adult, such as a family member, school counselor, teacher, or Video Mentor.



■ Exam stress is a particular minefield for everyone.



Productive

Moderate stress sharpens concentration and performance and creates energy and motivation to study.



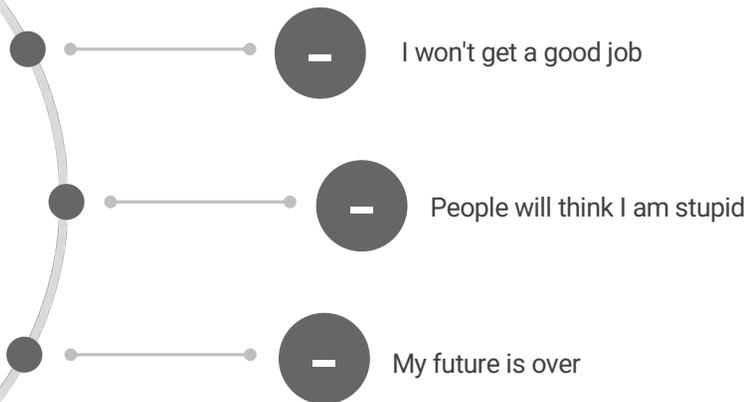
Overwhelmed

Too much stress can be overwhelming and impede a Net Buddy from being able to study or function effectively in school or life.

The combination of intense stress and the sensation of losing control leads to anxiety, which can be paralyzing, also known as a panic attack. Using biometric techniques (e.g. controlled breathing) or seeking support from a trusted adult, like a Video Mentor, is crucial to regaining control.

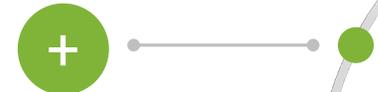
■ Pro-actively reframing negative thoughts helps manage uncertainty while initiating realistic responses to both positive and negative results reduces anxiety.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



PRO-ACTIVE THOUGHTS

What can I do to improve my grades in my challenging subjects so I can qualify for college/university entry?



How can I get extra help from my teacher/friend/study group for difficult subjects?



What steps do I need to take to do better in the next assignment/test/exam?



Control and confidence in being able to affect what happens are important as a foundation for mental wellness.

Just like any sport or talent, coping with any performance stress, planning and intention.



Organize time

- Use a weekly timetable
- Plan flexibility for the unexpected. (loadshedding, family emergencies, etc).
- Be realistic.
- Schedule relaxation to decrease stress levels and increase work effectiveness.
- Plan revision periods and set goals.
- Stick to deadlines.
- Prioritise subjects.

Cultivate sleep

- Sleep enough – at last 8 hours.
- Stop working at least one hour before bedtime.
- Regular to bed and get up times.

Eliminate distractions

- TV
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tik-tok, etc.)
- Manage FOMO (fear of missing out.)
- Learn to say “NO” to peer pressure for distractions (i.e., parties and social media.)

■ **Just like any sport or talent, coping with any performance stress, including exams, takes practice.**



Set study patterns

- ✓ Prepare all study materials in advance, including pencils, pens, highlighters, paper, etc.
- ✓ Be positive and remember your long-term goals
- ✓ Take a walk outside.
- ✓ Break up learning into manageable sections. Overloading your brain with too much information at once leads to fatigue, lack of focus, and increased anxiety.
- ✓ Keep study sessions short but effective and reward yourself with short, constructive breaks.
- ✓ Teach concepts to anyone who will listen such as family member, friend, etc.
- ✓ Read revision notes aloud.
- ✓ Use colours and pictures as learning tools.
- ✓ Focus brain energy on more difficult sections.
- ✓ Repetition is the key to retention.
- ✓ Eat properly and drink plenty of water just as you do during strenuous exercise.

Overview Basic Revision Methods

1.

Read notes and seek answers to questions. Read actively – talk to yourself, walk around the room, speak into a tape recorder.

2.

Close notes.

3.

Recall what you have just been reading, asking again the same questions without looking at your notes. Write recalled responses in brief notes.

4.

Check the original notes with the new ones. If you recalled all the answers to the questions, then you have created a master card that you can use to re-revise without having to consult lengthier notes.

5.

If not all the questions have been answered, re-read your original notes, looking particularly to those you missed. Repeat steps two to four.

■ Share Tips for Exam Day



- ✓ Do not try to learn any new topics since this may impair your ability to recall those they have learnt previously.
- ✓ Prepare what you need (pencils, pens, rubbers (erasers), paper, etc.) the night before.
- ✓ Look at some brief notes or revision cards.
- ✓ Do not study for the last hour before the exam.
- ✓ Time your arrival at the exam room so you do not need to wait about outside with others who may increase your anxiety level.
- ✓ Give yourself time to settle before reading the questions and starting to write.
- ✓ Use a breathing exercise to regulate your breathing and calm yourself down.
- ✓ Have a plan for how you will use your time in the exam room.

■ Slow, controlled breathing is critical for success.



Navy SEALs use Box Breathing to stay calm and focused before and during missions.

Preparation: Breath out

1. Inhale thru nose, count to 4
2. Hold breath gently, count to 4
3. Exhale, count to 4
4. Hold breath gently, count to 4

Repeat at least 6 times.



4-7-8 Whoosh: Breathing for Deep Relaxation and Sleep.

Preparation:

1. Close mouth, inhale thru nose, count to 4
2. Hold breath gently, count to 7
3. Exhale completely thru mouth +“whoosh sound, count to 8

Repeat at least 4 times.



Alternate nostril breathing “sorts out” brain patterns and settles the nervous system.

Preparation: Position hand to use thumb and ring finger

1. Close right (R) nostril with thumb
2. Inhale very slowly thru left (L) nostril
3. Pause, hold both nostrils closed
4. Lift the thumb, exhale thru R nostril slowly
5. Pause, hold both nostrils closed
6. Release thumb from R nostril and inhale slowly, L nostril remains closed
7. Pause, hold both nostrils closed
8. Lift the ring finger, exhale thru L nostril slowly
9. Pause, hold both nostrils closed

Repeat full cycle 5-10 times.



Breathing in adds oxygen to the blood.

Breathing out exhales carbon dioxide.

Best breathing is:

- In thru the nose
- 5-6 seconds in and out
- 5-6 breaths per minute

■ Post Exam Debrief

Think through the day then move on.	Focus on the next assignment or exam	Remind yourself to maintain a balanced daily routine
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was hard, what did you forget, what do you think you got right, etc.• Do not focus on the “should have”, “would have”, and “could have”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple questions like “What is up next?”, “Are there any compulsory sections?”, “Are there any predictable questions?”• Walk through a workplan or study schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasize sleep, especially the night before the exam.• DO NOT DO all-nighters that make it more difficult to retain and recall info the next day in the exam.• Take a moment to rest and recharge, if possible, before you dive into the next assignment or study for an exam.

Remember: passing individual exams or assignments are only part of the story. There are always other chances and other ways to reach your goals.



Stay Strong - and Calm!