

## **Free Time Matters**

*Quinn Stephens*

*It's a Monday afternoon, You've just come home from school and you're setting up to do homework. But you're really tired. It feels like a Friday afternoon, but you still have four days ahead of you. You should be relaxed after the weekend but didn't have any time. You spent the entire weekend doing homework and assignments.*

*It's been a fortnight since you've had any free time. It's that time of the school term where all the assignments are rolling around but the homework has barely ceased. It feels like a drought. You're just waiting for it to end. Waiting for the first drop of water; the first drop of spare time.*

Times like these can be quite negatively impactful to an adolescent's mental health. Adolescents need to know they have spare time as something to look forward to as if it's the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. If adolescents don't have spare time they start to get overly stressed and often start to cut corners on their work. They may also come up with ideas on things they may want to do, but never get to do it.

Giving adolescents time to unwind and do their own thing means that when it's time to get down to work they can concentrate more heavily. Not giving adolescents enough spare time means they don't get to finish what they might have been doing in their spare time so their thought process will be focused on that instead of the learning task ahead of them.

In primary school, free time was something common, it was at the start middle and end of every day. We took free time for granted. However in high school, time that used to be filled with fun and enjoyment is now crammed with assessment tasks and homework. The little time we get to ourselves now is minuscule compared to the long periods earlier. We now even have to organise our spare time to make sure we get the most out of it. We used to spend hours watching tv shows and playing pointless games but now, with the little free time we have, we need to savour it.

To conclude, free time is important in adolescents' lives to keep them safe from stress and to help them focus more on the work they have, adolescents need to be able to look ahead, and know they will eventually get some spare time. Free time matters.

*It's a Friday afternoon, you've just come home from school after a very long week. You're very tired but at least you have the weekend ahead of you. You have one task due on Monday, so you might as well do it now, and look forward to a nice weekend.*