



HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THEIR STUDENTS DURING STRESSFUL ASSESSMENT TIMES

As assessment periods approach, students often face increased pressure, which can lead to significant stress. While some handle it with ease, others may find it overwhelming. One of the best ways to manage this pressure is through preparation. The earlier students start, the less likely they are to feel anxious as deadlines loom. As a parent, your role is crucial in helping them manage stress and maintain a balanced approach to studying. Here are some practical tips to support your student during this busy time.

1. Encourage a Healthy Lifestyle. A well-rounded lifestyle is key to achieving good results. Remind your student that a healthy body supports a healthy mind. Ensure they:

- Eat balanced meals: Provide nutritious snacks and meals to fuel their brainpower.
- Stay hydrated: Drinking plenty of water can help them stay alert and focused.
- Get enough sleep: Sleep is vital to memory consolidation and overall performance. Encourage them to avoid sacrificing rest for late-night study sessions.
- Exercise regularly: Even a short walk or some stretching can relieve stress and help students focus better.
- Schedule relaxation: Encourage downtime to avoid burnout. Short breaks can recharge their mind and improve retention of information.

2. Offer Practical Support. Openly ask your student how you can help. Offer to:

- Assist with organising their study schedule, setting reminders, or preparing an exam timetable.
- Help source materials such as books, stationery, or online resources.
- Quiz them on topics they need to memorise. Some students find it easier to retain information by talking through their notes or practicing with a parent.
- Prepare nutritious lunches and snacks, allowing them to focus on studying without distractions.
- Encourage limited use of social media or gaming during study blocks to reduce distractions.

3. Focus on Effort, Not Just Results. It's important to reassure your student that effort matters just as much (sometimes if not more) than results. Encourage them to:

- Take pride in the hard work they're putting in, regardless of the final grade.
- Build resilience by learning from mistakes and overcoming challenges.
- Celebrate small successes along the way, fostering motivation and confidence. Avoid criticism.
- Remind them that academic performance is only one part of their life's journey. There are many ways to achieve future success, and exams are just one stepping stone and one pathway.

4. Keep Communication Open. Be a consistent source of support by maintaining open lines of communication. Try:

- Having regular check-ins to discuss their progress, challenges, or concerns.
- Creating a relaxed environment for these conversations—sometimes casual chats during car rides or while having dinner are more effective than formal sit-downs.
- Being patient if they express frustration or anger. Acknowledge their feelings and offer a listening ear. If you notice that stress is affecting their well-being, encourage them to seek help from a school counselor, teacher, or other professional resources.

5. Help Manage Worries and Stress. If your student feels overwhelmed, guide them and:

- Allow them to express their concerns fully before suggesting solutions.
- Encourage them to identify specific worries and work through ways to manage them—whether it's time management, understanding a subject, or handling test anxiety.
- Explore available resources, such as speaking with teachers, seeking academic support, or accessing online tutorials.
- Ask them how you can help—sometimes your presence and understanding are the most valuable support you can provide.

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