

Exam Stress

As we approach the business end of the year, many of our newspapers and magazines have articles about helping senior students cope with exam stress. Most of this advice is good common sense and it would take more space than this column allows, to give you the best of it. We urge you to take the time to read such articles and visit relevant websites to see how best to help your daughters and to help them help themselves. But how can we be happy effective parents when we too are feeling the stress and weight of the upcoming exam period? It is an admirable goal but seriously difficult to achieve when living with exam stressed young adults. In this article, we would like to consider parent stress around exams and hope the following may be useful.

Being realistic about what you are expecting your daughters to do around home can ease your stress. It is a good time to let them off the hook with regards to household chores and responsibilities. Reassure younger siblings who cry “unfair” that they will have their turn in due course and encourage them to be supportive and helpful too.

As far as possible encourage regular meal and bed times during this period. Regular routines are conducive to good mental wellbeing for all parties and help create a feeling of calm in the house.

A study plan which includes regular breaks, fun and time with friends is a healthy idea. Encourage your daughter to create a plan and to stick to it. You will also feel a lot better knowing that the study is programmed in and less anxious about the time they are not “at the books”. If you get to join in some of the fun too; a bonus.

Foster cheerful, non school related chatter at the dinner table, allowing a little levity and relief from the pressing issues.

Encourage your daughter to take regular breaks from study. Exercise together. Perhaps a 30 minute walk before or after dinner. This will clear the mind, boost energy, relieve feelings of stress and provide the opportunity for conversations about things other than exams.

Encourage your daughter in her self-belief by expressing your belief in her. Remind her that you want her to be “her best” not “the best”.

Finally, they are never too old for a hug and an “I love you”. Try to do and say this often, telling them what you love about them. True, they might resist this gesture at the school gate or in front of their friends, but if you choose your moment wisely you might be surprised by the response it generates.

The following have good study tips for students.

<http://www.parentline.com.au/parenting-information/tip-sheets/exam-stress.php>

www2.yk.psu.edu/learncenter/acskills/stress.html

http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/11549/Managing-Exam-Anxiety-and-Stress.pdf

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