

Supporting Your Daughter through Mid Year Exams

With mid-year exams on the horizon for students in grades 10, 11 and 12, signs of stress are starting to show and some students are becoming anxious about being prepared and doing their best. This stress can flow into the home environment as well, so we hope this article may help you in supporting your daughters, and hopefully relieving the stress factor for all of you.

First of all it is important to see the mid- year exams in perspective. They are an important measure for both teachers and students to gauge how well students are progressing through the course. As such, exams often provide good insight into where both strengths and gaps lie and this is invariably articulated by the teacher in the mid year report.

However, exams provide just **one** set of marks on several criteria. Teachers use **many** assessment tools throughout the year to arrive at the final end of the year result. This is the case for Grade 10 and for Grade 11/12 non pre-tertiary subjects. For pre-tertiary subjects mid-year exams can form only part of the internal component submitted to TASC at the end of the year.

That being said, mid-year exams are an excellent learning experience for students in Grades 10 and 11 to prepare for final exams, and by this includes preparing for the stress they inevitably bring as well.

So how can you help?

Be realistic about what you are expecting your daughters to do around the house over the next couple of weeks. Many of these girls have jobs and sporting commitments to balance, as well as school. The next few weeks is a good time to let them off the hook with regards to household chores and responsibilities if possible.

As far as possible encourage regular meal and bedtimes. A regular routine promotes good mental well being (for all of us), and can help to create a feeling of calm around the house. Regular bed/wake times induce a sleep that is more restful and a wakefulness that is more alert and receptive to learning. As far as possible discourage extra shifts at work, especially the late ones.

A study plan which includes regular breaks, fun, exercise and time with friends is a healthy idea. Encourage your daughter to create a plan that works for her and help her to stick to it. You will also feel a lot better knowing that study is programmed in and less anxious when she is not “at the books.”

Help her to think about other things. Foster cheerful non-school related chatter at the dinner table. Encourage regular breaks from study. If possible, exercise together. A 30 minute walk before tea can clear the mind, boost energy, relieve feelings of stress and provide the opportunity for conversations about other things than exams.

Finally and most importantly, 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. She is never too old for a hug and “I love you.” Choose your moment wisely (maybe not at the school gate) and you might be surprised by her response.

The following have good study tips for student:

<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

Gai Bath and Andrea Maver

SMC Counsellors

gbath@smc.tas.edu.au

amaver@smc.tas.edu.au