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## Dealing with Results – a few useful Tips

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Broadly speaking, examination results should be treated as a spring board to future achievements and better prospects. Examination results can cause a great deal of anxiety to the students and parents alike. However, a consistent family support system can be of great help.

### Parents should be alert to observe in the children:

- **Physical symptoms**, such as sleeping or eating more or less than usual
- **Mental symptoms**, such as loss of concentration and interest
- **Emotional symptoms** such as tears, tantrums, panic attacks
- **Addictive symptoms**, such as excessive drinking or smoking or using pills
- **Self depreciating comments** “I knew I’ll never pass or never do well or...Mohit’s/Shalini’s much brighter than me.....”

### Must Do’s for parents

- Be supportive and encouraging. Do not nag the child.
- **Help the child to gain self-confidence and a sense of achievement.**
- Just good schooling and tuition are not substitutes for emotional cushioning.
- Help the child in maintaining his confidence especially when he seems discouraged by his dropping marks or grades.
- Do not displace your anxiety on the child.
- The achievement goals should be realistically set according to the child’s capability.
- Make the child feel important and loved.
- Listen to your child.
- Praise the child when he does well. Encourage the child’s performance with positive statements like, “well done”, rather than saying “that was not enough”.

- Do not harp on previous failures or results.
- If achievement expectations are too high it may lead to greater anxiety.
- **Try to discuss problems. Help to find a solution.**
- Accept that expectation for everyone to do well is unrealistic.
- Involve the child in decision making.
- Be aware of the current trends and courses.
- Do not concentrate on traditional courses alone. This will narrow down the options considerably and cause stress.
- Many students do better after school because of maturity and greater focus, course of interest, increased awareness level and exposure to options.
- Avoid criticizing or comparing the child with others.
- Take help of a professional counselor in case of a conflict or depression over the result.
- Remember, exams are not the end of the world.

#### **For the students**

- Do not imagine extreme consequences and worst situations.
- Do not magnify failure or demean yourself.
- Develop alternative coping strategies.
- Learn to be positive.
- Learn to relax.
- **Talk to family, friends, teachers or counselors.**
- Stop worrying. Result is not the ultimate decisive factor.
- It is more important to explore and choose the next option.
- Find out and update with wide and varied career choices. Invariably the decision should not be based or influenced by the friends.
- Assess priorities, assets and difficulties

## **High risk Behaviour: Substance Abuse, Self Harm, Aggression**

### **Basic Symptoms:**

- Behaviour that is potentially harmful to self or others.
- Behaviour relating to consumption and abuse of psychotropic drugs or commonly used medicines like cough syrups, sleeping pills, painkillers without prescription.
- Behaviour related to smoking and consumption of alcohol.
- Self-harming behaviour like Suicide, wrist slashing, hitting self, starving deliberately.
- Harm to others in the form of abusive and aggressive behaviour like rash driving or violence to others in any form.

### **Do's and Don'ts for Teachers and Parents**

#### **Do's**

- Discourage the Behaviour.
- Keep communication channels open
- Talk about the negative and long-term effects.
- Teach (quick) relaxation/breathing exercise/techniques
- Teach anger management
- Teach him/her to evaluate consequences.
- Talk about the need for sharing and communication.

#### **Don'ts**

- Do not punish or reprimand harshly.
- Do not demoralize or make the person feel guilty. Help him/her to think of it as a problem needing help.
- Assertively say 'No' to the demand for taking cough syrup, pills etc. to relieve anxiety
- Do not suggest any medication.

## **Handling Suicide**

A lot many suicides are impulsive while others are well planned. Impulsive students decide on the spur of the moment. **Hence it is important to buy time.**

### **Common feelings in suicide**

- A crisis that causes intense suffering and feeling of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Conflict between survival and unbearable stress.
- Narrowing of perceived options.
- A wish to escape.
- To punish self and/or to punish others with guilt.

### **Indicators for increased chance for suicide**

- Withdrawal behaviour for few days
- Mention of suicide repeatedly.
- Suicide note
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns.
- A history of serious psychological problems.
- A history of impulsive, poorly controlled and destructive behaviour.
- A history of continuing academic problems and learning difficulties.
- Adjustment difficulties with family, school, peers.

### **Interventions**

- The student should be advised to contact a professional counselor as soon as possible.
- Efforts should be made to encourage him/her to talk.
- A student who is severely depressed and expresses absolute helplessness about future is more at risk.