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How performance pressure can impact your learning process during exams

Here are some of the ways shared by experts that can help students to cope with performance pressure during the examinations.



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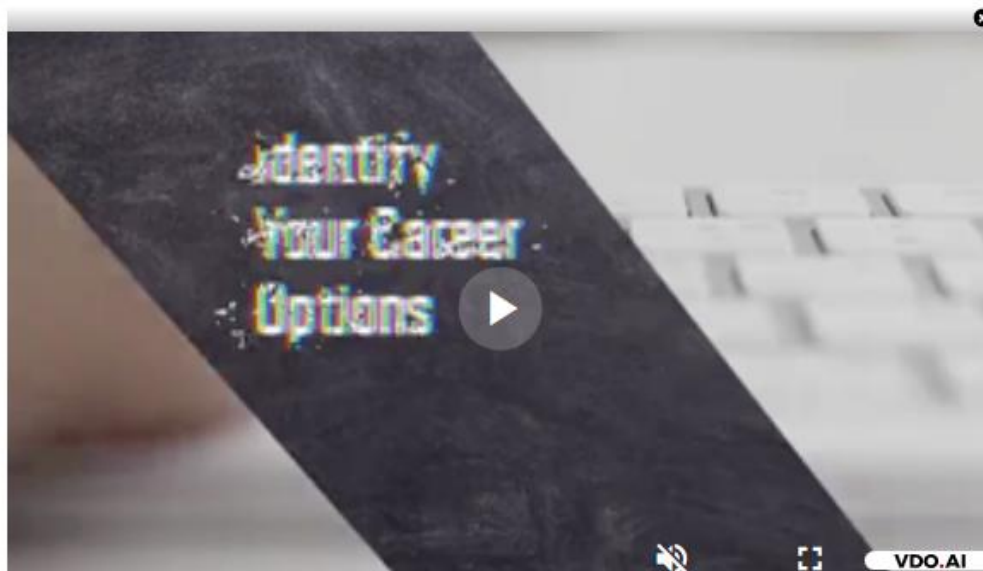


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A student's academic life has become stressful due to various internal and external expectations placed upon them. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to academic stress because they undergo a multitude of changes on a personal and social level. As a result, understanding the sources and consequences of academic stress is essential to developing effective and efficient intervention strategies.



Examinations are one of the most important phases of everyone's life. It has been observed that, whether a student or an adult, exams are a stressful thing for everyone -- everyone wants to perform well and no one wants to fail.

This point of performing well in exams becomes a performance pressure, which makes the life of students very stressful.

To better understand the impact of performance pressure on students, India Today spoke to experts along with students to find out the ways of dealing with performance pressure during examinations.

IMPACT OF PERFORMANCE PRESSURE ON STUDENTS



"Performance pressure to do well increases anxiety in students, leading to poorer physical, social and emotional health. Students can feel pressurised from their parents, school, teachers or themselves to achieve higher grades and academic success," says Prerna Shridhar M, Head, Middle School, Heritage International Xperiential School.

Further explaining, she adds, "Stress is basically a response that our system creates when it experiences situations that are outside our comfort zone. If we befriend stress responses and use them to mobilize our resources, sharpen our focus, work harder, stay more alert, then it can lead to better performance."

DON'T LET STRESS OVERPOWER YOU



As we know, stress during examinations is an unavoidable thing, but on the other hand, we should know how to handle it.

"Situations of examinations or academic evaluations are no different and students need to be supported on how they can turn the feeling of stress to their advantage," she adds.

Students during the examination should plan a strategy for performing well in the exams as last-minute revisions may sometimes give rise to anxiety and fear of failure.

"It is true that during our preparation for any type of exam, be it board exams, JEE, or NEET preparation, we all face anxiety and exam stress at some point in time. It disheartens us so much that we feel like giving up. This can hinder our learning process, and stopping us from achieving our goals," says Vaishali Gupta, student of Class 12, Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad.

"Indeed, increased pressure to perform well has adverse effects on students. They might feel under-prepared despite covering the syllabus completely, and a child gets trapped in the whirlwind of performance pressure," says Neetin Agrawal, Senior Vice President, Toppr.

"It is paramount that students should believe in their preparation and avoid contacting people who may question their ability to succeed. Parents too should avoid unnecessary comparisons," he further adds.

HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS

Performance pressure is not good for anyone, as we all put in our best to succeed. But getting loads of stress is not good for your health. To cope with it, parents and teachers should maintain a stress-free environment, so that students can pass with flying colours, leaving behind all their fears.

Here are a few useful things that parents and teachers can do to help students manage stress:

- Providing reassurance and normalising mistakes as being a natural part of learning something new.
- Building confidence by praising a child's effort and reminding them of a time they did well
- Being ready to listen and empathise by providing a safe and non-judgemental space to children
- Helping break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks
- Providing a structure and routine
- Removing or minimising distractions, including negative thoughts, by allocating a separate time to discuss any fears and worries that the child is feeling
- Encouraging mindfulness practices like breathing exercises and meditation where adults model it and make it fun and meaningful for children
- Remember that anxiety is contagious and if the adults at school or home are anxious or worried, it has a flow-on effect on the child.

"Every student must have felt the performance pressure at least once during their preparation, but what matters is, whether we can overcome it all and stand back on our feet to continue our journey towards success," says Vaishali.

"The ones who understand this performance pressure and stay positive in life, move forward will surely achieve success in life with no doubt. My mantra is not to worry, only keep doing my best, success will be mine and everybody's," she further adds. 