

Akash a class XII student is under pressure. His neighbour Ramesh got 89% in the same exams a year ago and his parents expect more from him than his neighbour. This is one of the root causes of stress. He is not only the one in that situation.

Every student will find himself in that situation which affects the performance in the exams. Exam period is extremely stressful for many students and some of them are so stressed that they underperform, but this doesn't occur because the lack of their abilities but because they have to cope with high level of exam stress. They are under a pressure of possible failure, or unsuccessful which results in underperformance.

Other causes of Stress:

Lack of Self Confidence: This is probably the most important factors that lead to exam stress. It means the student doesn't think that his skills are sufficient to pass the exams. This weakness results from the fear of student in his own ability to pass the exam.

"Much of the stress that people feel doesn't come from having too much to do. It comes from not finishing what they've started."

--- David Allen

Negative Thinking: Negative thoughts that occur during exams are important factor that causes exam stress. If the student wants to be the very best, a poor performance on a test may be a great fear. If the student spends too much time thinking about how difficult the exam is and worrying about the outcome of the test, this negative approach will increase exam stress.

"How we perceive a situation and how we react to it is the basis of our stress. If you focus on the negative in any situation, you can expect high stress levels. However, if you try and see the good in the situation, your stress levels will greatly diminish."

--- Catherine Pulsifer

Lack of preparation: When students do not feel that they have properly covered the material, they can often get into a testing environment and feelings of nervousness and anxiety will get over them. Rushed, last-minute studying will increase anxiety. Students who do not sleep properly before an exam may also experience higher stress levels.

Competition: This is important factor that can result in exam stress because during that period there is more competition amongst students.

And some other internal and external factors lead to exam stress.

Controlling Stress: Stress is a person's mental, physical, and emotional response to the rising demands and changes in his life. In very few cases, stress can even be a positive factor when it drives people to the edge by doing their best at a certain task. The problem only arises when stress becomes long-term.

Then how do we control it?

Ways to Control or Minimise Stress:

Develop Self Confidence: Having a high self confidence (over confidence is dangerous) will be a great boost to you and makes you immune to the exam stress. There are times we all feel a little stressed, but it is how you allow yourself to react which will measure your ability to overcome it.

Avoid Negative thinking: Be focused on your goals and stop being concentrated only on problems. You shouldn't think how difficult is the exam, how long is the study literature, how hard it is to acquire all the necessary knowledge or how failure will result in less prosperous future. Start thinking on the positive side of the situation and evaluate what are the advantages of passing the exam not disadvantages of failure. Only by positive thinking and focus on our goals we can reduce the pressure of exam stress and in some cases even prevent it from evolving.

Avoid cramming: Cramming usually involves memorizing material, and in many cases exam pressures will limit your ability to recall memorized information. Taking the time to reflect on your course material and to work on understanding, rather than repeating, important concepts will improve your chances of being able to use what you've learned when you need it most.

Be prepared: Students should study well in advance of the test and not wait until the last moment to prepare for an exam. Rushed, last-minute studying will increase anxiety. Students who do not sleep properly before an exam may also experience higher stress levels.

"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."

---- William James

Focus on the present and on yourself: Thinking about how you could've studied more, how the exam is going to be the hardest one yet, or how a poor performance may affect you negatively can all equally distract you from the task at hand. Instead of worrying about future consequences, pay attention to present details and focus your energy on managing things you can currently control, like relaxing and thinking positively. If your skills are good enough and you are prepared for examination the competition factor will be less important and examination stress at low levels.

"Being in control of your life and having realistic expectations about your day-to-day challenges are the keys to stress management, which is perhaps the most important ingredient to living a happy, healthy and rewarding life."

---- Marilu Henner

Stick with your routine: Changing your sleep patterns or diet in the days leading up to your exam will take you out of your comfort zone. Even though it's harder to manage your time during an exam period, try to maintain a productive and healthy routine.

Set aside relaxation time: Include relaxation time in your schedule. This time will allow you to recharge for a moment and you'll be recharged to study and brain will

be fresh. If you begin to feel anxious before or during the exam, use deep breathing relaxation techniques to calm yourself. It worked for me during my CPT.

Don't try to control the things which are uncontrollable: Many things in life are beyond our control. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

Inspirational Quotes:

"Give your stress wings and let it fly away."

----Terri Guillemets

"There are thousands of causes for stress, and one antidote to stress is self-expression. That's what happens to me every day. My thoughts get off my chest, down my sleeves and onto my pad."

---- Garson Kanin

"Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one."

---- Hans Selye

"The mark of a successful man is one that has spent an entire day on the bank of a river without feeling guilty about it."

"Some of the secret joys of living are not found by rushing from point A to point B, but by inventing some imaginary letters along the way."

---- Douglas Pagels

Remember, you are mainly responsible for your exam stress. Until you accept responsibility for the role you played in creating or maintaining it, your stress level will always remain outside your control.

Hope this article will be helpful.

BEST OF LUCK

Best Regards
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