



The Relationship Between Parent-Teen Communication and Adolescent Anxiety During Final Exams

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DESCRIPTION

Final exam periods are widely recognized as one of the most stressful times in an adolescent's life. Academic expectations, limited time and the intense pressure to perform can create emotional strain that affects both mental health and daily functioning. While much research has focused on how academic pressure contributes to student anxiety less attention has been given to the influence of family interactions especially how parents communicate with their teenagers during these critical times. The emotional climate at home often shapes how students handle academic challenges, influencing their confidence, motivation and stress levels. The nature of daily conversations between parents and teenagers plays a significant role in determining how adolescents experience exam-related stress. Supportive, calm communication can help students manage anxiety and maintain focus, while critical or pressure-driven interactions may amplify emotional tension. How parents speak, the words they choose and the emotions they project can all shape a teen's mindset during exams.

When parents engage in conversations that emphasize understanding, encouragement and balance, adolescents are more likely to stay calm and optimistic. Talking about general well-being, time management or self-care rather than focusing solely on performance helps teens feel emotionally supported. These discussions promote a sense of security and reassurance, reminding students that their worth is not defined by test results. In contrast, emotionally charged or critical communication, even when meant to motivate, can have the opposite effect. Phrases like "You have to do well" or "Don't let us down", often heighten feelings of fear and inadequacy, making it harder for teens to concentrate and perform effectively. Interestingly, the frequency of communication matters less than its tone and quality. Families who speak less often but maintain calm, positive conversations often see better emotional outcomes than those who talk frequently in stressful or critical ways. What appears to matter most is not how much parents say, but how they say it. When discussions become

dominated by worry or criticism, they tend to reinforce anxiety rather than reduce it. One of the most valuable communication strategies identified in this context is emphasizing effort over results. When parents acknowledge hard work, persistence and small improvements instead of focusing only on grades, teens tend to develop a growth mindset. They begin to view exams as opportunities for learning rather than as measures of self-worth. This shift in perspective helps them remain motivated even when faced with challenges. On the other hand, when parents consistently highlight outcomes, students often internalize the belief that love or approval is conditional on success. This perception increases anxiety, self-doubt and the fear of disappointing others.

Emotional regulation also plays a central role in shaping the tone of parent-teen interactions. Parents who remain composed, even when their children express frustration or fear, model emotional stability that teens subconsciously imitate. Calm, empathetic communication signals safety and acceptance, allowing adolescents to express their concerns more openly. In contrast, when parents respond with visible anxiety, impatience or anger, they may unintentionally transfer those emotions to their children, creating a feedback loop of stress and tension. The broader lesson from these observations is that emotional context is just as important as academic preparation. Parents naturally want their children to succeed, but motivation grounded in empathy is far more effective than pressure-based encouragement. Expressing belief in a teenager's abilities, recognizing effort and maintaining composure during stressful times can all protect against emotional exhaustion. These simple adjustments can make the difference between a household that heightens exam anxiety and one that helps students face challenges with confidence.

Beyond the family setting, schools and counseling programs can play a key role in promoting positive communication habits. Workshops, newsletters and guidance sessions can equip parents with strategies to better support their children during exams. Understanding how tone, language and emotional expression

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affect adolescent mental health allows families to create environments that foster resilience rather than fear. Encouraging open, judgment-free dialogue at home enables teens to discuss their worries without fear of criticism helping them manage their stress more effectively. Ultimately, the way parents communicate during exam periods can have lasting effects on a young person's emotional well-being. Calm, supportive conversations that prioritize effort, understanding and emotional stability help students handle academic challenges with greater confidence. Such interactions nurture a sense of belonging and self-worth that extends far beyond the exam

room. As educational expectations continue to rise, families must remember that emotional support is a vital part of academic success. The simple act of listening with patience, offering reassurance and maintaining an encouraging tone can significantly reduce anxiety and improve focus. When parents replace pressure with empathy, they not only help their children perform better academically but also strengthen trust and communication within the family. In a world where stress and competition often dominate the learning experience, fostering emotional safety at home may be the most effective way to help adolescents thrive both in school and in life.