



## Strategies for Coping Academic Stress

Dr. Ch.Hema, Department of Education, Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalam, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

**Abstract:** The word stress is derived from the Latin word “stringere” which means “to be drawn tight”. Stress is body’s natural response to challenge, threat or excitement. It is the body’s reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Stress is a subjective feeling or tension experienced in the physical, mental and /or emotional realms as a response to environmental events. All children have to make adjustments at times of transition. It is for parents to assess whether their child can adapt to these challenges and learn new strategies within a normal period of time. An attempt is made in this paper to present the multiple strategies for coping academic stress.

**Key words:** Stress, challenge Adjustment, academic performance

### 1. Introduction:

A frightening word and at the same time a miraculous word. We lose our equilibrium or stability because we are stressful. Psychologically speaking, the three major causative factors that create stress are tension, frustration and conflict. Tension within the organism is created by inequilibrium within the life space, which the individual wants to release through activities. Tension persists till the goal and intention is completed. Physical obstacles socio-economic barriers, sources from the self like limited intellectual abilities physical handicaps, lack of training also cause frustration. Further authority, like parents attitude towards their children, autocratic behavior of the administrators and natural calamities like flood, fire, earthquake and war become factors for frustration. An individual has several motives to achieve. Sometimes two motives coincide with each other and the satisfaction of one of the motives leads to the blocking of the other. Conflicting

situations create tension and a feeling of restlessness in our mind.

### 2. Academic Stress

As children grow, academic social and parental pressure create stress. Ambitious parents who want their children to be the best, pack too many things into their lives tutorials, art, class...the list is endless. Once back home there is barely enough time for homework, a quick dinner and sleep. Examination can be the biggest source of stress. It is a stressful situation and sometimes students may be unable to perform at a level matching their potential.

### 3. Causes of Academic Stress

One of the greatest contributors to stress in children is hurry to get ready, to go from one place to another, to do well in school and to become an all-round achiever. Stress also occurs in response to pressures such as homework, tests, overload of non-school activities. Conflict with friends and family and the physical and emotional changes that come with



growing up. If children are involved in too many activities and don't have time to just be kids' it can be extremely stressful. Stress is created in students when there is parental pressure to perform and to stand out among other children. When they cannot rise up to these expectations or during the process of achieving it, children may suffer from frustration, physical stress, aggression, undesirable complexes and depression. School systems are also to blame, as it crams students with tremendous amount of school work, which students are expected to complete, sacrificing their leisure hours or vacations. Unable to find enough time for them, students lose interest in studies and under perform.

#### **4. Role of parents in helping adolescents cope with stress**

Parents should understand that teenage is a period of turmoil and turbulence. Parents need to be familiar with the biological and psychological factors that predispose an adolescent to depression. Awareness of the risk factors helps parents to work with adolescents to be sensitive when stress is imminent. Parents have to accept the restlessness and discontent of their children.

#### **5. Some healthy ways of coping stress**

1. Take a break when you need
2. Take some deep breaths and slow down
3. Relax body by stretching muscles
4. Learning time management skills
5. Learning how to get organized

Apart from these children can change the source of stress. Divert attention by jogging, walking, listening to music etc.

- Talk about the cause of stress. Find a good listener and vent your feelings.
- Take time for enjoyable activities
- Laugh often. Try to see the humorous side of the situation. Laughter is a great way to put people at ease and reduce stress.

#### **6. Coping Strategies implemented by some schools**

**Collaborate with students and Parents:** Many schools have surveyed students and parents about issues related to academic stress, including student workload, home work time, extracurricular activities, sleep habit and course expectations. The schools use this information to identify the scope of the problem, to effect further change, and to determine progress each year.

**Improve Students' use of time:** Many schools have enacted changes related to students' use of time by eliminating summer assignments to give students some real time off. Some schools have created homework guidelines that asks teachers to consider the purpose of each assignment and to track how long each student takes to complete the assignment.

**Develop mental health initiatives:** Schools are working to provide counseling services that prevent stress instead of just reacting to the many cases of anxious and depressed students. Counselors teach classes on time management, stress reduction, yoga and meditation.

**Redefine Success:** Many schools have stopped ranking students or awarding valedictorians. Instead of posting pictures of merit students, some schools honour students who represent a broader definition of success, such as students



who serve their school and community, who excel in athletics or the arts, or who demonstrate dedication to a cause or passion.

**Raise Parent's awareness:** Because unreasonable parental expectations can fuel higher levels of stress, schools have instituted parent education evenings to address the pressures that well-meaning families place on their children. They encourage parents to work with their children to assess which activities and courses to take, keeping in mind the students' interests and passions.

**Conclusion :** Recent years have seen a growth in stress-related disorders among students, most of which are a consequence of the academic pressures faced by them. There may include unreasonable expectations of parents, setting of high standards that one is unable to achieve or problems with peers and teachers. Academic pressures, if left unattended to, lead to dire consequences in every aspect of the students' life-physical, mental, emotional, cognitive and social.

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