

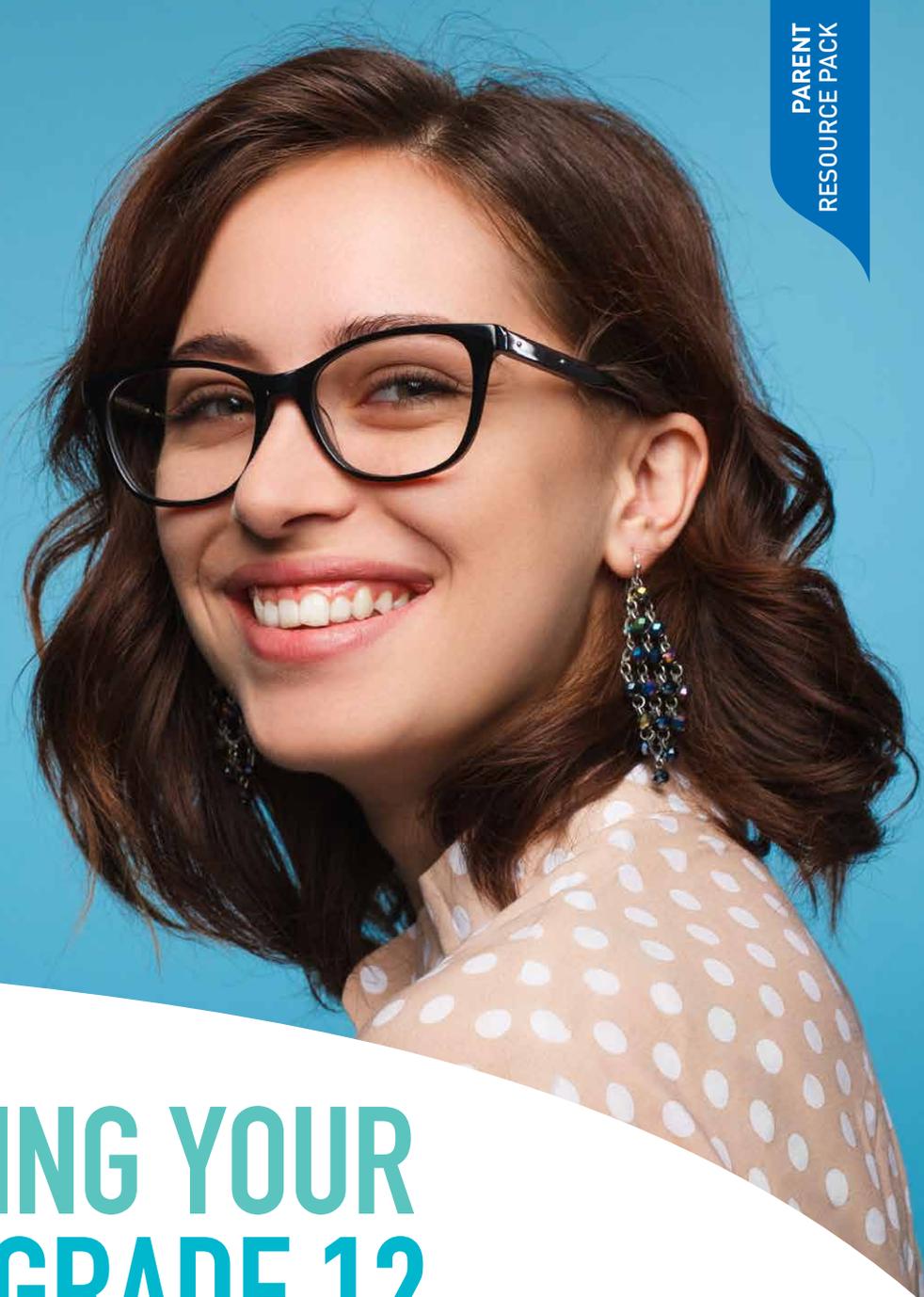


PARENT RESOURCE PACK

PARENT GUIDE TO MATRIC SUPPORT POST EVENT PACK

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SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN GRADE 12

by Esmarie Cilliers, Registered Counsellor

The 2020 cohort has had a difficult year facing challenges that previous groups never knew. They are already stressed and challenged so it is safe to say that this coming exam must be much more stressful for them.

The family forms a unit and therefore the rest of the family will also be impacted but can also be the source of immense support and comfort.

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE AND TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- 1. Provide your child with emotional support in the form of understanding and encouragement.** This means that you need to be patient and understand that they will experience some emotional outburst ranging from anger to sadness. Handle this by being the person that listens. Listen reflectively by focussing on what they say and then paraphrasing it for them. For example: "I hate this subject and will never be able to do it!" "I hear that you don't like this subject and that you feel overwhelmed and stressed. You feel that you will not be able to do it."
- 2. Encourage them instead of threatening them.** Give them praise for the hard work and effort that they are putting in. Remind them of their own natural strengths and talents. Good motivation speaks into that element internally that gets them moving towards their dreams rather than using external forces. In psychology, we talk about an internal locus of control.
- 3. Be observant –** notice when they are struggling and talk to them about it. They need to feel that you are there for them and that you are supporting them. Take an interest in what they are learning and what they are writing.
- 4. Curb your own expectations and dreams for your child.** All of us desire the best possible outcome for our children. These expectations can have an impact on our own emotions and behaviour. Put your own dreams on the side and take things day by day. Parents must control their own anxiety and remain calm and supportive.
- 5. Acknowledge your child's studying efforts.** Telling them how proud you are because they are working so hard. Give them space to set their own goals, manage their schedule and achieve their goals for themselves.
- 6. Help your child to understand that difficulty is part of life** and sometimes we will have papers that do not go well or where we feel that we struggled. Help them to see that difficulty can be overcome and that they don't feel demotivated by bumps in the road.
- 7. Teach your children** that they must strive to achieve their own personal best through perseverance and persistence. To achieve your own personal best is good enough.
- 8. Provide positive feedback on good choices** that they make for instance turning down a party invitation. Keep the communication lines open by asking open questions and refrain from giving too much advice.
- 9. Temporarily relieve your child from house chores** or other time-consuming responsibilities.
- 10. Remember that this is not your exam.** Avoid confusing your child with last-minute study techniques. Relax and stop feeling as if you are writing the exam. Your anxiety can be transferred to your child and this is exactly not what they need at the moment.
- 11. Help your child** by searching for additional study guides, resources or old exam papers. See if you can provide additional support through getting a tutor to help them with problem areas.
- 12. Acknowledge the fact that your child is a different person to you** and those study methods and relaxation methods that you used may not work for them.

13. Create an atmosphere in the house that is conducive for studying and help to set-up their study area. Make sure that the room has sufficient light, air and the right temperature. See that they have all the stationery they need and have a nice desk and chair. Ensure that they have some peace and quiet to be able to study.

14. Make sure they follow a healthy diet. Good breakfast containing protein before writing the exam will help to keep the blood pressure normal. Invest in a healthy shake if your child can not eat breakfast before the exam because of anxiety. Give them a good multivitamin and use Omega 3,6 and 9 supplements.

15. Make sure that your child takes enough regular breaks that can take their mind off from the studying. See if you can bring some fun into those times or use it to spend some time with them. Also make sure that they have some reasonable time for socialising, relaxation and the enjoyment of life that ensures their well-being.

16. Make sure that they are getting sufficient and good quality sleep. Research says that sleep is important to give the brain sufficient rest to consolidate everything that they have learned. If your child suffers from insomnia see if there is something that you can do to assist.

AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

- Conflict and criticism
- Big changes
- Comparing them to older siblings or yourself or friends
- Being too authoritarian in your approach – you shall do what I say!
- Trying to influence their decisions about their future.
- Trying to get involved or change their study methods.
- Expecting too much of them in terms of other activities and household chores.

LASTLY...

Hug them often.

Love them in their love language.

Laugh every day – humour is like medicine for the soul.

Again – patience and a thick skin.

If all else fails ...

Invest in a tin of hot chocolate.

GOOD RESOURCES TO READ:

<https://www.news24.com/parent/Learn/High-school/teach-your-kids-to-see-difficulty-this-way-and-theyre-more-likely-to-succeed-20170726>

<https://www.news24.com/parent/Learn/High-school/2018-top-academic-achievers-got-your-teen-feeling-inadequate-20180104>

https://www.news24.com/parent/child_7-12/development/Perform-or-else-20080909

<https://www.lifechoices.co.za/5-tips-parents-children-matric>

<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/book/the-5-love-languages-of-teenagers-2/>



THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL WELL- BEING ON PERFORMANCE

by Lauren Martin, Counselling Psychologist

The reality is, that burn out, anxiety and depression are common within the teen years. And in the context of matric preparing for their final exams – for many students, professional intervention is required to manage and cope with their emotions. Around this time, many mental health organisations and services receive calls from distressed matric students about their emotional well-being surrounding the build up to the exams.

Alarmingly, the majority of South Africans keep their emotional distress silent and therefore untreated. This makes it even more challenging for parents to identify if their children are suffering silently and what appropriate support to put in place – especially as we build up to the final examinations. Should your child be one of the many children who do require professional support, it is important that these resources are made available.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:

Interestingly, for many emotional well-being means feeling good and being in control of your emotions. But the truth is, as humans, we all have fluctuating emotions all the time (life is uncertain and unpredictable) and it's not possible to control our emotions or how we feel – nor is it necessary. In fact, research is showing that the more one tries to control their emotions, the more frequent and intense the emotions become.

If you're unable to control your emotions or if your children are experiencing uncomfortable emotions like stress, this does not mean they're not coping, this means they're human.

Rather, healthy, emotional well-being means learning that we can function, perform and have success while we experience normal, natural uncomfortable emotions such as stress. When we learn that stress or uncomfortable emotions are normal and we don't need to get rid of them, we allow ourselves room and head space to focus on what is important – like self-care, preparation, focused learning – that aid in helping us reach our goals.

Helping matric students to function within their natural uncomfortable emotions is important and healthy. And also prepares them for life after matric, when there will be many other events and transitions that will bring up similar uncomfortable emotions.

So as parents, what can you do to assist your matric children in maintaining a healthy, emotional approach to the matric examinations?

7 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. MAPPING FUTURE POSSIBILITIES:

One of the aspects I would encourage every matric student and their parents to do prior to the matric examinations is to practice flexibility in planning and thinking about the future – especially this year. Every matric student is wondering about the next steps for them, whether that's finding work, studying further or volunteering to gain experience.

- But Students can feel emotionally stuck knowing that their matric results may create disappointment or sadness for their parents or their results prevent them from following through on their future plans.
- As parents, be proactive, by discussing with your child the various possibilities that are available when results aren't what are expected. Mapping out various pathways to your goal leaves students with options and possibilities, regardless of matric examination results.
- For example, various mapping options are – remarks of matric exams, upgrading matric results, bridging courses such as a higher certificate which gives you entry into a degree programme, internships to gain work experience prior to applying for recognition of prior learning into a tertiary institution, trade institutions... really there are various options available.

Question to reflect on: Have you flexibly mapped out your child's future possibilities with them?

2. KNOW WHEN TO REACH OUT FOR HELP.

Speak to your children about their feelings and how they are coping – actively engage in this process. They know when they are not coping, when they are unable to function, when they are feeling paralysed, demobilised and stuck. The matric year is challenging and this is expected but the experience of matric and matric examinations should not leave matrics questioning their worth, value, future or their life. If your children are not emotionally coping or they are questioning whether they are alright or not, rather allow them to seek professional help. Organisations such as SADAG, Lifeline, Counselling Hub.

Question to reflect on: Have you made contact numbers readily available for your children – like sticking the numbers on the fridge as a reminder of support that is available 24/7 and for free?

- The Counselling Hub: 067 235 0019 info@counsellinghub.co.za
- SADAG: 0800 456 789 help@sadag.org
- Lifeline: 0861 322 322 safetalking@lifeline.org.za
- FAMSA: 086 641 6882
- SACAP [blog](#)

AND THERE ARE RESOURCES

3. DON'T PROJECT YOUR FEARS ONTO YOUR CHILDREN:

Often as parents or caregivers, we forget the profound impact we have on our children and whether directly or indirectly, we also add pressure and stress on our children around the matric exams. We may have disappointments because our children have not been able to experience a typical final year, such as participate in matric sports, matric dances, matric vacation – there are many highlights in the matric year that will not be experienced. But matrics have enough to grapple with.

- Parents should find a different outlet for their emotions, so that matrics are not sitting with their own fears and the fears of their parents.
- Parents can utilise the free SA organisations who provide professional support if they are not emotionally coping and you need an outlet (such as lifeline or SADAG or the counselling hub or visit our SACAP website for resources and tips for parents in our blogs)

Question to reflect on: Are you providing emotional support or adding an emotional burden on your children?

4. UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD'S OPTIMAL LEARNING HABITS:

For many parents, learning means sitting diligently at a desk pouring over textbooks – we grew up differently, from a different generation.

- However, your matric child will most probably prefer to do a lot of studying for their Matric exams sprawled on the couch and watching videos of their favourite YouTube teachers or online chats with friends into a peer-learning classroom.
- “Parents of the current Matric cohort need a real understanding of how their child learns best,” “You don't want to make the mistake of shutting down or getting in the way of what is highly effective learning for them because you have misinterpreted what they might be doing on YouTube or on FaceTime.

Question to reflect on: Have you discussed with your child how they learn best and then enabled a learning environment to cater for this?

5. DON'T COMPARE YOUR CHILDREN TO THEIR PEERS OR YOUR PEERS:

: Academic preparedness is contextual – have you had the support, resources, guidance, help to capitalise on this unique year? Some matrics may be very prepared for the upcoming examinations and others may not due to their circumstances. Also, your child's thoughts, emotions, aspirations, backgrounds, learning approaches, support structures are unique to them.

- Comparing exacerbates unnecessary emotional distress and in no way aids in success.
- As parents, ensuring that you help your children focus on their own growth, goals and preparedness is important.
- Identify when your children are making comparisons and help them to realise this thought process.

Question to reflect on: Have you sat and discussed with your child their own goals and aspirations and are you supporting them in their dreams?

6. ACTIVELY LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES:

We can't always change what we experience, what causes us stress or even our circumstances, but we can change how we think about these events. Our minds create scenarios, all the time, which we often buy-in into without critically being aware of. Our minds trap us into particular "What happens if..." stories or scenarios which exacerbate stress and anxiety.

- Your ability to catch when your mind does this helps reduce stress. For example, with the upcoming matric examinations your child's 'go-to' response may be "this is unfair and this should not be happening to me". This response creates anxiety and panic and often leaves individuals feeling stuck. Actively looking at things from another perspective helps us to think outside of the norm, such as "we all go through challenges and this is one of mine. I will put in the work to prepare well for the examinations despite the current circumstances".
- As parents, help identify your child's mind traps or scenarios and when you do hear these, help your child think about alternative perspectives that they may not be able to recognise in the moment.

Question to reflect on: Are you listening to what your children are saying to themselves and how are you helping them think more broadly?

7. FLEXIBLE ROUTINE:

: In general, routines like keeping to a normal school day schedule, organising work, building in self-care into your daily routine are all helpful and aid in optional learning but we also find ourselves in a very different situation or circumstances this year with the disruption of normalcy. So routine or structure can look different during this time.

- As parents, Let's be mindful that lockdown is not always conducive for a set schedule or routine. Sometimes waking up earlier or going to bed later assists with the other demands of what is going on at home.
- Or our emotional wellbeing may fluctuate, requiring a change in how we approach the day. It's ok to have an off day and not be as productive.
- A rigid stance on routine in any sphere of our life is not necessarily conducive to wellbeing nor learning.

Question to reflect on: Are you allowing your child to take ownership and responsibility for their daily structure required or are you enforcing a specific routine?



A PARENTS' HELP GUIDE TO TEENAGE DEPRESSION

by Dr Diana De Sousa, Research Psychologist and Registered Counsellor

Matric students face a host of pressures from changes associated with who they are to where they fit in, academic pressures and choosing a career path. With all this turmoil and uncertainty, it can be difficult to distinguish between burnout, anxiety and depression from the normal process of transitioning from a teenager to an adult.

WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY THE TERMS BURNOUT, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION?

- **burnout** fatigue or exhaustion or lack of energy
- **anxiety** intense worrying, being afraid to fail, wanting to belong and fearing rejection
- **depression** withdrawal, hopelessness and intense sadness

However, **constant burnout** and **chronic and untreated anxiety have been shown to be one of the best predictors of developing depression**. Depression goes beyond moodiness; it is a serious mental health problem that impacts on every aspect of an individual's life. Fortunately, it is treatable and parents can help their child to get back on track by **recognising and symptoms of depression and get them the help they need**.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Unlike adults, who have the ability to seek assistance on their own, matric learners rely on parents, teachers to recognise the warning signs and symptoms of depression and get them the help they need. While it might seem that recognising the sign and symptoms is easy, in reality this can be a bit more complex. This is because teenagers with depression might not necessarily always appear sad, irritability, anger, hostility, restlessness and agitation may mask an underlying feeling of sadness and hopelessness.

OTHER SIGN AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION INCLUDE:

- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- Poor school performance
- Changes in eating and sleep patterns
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentration
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Thoughts of death or suicide (should always be taken seriously and take immediate action, contact SADAG or Life-line).

IF YOU ARE UNSURE IF YOUR CHILD IS DEPRESSED CONSIDER:

- how long the symptoms have been present
- how severe they are, and
- how different your child is from their usual self.

Hormones can explain the occasional episode of worrying about academic pressures - but not continuous and unrelenting signs of burnout, anxiety, irritability, and unhappiness explained by depression.

A FEW THINGS TO NOTE

1. Don't ignore the problem
2. Know when to seek professional help
3. Take care of yourself (and the rest of the family)
4. Teen depression help & resources
 - a. The Counselling Hub: 067 235 0019 info@counsellinghub.co.za
 - b. SADAG: 0800 456 789 help@sadag.org
 - c. Lifeline: 0861 322 322 safetalking@lifeline.org.za
 - d. FAMSA: 086 641 6882

SACAP

COURSE OFFERING

SACAP COURSE OFFERING	NQF LEVEL
<u>Higher Certificate in Counselling and Communication Skills</u>	NQF 5
<u>Diploma in Counselling and Communication Skills</u>	NQF 6
<u>Advanced Certificate in Counselling and Communication Skills</u>	NQF 6
<u>Bachelor of Applied Social Science Degree</u> (<u>majoring in Psychology and Counselling</u>)	NQF 7
<u>Bachelor of Applied Social Science Degree</u> (<u>majoring in Psychology and Human Resource Management</u>)	NQF 7
<u>Bachelor of Applied Social Science Degree</u> (<u>majoring in Psychology and Business Management</u>)	NQF 7
<u>Bachelor of Psychology Degree</u>	NQF 8

UPCOMING OPEN DAYS

VIRTUAL OPEN DAY

14 NOVEMBER 2020
TIME: 10:00 - 11:30

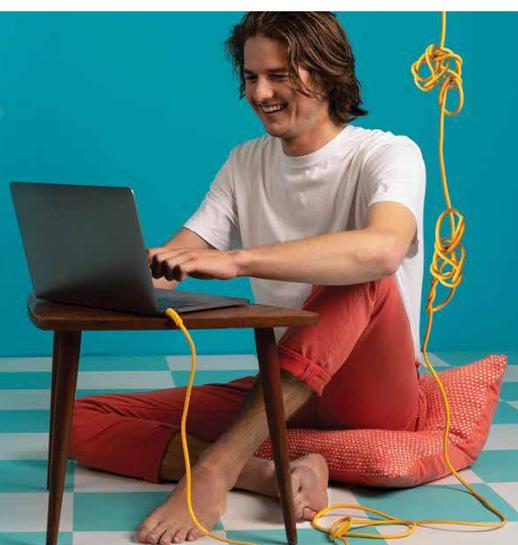
[RSVP NOW](#)



ONLINE OPEN DAY

18 NOVEMBER 2020
TIME: 12:00 - 13:00

[RSVP NOW](#)



ONLINE OPEN DAY

25 NOVEMBER 2020
TIME: 18:00 - 19:00

[RSVP NOW](#)

