

Prepare to Pass Workshop

Dear Wonderful Parent,

Today, your son or daughter attended a workshop called Prepare to Pass. It looks at the key areas of self-belief, organisation, reviewing and stress management all wrapped up in a powerful workshop, complete with a revision toolkit that's second to none and flexible enough to suit everyone! We know that kids very often don't talk much about their day, so we thought we'd give you a little insight into what was covered and, more importantly, what you can do to support and encourage the continued use of these tools and techniques.

KEY TOPICS

Self-Belief

Of course, there are many ways we can build (or destroy) self-belief. In this section we looked at the four key areas of:

Controlling Internal Dialogue – the things we say to ourselves inside our head are often negative e.g I'm rubbish at maths. This technique takes the initial negative comment and looks for a positive response to it. I am rubbish at maths.... So, I am going to ask my teacher for extra support.

Choosing Our Focus – our brain will always work towards what we think about the most so, if we want to achieve a 7 but we worry constantly about only getting a 6 then our brain is focussed on getting the 6. We encourage the students to use affirmations to help build their confidence and belief in their abilities.

Build a Success Bank – this is a technique where we reflect each day on our achievements, record them on a small piece of paper and keep all of our successes in a jar. The more success that is deposited in the bank, the more success (confidence) can be withdrawn.

What's in it For Me? – when human beings work towards goals we often hit hurdles along the way. However, when we have a good reason why we want to achieve our goal, this gives us the motivation to push through the difficulties.

Memory

The four elements of great memory are Imagination, Outstanding, Association and Repetition.

When a student is revising, they must use techniques that make things easy to remember.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- If you hear your child making negative statements about their looks, abilities or circumstances, encourage them to continue the sentence and end with a positive/possible solution
- Again, if you hear your child talking about doubts, ask them to focus on what they actually want and also encourage them to define the steps/actions that will enable them to get there
- Provide the necessary resources for a success bank (empty jar, plain paper) and ask them to share their achievements with you from time to time. Perhaps keep a success jar of your own (lead by example)
- When your child complains about their exams, encourage them to think about why they are doing this and how they will benefit at the end of the process.
- Discourage your child from using rote learning techniques e.g. just reading things over and over
- Encourage your child to use creative techniques that involve imagination, colour, links and so on e.g. if they are using flashcards these should have just a few words on each one along with pictures or, write the words in bubble writing and colour them in
- Without encouragement students will commonly revert to rote learning which is the longest, most arduous way to learn and the least effective way to retain information

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KEY TOPICS

Toolkit

The Picture Story Technique

The human brain remembers pictures approximately 3000 times more easily than words. Indeed, the natural language of the brain is images/pictures. This technique uses imagination, pictures, links and repetition to help students to remember key information.

Mnemonics

This is one from primary school and yet SUCH a powerful memory technique with applications way beyond the classroom (indeed, I use mnemonics to memorise my car registration number, and for the spelling of difficult words like diarrhoea!)

North East South West

Never Eat Shredded Wheat

So simple and yet, so powerful.

Diarrhoea:

Dining In A Rough Restaurant? Hurry,
Otherwise Expect Accidents

Regular Review

Within 24 hours of learning information, a human being forgets an average of 80% of the content! (that's why cramming does NOT work).

Using a regular review cycle will stop this from happening. The key here, is little and often. Possibly the best advice you can ever be given on how to revise.

Managing Nerves and Stress

The Timetable Jigsaw

Successful revision happens when life is scheduled as a whole to ensure balance is retained. Think of the rain and how this can lead to floods.

The rain falls and the ground soaks it up. When the rain continues to fall and the ground is full, the excess water runs off and causes chaos elsewhere. This is what happens when a student studies too much. Their brain cannot absorb all the information so much of it 'runs off' and causes disruption to learning, memory and stress levels elsewhere.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Ask your child to explain the techniques to you
- Provide appropriate resources (coloured pens/pencils, blank paper)
- Help them to create stories (if they will let you!!) and mnemonics
- Always encourage the use of creative techniques and emphasise that a little extra time spent creating imaginative resources will save a LOT of revision time overall

- Ask your child to explain the regular review process to you
- Provide them with the resources needed to create regular review sheets (paper and a ring binder per subject if possible)
- Do not encourage/push your child to revise for hours at a time. Pushy parents are likely to minimise success levels and maximise stress levels.
- Short bursts, done regularly are FAR more effective
- Organisation is key – you can help them organise revision schedules

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KEY TOPICS

A good balance includes:

Sleep – 8-10 hours every night

Revision - Create a sensible revision timetable (that starts on Day 1 of Year 11 preferably) and stick to it

Friends - Time spent with friends and participating in hobbies is very valuable during revision periods. This allows relaxation but also allows time for the brain to absorb and process (soak up) revision

Health - Regular exercise and a healthy nutritious diet will work wonders for the success of revision periods

When we are stressed our body releases chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol. Over time, a build up of these stress chemicals can lead to problems such as headaches, black outs, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, loss of appetite, panic attacks etc. These problems do not indicate weakness, they are a certain sign that someone has been trying too hard for too long, putting too much pressure on themselves. We can limit the impact of stress chemicals by taking:

Regular exercise – 20 mins, 5 times a week

Healthy diet (as already mentioned)

Meditation – the art of learning how to focus on one thing at a time (very difficult but proven to reduce stress, lower blood pressure and improve focus – among many other benefits)

Keeping a Positivity Diary – an end-of-day reflection process where we write down three positives from the day.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Help your child create a balanced schedule
- Ensure your child takes regular exercise and has a healthy, nutritious diet
- Ensure your child has between 8 – 10 hours sleep every night
- Encourage the use of creative learning techniques
- Encourage the use of techniques such as meditation and positivity diary
- Provide whatever resources are needed

Top Tips for Revision Success

1. Have a quiet revision space

- Remove all distractions –including phones

2. Drink water

- This keeps your brain hydrated and working at its best
- Always take a bottle of water into an exam

3. Take regular breaks

- 20-20-20 (in exams too)

4. Space it out

- Cramming doesn't work
- Follow the regular review schedule!!
- However, if you have not done this then you can try gapping i.e. the gap between revision sessions should be 10% - 20% of the time you want to retain the information e.g. if the exam is in a month, revise once a week, if the exam is in a week, revise once a day

5. Interleaving

- Research shows that mixing up the topics you revise in one session increases success rates by 3 times

6. Avoid procrastination!

- Use the revision sandwich and just do it!

An online version of the Prepare to Pass workshop is available to purchase at resilientmeonline.com