

Is your child preparing to sit the Junior or Leaving Cert? The Psychological Society of Ireland has this advice for parents

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is offering advice to parents with children that are due to sit the Junior and Leaving Certificate state exams in June. The run-in to starting the exams can be daunting for students, but also for parents who can sometimes feel at a loss as to what they can say or do to offer their children support during what can be a challenging time.

Points to consider for parents of young people sitting state exams:

1. Reflect on your own experience of exams in your life

Consider if your feelings about exams and their consequences could be influencing your teenager's response to them. Is there anything that would have benefited you that you might be able to provide now?

2. Offer your child space to express any concerns about exams without trying to rush to solve the problem or reassure

Focus on using words to show them that you understand. Often that might be enough to provide them with relief in that moment.

3. Young people are repeatedly receiving the message in school, online and from the media that exams are important

So they probably don't need an additional reminder of this. If it doesn't appear that your child is doing much studying, it is unlikely they do not care at all, they quite likely have complicated feelings about them. It is possible they may be overwhelmed, hopeless or afraid of failing.

4. Try your best to be a model of good self-care practice

Young people benefit from having their parents as role models who look after themselves in times of adversity. Is there any way you could improve any of these elements in your own life so that you may inspire your child? Note the ways in which you take care of yourself in stressful situations, and demonstrate how to look after yourself through good nutrition, sleep, exercise, enjoyable activities, accessing social support and relaxing activities.

5. One of the positives about exams is that we know when they are definitely going to end!

Once they are over, take the opportunity to reflect on how your family is doing. Was there something that worked well to help your young person to cope and is there anything different that could be done to help with a stressful situation in the future?

Jennifer Twyford-Hynes, Clinical Psychologist and Chartered Member of the PSI, states: “Exams are just one example of a situation that can challenge your child and perhaps your parenting. You probably already have within you an instinct of what your child might need to feel supported. Trust that!”

ENDS.

For media queries, or to arrange an interview with a PSI spokesperson, please contact:

Lisa Stafford

Head of Communications

087 945 2801 or lisastafford@psychologicalsociety.ie

To note:

- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is the learned and professional body for psychology in the Republic of Ireland. Established in 1970, the Society currently has almost 3,000 members;
- The PSI is committed to maintaining high standards of practice in psychology and also to exploring new and innovative ways of furthering psychology as an applied science.