ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG CHILDREN AND PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES TO OVERCOME STRESS

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Abstract:
The Indian school education system is text book-oriented that focuses on rote memorisation of lessons and demands long hours of systematic study every day. The elaborate study routines that are expected by school students span from the morning till late evening hours, leaving little time for socialisation and recreation. This leads to stress among children. Stress is a necessary and inescapable concomitant of daily living- necessary because without some stress we would be listless and apathetic creatures and unavoidable because it relates to any external event, it is agreeable or anxiety producing. Stress is defined as a feeling of tension that is both biological and psychological. A person's response towards stress depends on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat. Academic pressure by the parents as well as the children are themselves tensed about their career and future, when fail to cope up with the situation or fail to satisfy their needs then it results in to stress and depression. Parents and teachers support is considered as one of the most important way of coping with academic stress.

Index Terms: Academic Stress, Students, Parents, Responsibilities, Strategies & Management

1. Introduction:

The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievement, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere; whether it is within the family, business organization or any other social or economic activity. Stress is physiological and psychological imbalance. It arises due to the demands on a person and that person's inability to meet those demands. Academic Stress in the students can be very taxing on the parents and the students themselves. Stress has been tightening its grip on the students, as they have to compete at every step of their academic career in this fast moving world. Academic stress is the product of a combination of academic related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual (Wilks, 2008). Academic pressure by the parents as well as the children are themselves tensed about their career and future, when fail to cope up with the situation or fail to satisfy their needs then it results in to stress and depression. Social support is considered as one of the most important way of coping with academic stress. Students are the budding future of a nation and it is imperative for the teachers, parents and caregivers to understand the factors which might be stressful to students and recognize ways to help them cope up with such situation.

Stress is a necessary and inescapable concomitant of daily living-necessary because without some stress we would be listless and apathetic creatures, and unavoidable because it relates to any external event, it is agreeable or anxiety producing. Stress is defined as a feeling of tension that is both biological and psychological. Stress consists of any event in which environmental demands, internal demands or both tax or exceed the adaptive resources of the individual, social system or tissue system. A person's response towards stress depends on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat.

Academic performance is mainly a function of students' study habits referring to the student's way of study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient. The study habits that influence the academic performance of a student include: time management, setting realistic academic targets, setting rewards on completion of a task, revision, organization of materials, and notes-taking during lectures. Hence, study habits are coping strategies used by students to overcome academic stress so that they can meet the demands imposed on them by the academic environment. There are various coping strategies used by students when experiencing academic stress. Some resort to avoidant coping; alcohol/drug abuse, denial and behavioral disengagement; while others cope actively through acceptance, planning, and positive reframing and taking the necessary steps to overcome the academic stress.

The self-worth of students in the Indian society is mostly determined by good academic performance, and not by vocational or other individual qualities. Indian parents report removing their TV cable connections and vastly cutting down on their own social lives in order to monitor their children's homework. Because of academic stress and failure in examination, every day Indian students commit suicide.

Symptoms which are helpful in identifying the stressful behaviors of Students:

- ✓ Students may be experiencing irritability because of lack of proper sleep at night. Then it is a Wakeup call for parents.
- ✓ They may be unable to concentrate on academics and sports.
- ✓ Students may be having unexplained fears or increased anxiety.
- ✓ Students isolate from family activities or peer relationships.
- ✓ Students may be experimenting with drugs and alcohol.
- ✓ Students may complain about headaches or stomach aches.
- ✓ Students may have poor appetite and low immunity

2. Role and Responsibilities of Parents:

It is widely acknowledged that parents play a significant role in the cognitive, social and emotional development of their children. Through their role, parents provide children with socialization to cultural and societal norms and values meant to prepare them for the navigation of the communities in which they live and the needs of the society they will encounter in the future (Miller and Goodnow, 1995).

Family, which serves as a first school for the child, appears to be an important source of rising expectations. Parents have an important positive or negative influence on the academic aspirations and achievements of children. An adolescent is strongly and positively identified with parental model but if that model is indifferent to or suspicious and critical of educational values and goals, the young person is likely to adapt him/ her to respective parent model. Review of relevant literature revealed that family and parents significantly affect child's performance in many spheres of life. Molnar (1979) found that parents' education and home environment play a significant role in child's academic achievement.

Parental involvement leads to better social adjustment and academic achievement, on the other hand over aspirations and negative attitude of the parents lead to depression and stress among students. Parents usually set unrealistically high goals for their children and expect them to come up to their expectations. When children are unable to come up to the expected standards, they are accused of being lazy or dull which induces a sense of inferiority among adolescents and sometimes leads to drastic outpourings by them in the form of mental disorders depressions, stress and even suicides.

3. How Parents Can Help Their Child:

- ✓ Be aware of your child's behaviors and emotions.
- ✓ Build trust with your child.
- ✓ Encourage the expression of feelings.
- ✓ Teach and model good emotional responses.
- ✓ Encourage them to tell you if they feel overwhelmed.
- ✓ Encourage healthy and diverse friendships.
- ✓ Encourage physical activity, good nutrition, and rest.
- ✓ Teach your child to solve problems.
- ✓ Remind your child of his or her ability to get through tough times, particularly with the love and support of family and friends.
- ✓ Keep your child aware of anticipated family changes.
- ✓ Use encouragement and natural consequences when poor decisions are made.
- ✓ Help your child select appropriate extracurricular activities and limit over scheduling.
- ✓ Make your child aware of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol before experimentation begins.

4. Strategies of Stress Management:

A number of approaches are currently being used to treat and control stress responses. Major methods include Stress Management, Relaxation techniques, Biofeedback, Drugs and Yoga that all can have therapeutic psychological effects. Stress management is a large family of techniques ranging from methods to reduce the occurrence of stress to techniques which can be used by people who feel overwhelmed by stress. Stress management refers to a wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress for the purpose of everyday living. Yoga, humour and reading are simple effective methods to help reduce academic stress among children.

Parents and teachers can help children to express anger positively. Children have a right to feel angry or upset. Allow them the opportunity to express their feelings. Teach positive ways to release anger. They can punch a pillow (teaches children to punch soft things that does not hurt themselves or others), count to 10, talk to someone about angry feelings, go for a walk, or take time out to rest and relax. Positive anger releases give the child time to accept his/her anger and not hurt themselves and others in the process.

5. Conclusion:

Stress is part of every one's life. Academic Stress among students can create havoc in their life. Under Academic stress the performance gets hindered and students can take wrong decisions under the influence of stress. Social support is considered as one of the most important way of coping with academic stress. In order to overcome deviant behaviors the parents play a constructive role in channelizing energies of the students. Proper care should to be taken in helping to take the right decisions which may affect their future. Hence, Students need to receive appropriate direction, nurturing, encouragement and guidance from significant adults for their successful transition into adult life. (Linden, 2005).Students must learn and practice coping skills to get them through an immediate conflict or problem. Coping strategies must emphasize self responsibility to find positive, nondestructive ways to find relief. Communication skills involve being able to talk and selecting a good listener. It is important to express feelings, vent emotions and talk about the problems and issues.

They need help to learn problem – solving skills, sorting out the issues, setting goals and making plans to move forward, are skills that can be taught and practiced.

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