

Guidance for parents or carers for supporting their young people coping with GCSE/ other academic – results

Firstly, let's think of you- how can you best keep yourself available and calm for your child? It's really helpful if you are able to be a 'strong container' for your child's strong emotions, without that affecting you negatively.

1/Plan for you:

In order to support our children best, we need to feel that our own needs are being met to some extent. **Think ahead and plan for this event.** E.g. Do you have a trusted friend who you could call after you have experienced this situation? Can someone else walk the dog this afternoon for you? Can you put your evening meal 'on-hold' without too much drama and have a cheese toastie and a cup of hot chocolate when the tears have subsided? Think of some possible realistic options for your own situation.

2/Reassurance for you:

There are many different and interesting ways to get to one destination. Many roads, many journeys.... Have that in the back of your mind or jot that down to refer to later when emotions are processed. Have confidence that this is one REALLY **big** day for them that you can help them cope with. There are an increasing number of options available for your teenagers' onward learning journey.

3/For your young person:

A/ Validate feelings — Take their lead - don't assume what you might be feeling is what they are feeling... Ask them if you are right to think they look / sound Anger/fury/injustice/jealousy/ashamed/embarrassed/want to withdraw and hide.

Acknowledge those feelings using empathy.... E.g. "it's really tough isn't it when you don't get the results you were hoping for?" Be genuine and honest. Whatever they are feeling is understandable and justified. Avoid telling them 'not to be upset' when they probably already are – *another thing they have got wrong? And it's not the time to talk about your own upsets or disappointments.* Resist giving any opinions.

B/ Listen well – or let them know you are available to listen to them if or when they want you to. Don't rush in to solve problems or find solutions – keep listening well, that includes being quiet yourself (this can be hard as its very difficult to hear our loved ones hurting) but it is an important step in being properly listened to.

C/ Allow your child to process those feelings – DON'T try to do it for them. Let **them** lead the process of getting over this difficulty ... a bit like grief. Show your patience and try not to panic. Give them time – say you'll help them work out what they might do next if they want you to **when the time is right – (but check with them first!)**

focus on your ability to empathise and go along the journey by their side – It's a 'rite of passage' for these young people. Allow them to process their feelings in their own timeframe.

DONT be tempted to try to make them feel better too soon – they need to be listened to first. It is sometimes hard to do, but they will be able to cope better if we let them express that hurt or other difficult feelings with them in the 'driving seat.' *Our own 'felt wisdom or lived experience' - can't be translated into words.*

DO Think about the things that you could put aside in order to spend a few minutes of quality time with them over the next few days (if they want it – be available /around so that they know they can approach you about this.) Above all – take care of yourselves and each other.