

Westlake Boys High School



Being in 'Quaranteen' – what have we learnt about supporting your son in a lockdown?

We can't change what we can't see. You might be unaware of how your son is affected by pressure – even at moderate levels – and how this holds him back. Gaining emotional control is the goal for those that want to thrive under pressure.

Earlier this term, our community had the privilege of hearing from world-renowned Psychiatrist and 'pressure expert', Dr Ceri Evans. As we move towards the end of term, it is inevitable (and important) that your son will be turning his attention to some crucial exams, particularly in Years 11-13. We do realise that the increased disruption of this year, may be having an impact on the pressure that the boys will be feeling.

With the above in mind, we thought that it may be helpful to share some key insights from Dr. Evans' presentation around strategies to thrive under pressure.

The overarching message to deliver to your sons is that if they want to be successful, then pressure is unavoidable. The pressure itself is not the issue, rather our response to it. An ability to find 'mental comfort in uncomfortable situations' is the mindset that needs to be adopted when the tough moments inevitably arrive.

What can you do to support your son when moments of pressure are looming?

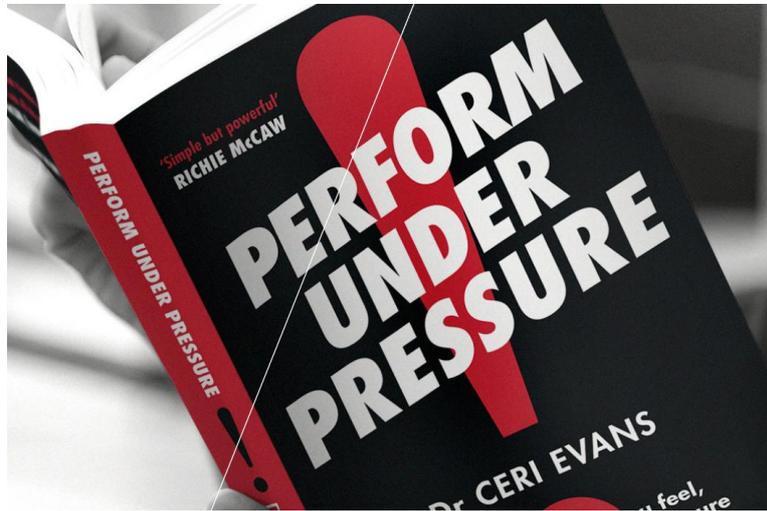
- Assist with providing a clear picture of the overview. This means your son can make informed decisions, rather than reckless ones. Reckless decisions arise from tension and tunnel vision. Maintaining a clear picture ensures your son will be able to avoid one-sided 'positive' or 'negative' thinking. The goal is to be able to think clearly under pressure and both the 'positive' and 'negative' serve important functions and keep our thinking in balance.
- Avoid the procrastination trap, this occurs when we are waiting for something to happen to us, rather than taking effective action. Instead of avoiding tough moments and having as little discomfort as possible in our lives, we need to see those tough moments as the ideal conditions to put our skills into practice.
- Parents that can role model good mental behaviour are more effective in highlighting performance under pressure for their sons. Consistently demonstrating ways that you hold your nerve, find your way and make your mark, will encourage your son to tolerate tough situations and 'walk towards the pressure'.

Why is it important to have a mindset of being 'comfortable when in uncomfortable situations?'

Taking this approach will afford your son every opportunity to feel freedom from fear. This doesn't mean that he won't feel any pressure at all, just that it won't be something that holds him captive or prevents him from performing at his best. Developing the intention to be 'comfortable when uncomfortable' means your son will not only tolerate tough moments, but deliberately seek them out. Going beyond the confines of your son's comfort zone will mean that he can practice holding his nerve,

reduce any self-sabotaging mental chatter and escape the behaviours that are stopping him reach his potential.

If you are keen to learn more about ways that your son can face pressure, find a way through it and feel free to perform at his best, then we highly recommend Dr Evans' book, 'Perform Under Pressure'. A great read for anyone who wanting to change the way they think, feel and act under pressure.



*Andrew McBride
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