

VCE Parents Night

February 7 2007

Keeping the Balance

Keeping the balance between the competing interests of

- Academic rigour and chilling out: having a life
- Sporting commitments and television/nothing
- Other co-curricular activities
- Social interests especially girlfriends
- Family; between their love for you and the independence of adulthood

How Parents Help

- Keeping the balance in your own life: control your own anxiety, social activities, life events
- Which in turn keeps the household balanced: your son needs routines such as regular meal times
- Provide the creature comforts: so they maintain good health
- Maintain the emotional balance so they feel good about themselves
- Build trust so your son knows you appreciate him
- **Don't nag:** set the expectations now, such as 3 hours homework a night and a top up on Sunday
- Make your values clear and hold to them, knowing that at this age you cannot enforce them. But if he knows your values he will eventually return to them

Family Values that Matter

- You are their **parent not their friend:** have rules and expectations that they will keep the rules
- **Treat each other with respect:** I will respect you and expect that you will respect me.
- **Expect** that they will do their best and assist them to do so.
- **Bed time** needs to be regular: young adults need 8 hours sleep. As do meal times
- **Remove** iPods, computers with Myspace and other addictive electronic devices

- **Note addictions** – we have a generation addicted to the net and electronics
- **Note substance use:** binge drinking, drug use. Seek help

Watch for Depression and Anxiety

Depression

- Flat affect and crying
- Depressed irritable mood
- Indecision
- Loss of pleasure in previously pleasurable activities
- Insomnia and hypersomnia
- Expressions of hopelessness and worthlessness

Anxiety

- Procrastination
- Apprehension and excessive worry about activities s/a athletics, academic social performance
- Motor tension such as trembling and shaking
- Excessive vigilance and scanning
- Irritability

What to do?

Seek help sooner rather than later

- These conditions can be treated but the longer they are left the more difficult it is to treat
- Psychologists in the school, Head of Senior School, Director of Students
- Heads of House do have some training in pastoral care
- Try to get him talking. If he refuses to talk reflect back to him your observations and offer help when he's ready

Above all else enjoy this passage of their development. If you enjoy it they are more likely to enjoy it.

And never forget to have a sense of humour. Laugh.