

DEALING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

Whether it's a failed exam or a result you weren't quite expecting, disappointment about your academic performance can be difficult to deal with. Below are some strategies you can use to help you manage disappointment when it comes up and help you to move forward faster.



DISAPPOINTMENT IS NORMAL

Everyone experiences disappointment at some stage in their life. Accept that it happens to everyone and know that it is a completely normal and valid emotion to experience.



ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

Disappointment is uncomfortable. Acknowledging how you feel can take some of the pressure off an already difficult experience. Allowing yourself to feel any emotions as opposed to burying them, can allow you to reach a state of calm that can help you to make decisions about what to do next.



Finding a word for how you feel (e.g. frustrated, resentful, angry) and labelling it can often help you make sense of the experience.



LEARN FROM MISTAKES

Disappointment can be a valuable learning opportunity. How can you improve from this experience? What information do you know now that you didn't know before? How can you prevent this from happening again? What resources do you have available to you?



Academic performance is one area where learning from your mistakes can help you to become a more successful student. Get into the practice of reviewing where you went wrong in assessments. Follow up by asking for feedback on how you can improve or to correct your knowledge of the topic.



AVOID COMPARISON

The only useful comparison is comparing your past self to your present self. Focusing only on the successes of others doesn't take into account everything it took to get there. This makes comparison an unhelpful point of reference for your own journey.



Instead of letting the triumphs of others get you down, could you learn from them?



SELF-COMPASSION

People who practice self-compassion have a greater ability to manage stress and setbacks which can help you move past disappointment.



Compile a list of times in the past that you have been successful and use it as a reminder that you are capable of achieving success.



AVOID MAKING IT PERSONAL

It can be easy to personalise disappointment by attributing it to our own shortcomings. However, telling yourself you failed because you're a failure makes you feel bad and doesn't help you understand where what went wrong or what you can do to improve in future.



Instead of explaining a failure on something about you as a person (e.g. "I'm awful at studying"), try viewing it as a situation. This will help you identify things you can do to change the situation (e.g. "I need to spend more time reviewing biology" or "I need to do more research to understand the topic").



FOCUS ON THE BIGGER PICTURE

It can be easy to get distracted from the end goal when we come across disappointing situations. Taking time to step back and see the bigger picture can help put things in perspective.



TAKE ACTION

Having a way to move forward from disappointment is important. Although we can't change the past, we still have control of the future. What do you need to do now? Listing a set of next steps to take can help you move forward.



Start small. Setting small goals that are easily achieved are a good way to help you regain a sense of confidence before moving onto larger goals.