Midterm exam time is a stressful time for most students.  For many students, midterm exam time comes as a wake-up call.  The beginning of the semester has progressed smoothly, or so it seems, and then suddenly your student realizes how much there still is to do on that paper or project, or how many chapters are yet unread, or how much material must be memorized for an exam.  Although some students may have had large midterm or final exams in high school, for some students this may be a new experience.  This may be one of the first big college reality checks for your student.

 College parents may feel helpless as their college student begins to worry or even panic over exams.  This is one of those college moments where your student needs to figure out how she will cope.  However, there are a few things that parents can do to help students through this stressful time.

* **Recognize that your student is tired and stressed right now**.  This may not be the best time for lengthy chats about everyday life.  Understand that she is preoccupied by what she needs to get done.
* **Use your best listening skills.**  Your student may need to vent.  He may need to complain about the amount of work, the unfairness of the professors, the difficulty of the material or the assignments.  Provide an ear and let him know that you understand.
* **Understand that he may not want to talk about it**.  Your student may see no point in telling you about every exam or paper or project that he has to do.  He may just want to get it done.
* **Remind your student that this is part of the rhythm of the academic year**.  He will get through these few days or weeks and then things will level off again.  Other students are probably feeling the same stress.
* **Remind your student to think about his health.**  Unfortunately, midterm exams often come at about the same time in the semester when students are hit by colds, viruses, flu, and general exhaustion.  Remind him to take care of his health and get help if he needs it.
* **Help your student keep midterms in perspective**.  It may be a generous portion of his semester grade in a course, but it is just one piece of the class.  He is not likely to fail a class based on one exam.  If he has been doing his work all semester, he will probably do well on the exam.  Don’t let him panic and lose perspective on the importance of the exam or paper. Even if he has not been doing well, this course is only half over.  He can use this as a good time to decide what needs to be changed to be successful in the second half of the semester.
* **Don’t micromanage**.  It’s okay to suggest a few study skill techniques that may be helpful – time management, study groups, using the library rather than studying in the dorm, getting a tutor,  but then let your student decide how he will get through this time and what he will, or will not, do.  He needs to learn this lesson on his own, and if whatever he chooses doesn’t work, then he will be that much wiser next time.
* **Help your student have realistic expectations**.  If your student is a first-year student, and this is the first time that he has faced a major college exam, he may not do as well as he hopes.  Remind him that this is a first experience.  He should be prepared for a grade that may be lower than he hoped.  It will be a learning experience, and like anything else, dealing with midterms may take practice.  Many students receive grades during their first semester that are lower than they are used to receiving in high school.  This is a new level of study and he may need to learn new ways of approaching it.
* **Encourage your student not to panic**.  Even if he feels overwhelmed right now, he needs to take a breath (figuratively and literally) and recognize that he can do something to take control.  If he is far behind, he may not be able to accomplish everything, but he can do something.  Some students feel so overwhelmed that they panic and do nothing.  Anything that he does, even if small steps, will help.
* This is an excellent time to **send a care package from home** and/or send a “cheer up” card for his mailbox.  It’s the next best thing to an “I know you can do it” hug.

http://www.collegeparents.org/members/resources/articles/ten-suggestions-college-parents-help-students-through-stress-midterm-exam