

Women Teaching Girls
Interactive Training Modules

Girls who try too hard

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The Village Teacher

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Women Teaching Girls Self-paced training modules

The female brain
Girl-friendly classrooms
A girl's need for social interaction
Risk-taking and problem solving
Girls and difficult subjects
Good girls syndrome
Girls' self-esteem and confidence
Empowering girls
Teaching girls who struggle
Girls and exam anxiety
Girls who try too hard
Be an empowering teacher

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Girls who try too hard

Achievement Versus Perfectionism

Whether you are watching girls strive endlessly for perfect marks, the most toned body in town or any other goal, perfectionism isn't exactly the same as achievement. While girls can technically achieve perfection, achievement -- or even high achievement -- focuses more on excelling at one task or activity. For example, some girls may push themselves to succeed at a certain school subject that they show an interest in such as history or science. Instead of crying at a B grade -- like the perfectionist may -- the high achieving child will look at this as a chance to learn and grow.

While wanting your female students to get good grades is a no-brainer, striving for pure academic perfectionism isn't always what it's cracked up to be. Teachers of today's teen girls may see the quest for school success as either a positive sign of preparedness or an unhealthy burden. Perfectionism in teen girls, when it comes to school, may not only include the desire to do well in academic classes, but also over-engaging in extra-curriculars. While there's nothing wrong with setting high expectations for a teen girl's academic career, feeling concerns about the pressure that a girl is under to succeed is also completely normal.

Body Image

Although a teen girl's changing body is it may set off feelings of self-consciousness. Between the idealized images that the media churns out of super-skinny models and the constant influences of peers, a teen girl may set her sights on appearance perfection. Taking body image expectations to the extreme may result in serious issues such as body dysmorphic disorder -- obsessing over a perceived physical flaw -- or an eating disorder such as anorexia. If you think that a teen girl has an unrealistic set of expectations when it comes to her perfect shape, talk to her about the difference between a healthy body and the model-skinny look. Help her to understand that there is no one ideal body type and that she is perfect even if she doesn't look like the airbrushed girl in the magazine ads. Perfection expectations that get out of hand typically require more than an open discussion. If you suspect that a teen girl has an eating or body disorder, refer her to a medical professional.

Social Skills

A teen girl's quest for perfectionism may extend into her peer group. Wanting to fit in with the "cool" clique may make a teen girl strive for social perfectionism. This may result in a girl succumbing to peer pressure, engaging in activities that she normally wouldn't think are acceptable -- such as drinking alcohol or cutting class -- or changing her appearance to meet someone else's ideal of "normal." If a teen girl starts to make

negative changes that concern you when it comes to her social behaviors, strike up a discussion about your own experiences with other kids during the high school years to put the social scene into perspective.

Because girls believe in the benefit of effort, they are more willing to work hard.

Many girls will spend excessive amounts of time on homework and projects. In some cases they will dress up their work with fancy folders and pretty headings in an effort to gain extra marks for presentation. To discourage this waste of time you might dictate that assignments are not to be bound or accessorized with bling.

Keen girls may also dedicate long hours of work or too much attention to minor assignments in order to please teachers they like.

1. Watch for signs of school-related stress.

With teens, teachers should watch for stress-related behaviors, like purposely cutting themselves, or expressions of despair or hopelessness, however casual the comments may sound.

Younger kids may have more subtle signs of school stress, like [headaches](#), stomachaches or reluctance to go to school, she adds.

2. Teach girls time-management skills.

With today's heavy homework loads, time-management and organizational skills are crucial weapons against stress.

Teach girls to budget their time wisely with homework. Say to girls, “Try to do something every night instead of cramming at the last moment.”

Stress-Relieving Homework Tips

- Teach girls to use a planner to keep track of assignments. When they finish each assignment, girls can check them off for a feeling of accomplishment.
- If girls struggle with tracking their homework, help them by following along with homework if their school posts assignments online.
- Encourage parents to provide a quiet place to study, free of distractions, away from TV and video games. If possible, have girls study earlier rather than later in the day.

Two Page Plan – Girls who try too hard

Describe the obsessive behaviours you witness of girls trying too hard

What tips have you learned in this session that would you would use in helping girls balance their lives

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

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