

From Dr Seshni Moodliar

Exams are easy for some and for some they are challenging , and each of us have different lives ..follow the guidance here if you want in order to maximise the chance of passing. I've successfully coached many students with the following ...

#### MANTRA

"I will Pass the CASC"

- As crazy as this sounds say this daily, stick post its in visible place for you to see , look in the mirror and tell yourself this -and believe it !!!

#### MINDSET

Roger Bannister (bless him -passed away a few days ago) broke world record because his mindset was that he could do it , it was possible -it's possible to pass and many IMG and non IMG pass.

- Change you mindset and negative cognitions -do some self CBT.
- Like sports people psychologically prepare yourself for CASC.

#### MAKE IMPROVEMENTS DAILY

- PRACTICE daily 4 -6 stations and doing a timetable which you can revise (I had to adjust mine many times as I couldn't keep up with my timetable !!)
- Be DISCIPLINED -don't waste ur time when you out practising (in my group of 8 or so -I was consistent, didn't miss a session even if there was just 2 present-I was there). My time was precious as it was time away from my family ..so I was serious about my learning during that session even if I didn't perform a station I was learning how to do it) .Use technology , Skype, FaceTime or just make a call to a colleague(I did this with senior colleagues who couldn't see me) and practice a station
- Do physical stations early and don't leave it till the last minute.
- PRACTICE with other colleagues anyone and everyone (nurses, other doctors , registrars, consultants, family members who are medics or non medics-I practised with my mum & hubby )
- You are seeing cases daily in your practice and this is what it will boil down to, how you are in your day to day work -confident , relaxed, caring, helpful , knowledgeable, respectful, polite & so much more-use this day to day practice to master your skills
- READ ( it's like any exam -preparation is key), make notes !!
- Know your ICD 10, read RCPSYCH leaflets -they are brilliant !! Practice daily all the past CASC stations as you see the college repeats them as they are all important cases. Write your bullet points and rehearse 2-4 daily.

- VIDEO yourself -what's ur body language and posture like , how are you sitting , are you listening and are you making eye contact ?Are you looking relaxed or anxious ??
- Get FEEDBACK from people you trust and take it positively. I was fortunate, lucky and grateful to all those who guided me. You are lucky too and have those people in your daily working life, take advantage of that and ask for help.
- If you want to improve your COMMUNICATION observe others and try to emulate that.
- Become and BE more CONFIDENT-exude confidence in your actions, speech , dress and behaviour ..observe and emulate a consultant you like and see how they are ..always confident, calm, listening and ready to help ..despite the tons of things they are juggling.
- Give this attempt a 100% otherwise don't do it (I was given this advice by a consultant colleague)
- LIVE your life and enjoy the time with your family (this is super important) and be present (with mindfulness) but at the same time make sacrifices to study and not spend time in front of the TV or on the internet , don't go out as much
- Find ways to DESTRESS and be balanced-Yoga, meditation, relaxation exercises, exercise, take care of your eating habits -this will clear your mind and keep you focussed
- Be more POSITIVE and show LOVE in all aspects of your life ( including the casc-just love this exam and all that it's teaching you as difficult as it is and the gains once you pass-and u will pass!!)
- If you have a partner and family u need them on your side up until the day of the exam otherwise u can't do this and their support is vital but understand also the toll it takes on them.
- Get HELP from others if needed . Reward your other half with a gift (favourite perfume, clothing, meal out , jewellery, massage voucher -whatever it takes or something nice and hopefully in return u get more time to study and support and you will be in their good books instead of being stressed about exams etc
- If you have a problem with ANXIETY during exams etc find a way to overcome this and see your GP if needed(most people fail because of this !!)
- Be your own critic-what do you think you need to change and start by tackling that
- Communicate clearly(polish your English if you need to ) , short sentences, come to the point , listen , SHOW EMPATHY, SHOW CONFIDENCE -that person needs to see you have that confidence to help them
- The college wants to see that if you are left on that ward , whilst the consultant is away on holiday etc you need to be able to handle that scenario, show you are a safe, reliable, competent doctor

- Change your mindset from being a junior doctor to actually being at a higher level (ST or almost consultant ) being able to manage that scenario competently and confidently , managing risks (PND, MJ, PP, DTs, serious OD, Erotomania(all risky - you not going to send them home !!), and above all treating them with RESPECT , LISTENING to them and GIVING them HOPE for their RECOVERY( not false hope though)
- FAILURE & SUCESS -been there, done that and trust me I know what it feels like. It doesn't make me any less of a psychiatrist -I passed when I was ready and I can tell you I was a better and more knowledgeable psychiatrist when I did. I was fortunate too as I did the OSCE part 1 , 6 weeks postpartum & passed that -both CASC & OSCE..similar !!When I focused on negative cognition about failing the CASC my husband would say , don't waste your energy and time on thinking about failing but use this time to prepare to pass the CASC and he was right.
- The CASC prepares you to be a better psychiatrist and consultant with the range and depth of cases , learning the information you have and then to be able to communicate with different people and with our patients.
- You see every cloud has a silver lining...
- The art and magic in passing any station casc is keeping it simple , having a structure but being flexible , smiling appropriately , listening , giving eye contact , showing empathy, covering range and depth , summarising back to show you've understood and thanking the patient ...
- Just know that each of you must be a successful person to have become a doctor or else you would have never be where you are, and just understand with CASC the Royal college wants you to be at a certain standard and level, which is definitely achievable ....
- But above all this -Just BELIEVE in YOURSELF ..wake up believing you will pass or have passed and have a new positive outlook on this exam ..that's my wish for each of you doing this exam. You need just one person to believe in you& I surely believe each of you are capable of passing the CASC!!!