Tame Your Test Anxiety

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Who experiences test anxiety?

- 25-40% of students experience test anxiety (J.C. 2010)
- 1/4 to 2/5 students – at times students who studied the material have test anxiety
What is test anxiety?

- **Formal Definition**: The test anxiety construct is considered as a situation-specific trait accounting for individual differences in the extent to which people find examinations threatening (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995).

- **It feels like**:
  - Butterflies in stomach, sweating, increased heart rate, stomach ache, head ache, etc.
What can be done?

- Developing good study habits
- Acknowledging external pressure
- Decreasing anxiety
Study Habits

- **Time Management**
  - Begin preparing ahead of time. Avoid cramming!
  - What time of day is best?
  - Have a set amount of time to study.

- **Organizing Study material**
  - What type of learner are you?
    - Audio: Hear
    - Visual: See
    - Kinesthetic: Touch

- **Note taking during class**

- **Study groups**
External Pressure

- What worries you?
  - Success versus failure
  - Consequences at home or at school
  - Peer pressure
  - Competitiveness
Decreasing Anxiety

- Get a good night’s sleep
- Eat something healthy before the test if possible
- Dress comfortably
- Be prepared
- Go in with confidence!
Decreasing Anxiety

- Negative self talk & Thought stopping
- Avoid all or nothing language
- Creating a counterargument
- Relaxation techniques
What is negative self talk?

STOP! Or CANCEL THAT!

Redirect yourself when thinking self defeating negative thoughts such as “I know I can’t pass” or “This is awful”

Instead say:

- I can do this!
- I am prepared!
Avoid all or nothing language

- “I ALWAYS fail” versus “I have failed”
- “I NEVER get the grade I want” versus “Sometimes I don’t get the grade I want”

- Avoid stating **Demands** versus **Preferences**
  - “I HAVE to do well” “I MUST do well” versus “I’d LIKE to do well”
Creating a Counterargument

- Ask yourself these questions:
  - Viewing the situation objectively, what are the odds of the negative outcome actually happening?
  - If the worst did happen, is it actually true that I couldn’t handle it?

- Create this list:
  - Identify and list specific ways in which you would cope with what you fear will happen.
Relaxation Techniques

- Taking deep breaths
  - 5 seconds in, hold for five, breathe out slowly
- Relax Muscles
  - Start at head and move through to toes
- Positive Visualizations
  - This can be done before and during the test
Questions?
For more information contact:

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972-943-0400


Kidshealth.org

Faculty.washington.edu/chudler/auto.html