

COPING WITH TESTING ANXIETY

TESTING ANXIETY

- Testing anxiety is the fear and worry we experience before, during, or after an exam.
- Some level of anxiety prior to an exam is normal and can be used as a motivator. However, high levels of anxiety can interfere with your learning and testing.
- You may experience a range of symptom including (but not limited to):
 - Butterflies in the stomach
 - Excessive sweating or extreme body temperature changes
 - The feeling that you can't think clearly during the test and/or your mind going blank
 - Negative self-talk
 - Fidgeting
 - Fear, disappointment, helplessness

CAUSES

- Fear of failure and/or focusing on the negative consequences of failure
- Lack of preparation
- Lack of confidence
- Pressure to perform well
- Negative prior test-taking situations and/or outcomes
- Poor time management

COPING STRATEGIES

- Be prepared
 - Prepare for the exam over time – avoid cramming
 - Attend all classes
 - Meet with instructors to discuss strategies to be successful
 - Keep to a study schedule to avoid falling behind
 - Assess yourself often while studying
 - Ask for help when needed
- Be aware of triggers and avoid prior to and after an exam
 - Avoid people who add stress prior to the exam (Ex: talking with other students in the testing center prior to the exam)
 - Budget your time on exam days
 - Avoid comparing answers with peers after the exam – this can raise anxiety
- Use strategies
 - Close your eyes and take 2-3 deep breaths (5 seconds in and 5 seconds out)
 - Write about your stress and anxiety
 - Manage your time wisely
 - Engage in healthy habits such as exercising, getting enough sleep, eating healthy
 - Set priorities
 - Talk to someone about your anxiety and stress
 - Use test-taking strategies (see test-taking strategies handout)

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