Test-Taking Anxiety: A Self Assessment

Self-Assessment

Mental
1. I have trouble focusing while studying for a test or during a test.
2. Sounds and noises bother me when I am taking a test.
3. I “blank out” when I receive my test.
4. I only remember answers after the test is over.

Physical
1. I experience physical discomfort (e.g., nausea) before or during a test.
2. I have headaches before or during a test.
3. My heart beats faster and/or I have trouble breathing before or during a test.
4. I am tense and have difficulty sitting still during a test.

Emotional
1. I more sensitive and irritable before a test.
2. I feel pressure to succeed in school from family, friends, or myself.
3. I have difficulty sleeping the night before a test.
4. I place an extraordinary amount of significance on each test.

Personal Habits
1. I often stay up late studying the night before a test.
2. I have a personal history of failure taking specific types of tests (e.g., math, essay).
3. My caffeine intake is higher and/or I do not eat immediately before a test.
4. I avoid studying and do less important tasks instead.
**Evaluation**

If you answered “yes” ...

13-16 times: You experience severe test anxiety and should work with the university’s academic support programs to learn strategies for managing this issue.

9-12 times: You experience moderate test anxiety and could benefit from working with the university’s academic support programs to reduce your stress.

5-8 times: You experience mild test anxiety that may occur irregularly. Reflect on your own approaches to tests to determine when or why this anxiety appears and research strategies for managing it.

1-4 times: You rarely experience the negative effects of test anxiety. Yet slight anxiety can be positive and help improve test performance.

**Managing Test Anxiety**

**Deep Breathing**

**Step 1:** Stand up and reach your arms toward the ceiling, then slowly bend over and touch your toes.

**Step 2:** Lie down on the floor or bed and then inhale and exhale to the count of four.

**Step 3:** Close your eyes and focus on getting each part of your body to relax.

**Stay Calm**

Be confident in your knowledge and practice deep breathing before entering class.

**Think Positively**

Remind yourself of your weekly effort to increase confidence on test day.

**Maintain Perspective**

1. No test defines a person’s worth or intelligence.
2. Tests are an opportunity to show the instructor what you have learned.
3. A low grade suggests that you should try new strategies prior to the next exam.

**Reframing**

Reframe negative thoughts into positive thoughts:

| I’m terrible at test taking. Failing may mean expulsion from college. | becomes becomes | I’m improving my test taking. It is just one test, it does not mean I will fail to succeed in college. |

**Visualization**

Envision a place that you find relaxing and “visit” it before the test.

**Journal**

Express your fears and anxieties in writing 30 minutes before the test.

**Resources**
