

Help Your Child Reduce Test Stress/ Anxiety

Parent Workshop
February 25, 2020
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Mount



Agenda:

- Anxiety
 - What is Testing Anxiety?
 - Symptoms of Testing Anxiety
- Tips & Strategies
 - the home
 - before test
 - during test



Anxiety?

- What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress – **apprehension, tension, or uneasiness** – it helps you cope with tense situations. It is the body's natural response to stress.

ADULT EXAMPLES: Job interviews, seeing a doctor, public speaking



What are some causes of anxiety in children?

- Separation
- Socialization
- Major life changes (divorce, moving, new school year, etc)
- Changes for normal day routines
- Social Media
- Grades



Testing Anxiety

- Testing Anxiety - involves apprehensions of performing at levels below those at which we'd like to perform, or even apprehensions of failure.
 - This type of anxiety may be a product of our underestimating our abilities to perform or of the resources we have available to help us to perform to our desired levels on exams.
 - Conversely, exam anxiety may be a natural reaction to insufficient exam preparation.



Symptoms

Exam anxiety can result in:

Physical Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Perspiration, sweaty palms, feeling too hot or cold- Headaches, upset stomach, nausea- Rapid heart beat, shallow/irregular breathing, dizziness- Muscle tightness
Emotional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feeling guilty, angry, depressed or unsure
Behavioural Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Procrastination and avoidance- Excessive study- Over/Under eating; Poor nutrition- Sleeping too much or too little- Fatigue or inability to relax- Alcohol or drug misuse
Cognitive Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Negative or defeating self-talk- Excessive worry- Difficulty with concentration or focus- Difficulty retrieving or selecting key terms or concepts- Difficulty organizing, integrating or expressing your thoughts- Going blank on exam questions- Remembering the correct answers after the exam is over



What is testing anxiety sound like?

- "My head feels like it's in a clamp."
- "My stomach hurts."
- "I'm sweating."
- "I studied this stuff yesterday, why can't I remember?"
- "I can't think!"
- (After taking the test) "As soon as I leave the test, I remember everything."



When testing anxiety become problematic

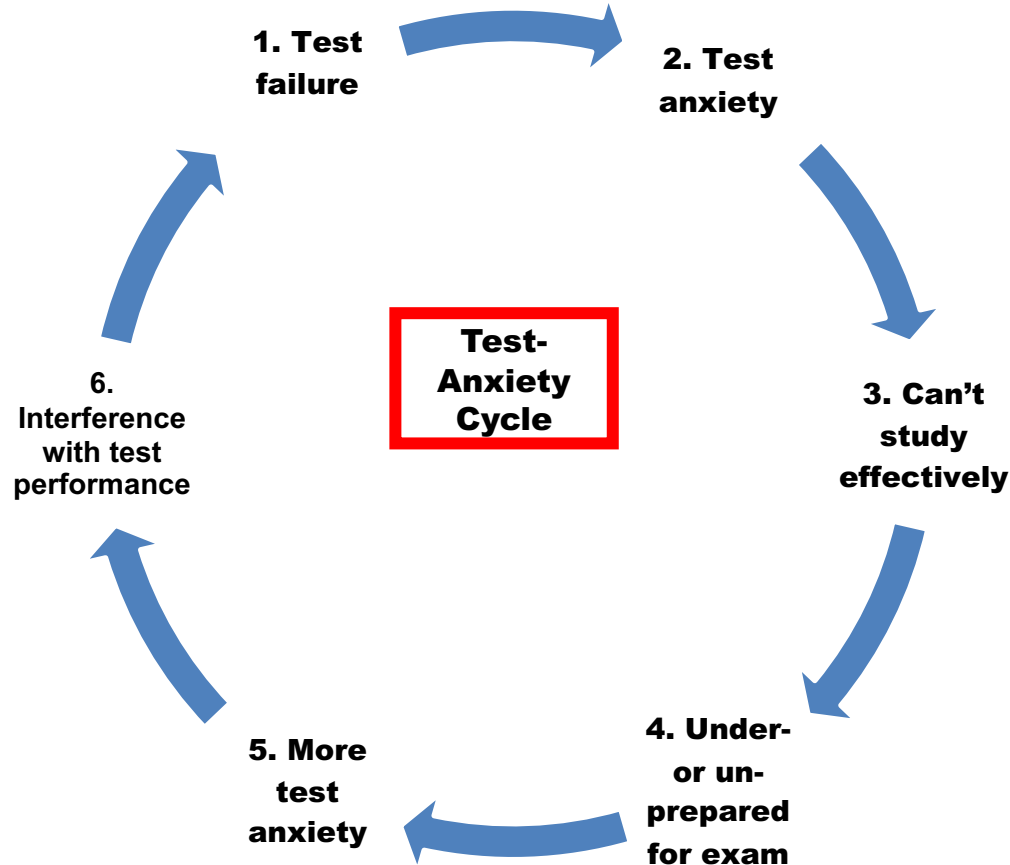
High levels of Test Anxiety

Interfere with your ability to

Prepare for, Think about

or

Take an Exam.



...Not a Bad Thing

- Please note: most of the time anxiety of a test is not a bad thing. It is a normal and natural response.
- Some physiological symptoms can be helpful: blood pumping, outburst of energy, mind races, etc.
- Some people say work well under stress



Tips & Strategies In the Home



Ways to Help

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Physical



Cognitive

- Prepare Well: Overlearn the Material
- Practice good time management
 - Space out your studying
 - Avoid procrastination
 - Eliminate cramming
- Use active study techniques
 - Review regularly, short periods of time

9. Take breaks. Attention is usually your age + 2.

12 years old + 2 = 14 minutes

11 years old + 2 = 13 minutes

10 years old + 2 = 12 minutes

9 years old + 2 = 11 minutes

8 years old + 2 = 10 minutes



Understanding Your Child's Learning Style

Different learning styles

- Auditory
 - Visual
 - Tactile
 - Other
-
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-JWFbww9OM>



Emotional

- Practice relaxation techniques – long and short
- Recite positive self-talk
- Use visualization
- Identify TA triggers and plan how they will cope with them
 - Ex: Instructor announcing the time
 - Consult a counselor if necessary
- Be patient!



The Power of Self Talk

- Preparation + the power of positive self-talk
 - “I am always calm and confident under pressure.”
 - “I can do it!”
 - “I am smart!”
 - “I am an amazing person!”



Physical Control

- Get exercise everyday
 - Clear out the stress hormones!
- Do something you enjoy everyday
- Practice relaxation techniques regularly
- Avoid cramming the night before tests
- Get enough rest and proper nutrition
- Set up a calm study environment



Test Taking Skills

- Teach your child test taking strategies.
 - Process of elimination
 - Key words
 - Come back later
 - Plug in
 - Flashcards
 - Make studying a game



Tips and Strategies Before Test Time



Before the test...

- Deep breath
- Focus on test and not what is going on around them
- Block out distractions
- Positive Messages
- Smile
- Be confident
- Relax, shoulder, neck roll
- Tighten fist, release
- Lucky pencil!



Tips and Strategies During Test Time



During test time...

First Impression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Read the directions first, review the entire exam, then read the directions again- Think of the exam as an opportunity to show off what you know (which may be more than you first think)
Organize Yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organize your time efficiently - work on the easier portions of the exam first<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ This can increase confidence and reduce anxiety- Pace yourself throughout the exam<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Check to see if you are rushing or getting behind
Tackling Exam Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Essay Questions: construct an outline to organize and avoid rambling, repetition, and missed information- Short-Answer Questions: answer only what is asked and keep it short and to the point- Multiple Choice Questions: read all alternatives then eliminate those that are incorrect<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Watch for qualifying words - "only", "always", "most"
Possible Fears	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Difficulty with a question: show the material that you do know- Think you're unable to finish the exam: concentrate on those portions that you can answer well- No time to review exam: review your answers as you go and recheck answers only if you have time



During test time...

If it starts to feel overwhelming...

Overcoming Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Slow down and become intentional about your physical movements, this can increase your sense of self-mastery and control- Use relaxation and visualization methods (ie. controlled breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualizing peak performance)- Stretch, stand up or walk around to relax tight muscles
Calming Distractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Focus on an inanimate, calming object (ie. Wall, floor, pen)- Perform a calming action (ie. Rubbing a stone)- Use a mantra (ie. Silently, slowly repeat a calming word/phrase)- Use affirmative self-talk (ie. Relax, concentrate, it's okay)- Create a mild, harmless pain that can override over other thoughts and impulses (ie. Pressing fingernails into palm)- Have a drink of water or a snack- Wear, touch or look at something with positive associations; this can trigger a calming response (ie. Photo, special stone)



After the test

Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Learn from the experience- Keep notes about what does and doesn't work for reducing exam anxiety- It helps to be strategic, intentional and creative in developing and applying an anxiety reduction plan
Reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- It's not helpful to punish yourself and mull over what didn't go well- Treat yourself well and give yourself a reward for your efforts
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review what worked well for you and increase your awareness of those assets and resources for the future- Review what didn't go as well so that you can develop new strategies- Continue to practice and develop relaxation and visualization methods



No Child Is The Same

- Each child has their own strengths.
- Praise is important.
- Acknowledge the effort.



Thank You!
Questions?
Please Take Handouts

