Overcoming Test Anxiety

Steps to Overcoming

Be prepared.
- There is no substitute for knowing the material. Study thoroughly with whatever techniques work best for you in accordance with your learning style.

Think positive
- Visualize success (I will do 8 points better than the last test.)
- Praise yourself (I am relaxed and doing a great job.)
- STOP negative thoughts or feelings

Learn to relax!
- Spend 10-20 minutes a day taking long, deep breaths, telling your muscles to relax and clearing your mind
- Do this as the test is distributed. It will help you to remain calm throughout the exam.

Practice self--testing!
As you study throughout the term, write your own test questions. Divide the chapters amongst classmates. Write questions and exchange to make up a “mock test.”
- Objective terms are good for drill, especially in a study group.
- For essays, make an outline for the answer; then begin writing.
- For math and some sciences, use old homework problems.
- Take a “mock test” in the room where you actually take the test. When you go to take the real test, you should find yourself more relaxed and confident.

DO I HAVE TEST ANXIETY?
Any uneasiness, tension, apprehension, or feelings of worry or fear associated with the three phases of the learning-testing cycle:
- Test Preparation
- Test Performance
- Test Reflection

Test anxiety can occur before, during or after the test.

Cognitive Symptoms--racing thoughts, self-comparison to others, difficulty concentrating, blanking out, negative thoughts of past performances

Emotional Symptoms--fear, anger, feeling helpless, guilt, shame, disappointment

Physical Symptoms--nausea, racing heart, excessive sweating, shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, dry mouth, tense muscles
Steps to Overcoming

Have an emergency plan!
You are well prepared and have done everything suggested above. But wait! You “freeze” in the test anyway. Use this formula: R.S.V.P.

♦ R-- is for respond.
♦ Recognize that your nerves are still getting the upper hand. Identify the feeling.

♦ S-- is for seize control.
♦ Realize that you are not helpless; you do not need to be a victim. Take three deep breaths and do a small version of the relaxation exercises you have been practicing.

♦ V-- is for visualization.
♦ Visualize successfully completing the test.

♦ P-- is for put.
♦ Put down what you can– start with anything: facts, formulas, a rephrasing of a question, anything. This may break the wall built up between you and the information you're trying to recall.

Get plenty of sleep
♦ It is recommended that you get at least 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

Eat a good breakfast
♦ Blueberries, nuts and eggs are all good brain power foods.

When the exam is over, treat yourself!


If you have been diagnosed with anxiety and are experiencing test anxiety, contact Brandie Blankenship in Student Accessibility Services.

330-888-6314 or bblank10@kent.edu.