

Test Anxiety and Test-Taking Strategies

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Causes of Testing Problems

➤ LACK of PREPARATION

- *Faulty **study habits***
- *Cramming versus Reviewing*
- *Poor communication*
- *Unsophisticated **test taking skills***

➤ PREPARED but still having issues

- *Poor sleeping & eating habits (caffeine, sugar)*
- *History of poor performance – learning issue*
- *Stress induced **ANXIETY***



What is Anxiety?

General term for feelings that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension and worrying.

- Anxiety is normal
- Anxiety is adaptive
- Anxiety is not dangerous
- Anxiety does not last forever




Prepared, but still having problems?

Test Anxiety

A physiological and psychological response to a perceived danger or threat.



Test Anxiety

 Worry, uneasiness, or fear you experience before, during or after a test.



Symptoms of Test Anxiety

Physiological

- *Upset Stomach*
- *Restlessness*
- *Sleep Problems*
- *Muscle Tension*
- *Headaches*
- *Back Pain*


Psychological

- *Confusion*
- *Memory Blocks*
- *Irritability*
- *Impaired Concentration*
- *Frustration*



Two types of Test Anxiety

Anticipatory:

-  Feelings of distress that happen while studying for or thinking about the exam

Situational:

-  Feelings of distress that happen while taking the exam

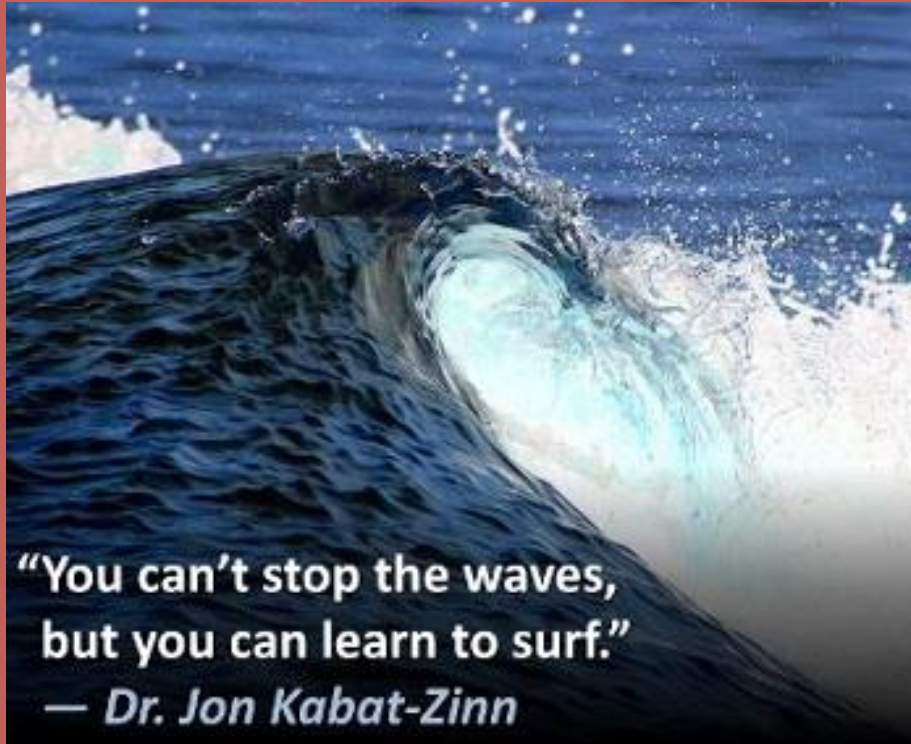


What are the causes test anxiety?

- Lack of preparation
- Fear of failure
- Past experiences
- Focusing too much on the outcome
- Comparing self to others
- Other stressors outside of school
- Bad experiences with taking test
- Worrying about the future
- Poor study habits
- Lack of stress management skills



Understanding the Wave of Anxiety



**"You can't stop the waves,
but you can learn to surf."
— Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn**



Gather as much information as you can

- Know as much as you can about your exams so you can study in a way that will help enhance your performance
- Read your syllabus
 - Know test dates
 - How will you be graded?
- Find out from your instructor what is on the test
 - Is it a couple of chapters?
 - Is it comprehensive?
 - Is it multiple choice? Essay? Short answer?
 - How much time will you have on the exam?
 - Will it be in the same classroom? Or, somewhere else?



During the test:

- Read directions carefully
- Budget your test taking time
- Move, stretch & breath to relax
- Positive self talk!
- If you go blank, skip the question and go on, be sure to return to it, though.
- If other students start handing in their test, remember there is no prize for finishing first, just re-focus on your task.



After the test:

- List what strategies worked, no matter how small = building block to mastery!
- List what did not work or what continues to cause you distress
- Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle!
- Analyze returned test- rework missed problems; determine what type of questions you missed and work on your test- taking strategies.



Questions???



Relaxation Techniques

Deep Breathing Exercise:

- ❧ Sit up Right, Exhale
- ❧ Inhale, and fill your belly with air. Relax your belly muscles
- ❧ Keep inhaling, fill up the middle of your chest. Feel your ribcage and chest expand
- ❧ Hold your breath and exhale slowly
- ❧ Relax your ribcage and chest
- ❧ Relax your mind and facial muscles
- ❧ Repeat 2 more times

