



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

HUMAN SERVICE CENTER - FSUS LOCATION

MENTAL HEALTH INFO FOR PARENTS:

TEST ANXIETY

How it affects your child and how you can help

What is it?

A type of performance anxiety related to test taking; similar to anxiety right before an important sport game, speech, or other similar life events

What it is not!

Anxiety caused by other stressors in the student's life unrelated to the test (e.g., death of a loved one).

Symptoms



Physical

- Sweating
- Shaking
- Butterflies in stomach
- Increased heart rate
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Possibly fainting



Mental

- Forgetting material you had studied
- Poor concentration
- Negative self-talk
- Racing thoughts
- Catastrophizing thoughts



Behavioral

- Avoidant behavior
- Fidgeting
- Sleeplessness
- Substance abuse



Emotional

- Anger
- Depression
- Decreased self-esteem
- Hopelessness



Causes

1. Fear of failure
2. Lack of preparation
3. Poor testing history

Princeton Review's Top 10 Ways to Overcome Test Anxiety

1. Be prepared - study, review difficult concepts and possible questions
2. Get a good night's sleep - good rest will help with mood and energy levels
3. Fuel up - a nutritional breakfast will provide a good source of energy throughout the day; avoid foods that can lead to sugar crashes.
4. Arrive early - the fear of being late will only increase your anxiety the day of the test; prepare everything you need to take the night before.
5. Keep a positive mental attitude - challenge negative self-talk with positive statements.
6. Read directions and questions carefully - slow down and stay focused
7. Just start - dive into the test after reviewing the instructions; you can always go back and review what you answered.
8. Focus only on yourself - don't pay attention to what anyone else is doing; it doesn't matter if the first person finishes while you are still working.
9. Watch the clock - mentally allocate how much time you will need for each question and try to keep that pace.
10. Focus on calm breathing and positive thoughts - deep breathing can calm racing thoughts and help relax your body, protecting against those anxious feelings.

Resources

<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/test-anxiety>

<https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/test-anxiety>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-test-anxiety-2795368>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/test-anxiety.html>