Helping Your Students Manage Midterm Test Anxiety

Midterm exams are just around the corner and many of your students may be experiencing test anxiety. Recognizing the signs and knowing how to help your students prepare for exams can assist them in managing their anxiety as the semester continues.

What is test anxiety?
Test anxiety occurs when we experience a high level of anxiety that negatively impacts our performance on exams.

- Sweaty palms
- Headache
- Upset stomach
- Rapid heart beat
- Tense muscles

Who gets test anxiety?
Anyone can experience test anxiety. It occurs most often when a student:

- is unfamiliar with the test or material
- is worried that they haven't mastered the subject being tested
- has negative thoughts about his/her performance before or during the exam

Preparing for or Anticipating Test Anxiety

Cause: You are unfamiliar with the test.
Strategy: Learn more about the test.
Ask questions- what are the topics? How many questions? How long? It's helpful to know what to expect, and this typically lessens the anxiety.

- Manage your time
- Schedule in study breaks
- Prioritize
- Form effective study groups

Cause: You haven't mastered the subject being tested.
Strategy: Make an organized study schedule and stick to it. Doing the hard work beforehand will help you feel less anxious during the test.

- Relax; you're in control. Take a slow, deep breath. We often forget to breathe during stressful situations.
- Just take it one question at a time.
- Think about what you can do in the moment and take a minute to pause before going back to the test.
- Keep the focus on the present.

Visit the biofeedback center at Student Counseling Services to learn ways to relax. Located in the Student Services Bldg, 3rd Floor Phone (515) 294-5056

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