How to Beat Test Anxiety

1. **Positive Self-Talk**
   a. View tests as challenges, learning opportunities, or competitions—something that sparks your motivation.
   b. Develop a believable mantra (or two) about why you will do well on the test.
   c. Practice using your mantra as you study.
   d. Before taking the test, remind yourself of all the ways you have studied and prepared.

2. **Deep Breathing**
   a. Use diaphragmatic breathing only. Your belly should rise and fall, and your chest should not move.
   b. Inhale through your nose for 6-8 counts.
   c. Hold your breath for 4 counts.
   d. Exhale for 6-8 counts, pushing the air out through pursed lips.
   e. Hold your breath for 4 counts.
   f. Repeat

3. **Act, Don’t Think**
   a. Actively read test questions by underlining key phrases.
   b. Write down what you know about a question as soon as you read it.
   c. Plan your answers on paper, not in your head.
   d. When stuck, write out all your options on paper along with the pros and cons of each.

4. **Thought Stopping**
   a. Notice times when your mind drifts off to worries about your performance.
   b. Cut off the thought immediately by breathing deeply, tapping your foot, or closing your eyes.
   c. Refuel yourself with positive talk (i.e. a mantra).
   d. Refocus on the test.

5. **Test Preparation to Reduce Anxiety**
   a. Be prepared!
   b. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the room
   c. Strive for a relaxed state of concentration. Avoid speaking with fellow students who express negativity
   d. Exercise
   e. Get a good night’s sleep
   f. Eat something before. Fresh fruits and vegetables are recommended to reduce stress. Stay away from processed foods, caffeine, and junk food.

6. **During the Test**
   a. Read the directions carefully
   b. Budget your test taking time
   c. If you go blank, skip the question and come back later
   d. Don’t panic when others finish before you
   e. Use positive self-talk, deep breathing, and thought stopping

*Everyone suffers from test anxiety to some degree. However, if test anxiety is unmanageable, you should seek professional help from the Counseling Center. 610-758-3880*