**Test & Performance Anxiety**

Anxiety is NOT the enemy. Moderate levels of anxiety can enhance our performance. However, too much anxiety can interfere with our ability to prepare and perform well.

**Preparation is Key**

- Avoid cramming. If you can’t cover everything, choose important sections you can cover well.
- When studying, quiz yourself on what questions you think will be asked, so it feels like you’ve been tested already.
- Organize your materials and meet with the professor or TA.
- Familiarize yourself with the test setting, and study or take a practice exam there, if possible.

**The Day of the Event**

- Minimize stress–talking with others and avoid negative self-talk.
- Remind yourself of all the ways you’ve prepared.
- Limit caffeine and sugar intake.
- Eat a healthy meal before your event so you have energy and aren’t hungry.
- Relax and move your body in the hour before the event to ease anxiety.

**During the Event**

- **Expect** and **accept** that you’ll feel some anxiety.
- Be **comfortable**, arrive early, and sit away from possible distractions.
- First **review** the entire test and read over the directions. Organize your time efficiently.
- **Focus** on what you know and answering the questions, not on your grades or others’ performance.

**After the Event**

- **Stop** for a moment to savor what went well.
- **Acknowledge** that you may notice anxiety while you await the results.
- **Remember** that exams only test what you know; they don’t reflect who you are as a person.
- **Remind yourself** you have options to deal with any outcome.
- **Reward** yourself and allow time to relax.
Relaxation Training

Practicing anxiety-reducing exercises like deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation while preparing for a test or performance can make the exercises more effective when you need them.

If you notice a spike in anxiety, engage in deep breathing:

- Inhale for 6-8 counts
- Hold your breath for 4 counts
- Exhale for 6-8 counts
- Hold your breath for 4 counts

Allow the belly to rise and fall, keeping the chest still, repeating this process until you feel more relaxed.

Campus Resources

Habif Health and Wellness Center

Medical Services: 314-935-6666
Mental Health Services: 314-935-6695
Health Promotion Services: 314-935-7139

Visiting Us

Habif is on the lower level of Dardick House on the South 40 on Shepley Drive. The Zenker Wellness Suite is in the Sumers Recreation Center (room 303).

habif.wustl.edu