COUNSELING CENTER
HAR-BER HIGH SCHOOL

WILDCAT WISDOM

Conquering Test Anxiety

What is Test Anxiety?
It's more than just being nervous. Test anxiety can cause:

- **Physical Symptoms:** Racing heart, sweating, stomach ache, headache, feeling dizzy.
- **Mental Symptoms:** Blanking out, difficulty concentrating, negative thoughts ("I'm going to fail"), feeling overwhelmed.
- **Behavioral Symptoms:** Avoiding studying, restlessness, fidgeting during the test.

Strategies to Help You Cope

1. **Before the Test:**
    - **Study Smart, Not Just Hard:** Don't cram! Start studying early, break material into chunks, and use active recall (quizzing yourself).
    - **Get Enough Sleep:** Aim for 8-10 hours the night before. A well-rested brain works better.
    - **Eat a Healthy Meal:** Fuel your brain with nutritious food. Avoid too much sugar or caffeine.
    - **Practice Relaxation:** Deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or visualization can calm your nerves.
    - **Positive Self-Talk:** Challenge negative thoughts. Replace "I can't do this" with "I've prepared, and I'll do my best."
    - **Know What to Expect:** Clarify with your teacher what the test format will be.
2. **During the Test:**
    - **Read Instructions Carefully:** Don't rush! Understand what's being asked.
    - **Pace Yourself:** Scan the whole test first to get a sense of the length and difficulty.
    - **Start with What You Know:** Answer easier questions first to build confidence.
    - **Take a Deep Breath:** If you feel yourself panicking, close your eyes for a few seconds and take several slow, deep breaths.
    - **Don't Get Stuck:** If you're struggling with a question, skip it and come back later.
    - **Visualize Success:** Imagine yourself calm and confident, doing well on the test.
3. **After the Test:**
    - **Don't Dwell:** Once it's over, it's over. Don't rehash every answer.
    - **Learn from It:** When you get your results, review what you did well and where you can improve for next time.

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What Parents/Guardians Need to Know & Can Do to Help

- **Listen Actively:** Validate your student's feelings without judgment. "It sounds like you're really stressed about this test."
- **Avoid Adding Pressure:** While wanting them to succeed is natural, avoid putting excessive pressure on grades. Focus on effort and learning.
- **Encourage Healthy Habits:** Support good sleep routines, balanced meals, and regular physical activity, especially around test times.
- **Help with Study Strategies:** Discuss their study methods. If they're struggling, help them research or find resources for effective study techniques.
- **Promote a Calm Environment:** Ensure a quiet space for studying and relaxation at home.
- **Focus on the Process, Not Just the Outcome:** Praise their effort and resilience, regardless of the test score.
- **Model Healthy Coping:** Show them how you manage your own stress.

Suggested Resources for Further Information:

- **Khan Academy:** Offers free online practice and tips for various subjects and test prep. (khanacademy.org)
- **Mindfulness Apps:** Apps like Calm or Headspace offer guided meditations for relaxation and stress reduction.
- **Anxiety & Depression Association of America (ADAA):** Provides resources on anxiety, including test anxiety. (adaa.org)

See Video Here➡️	Crash Course Study Skills #8: Test Anxiety	Ted-Ed: How to make stress your friend	Psych Hub Education: What Is Anxiety?
Why it's relevant➡️	This video directly addresses test anxiety, its causes, and practical strategies like expressive writing to manage it.	This inspiring TED Talk reframes stress as something that can be helpful, which is a powerful mindset shift for test anxiety.	Provides a clear, concise explanation of anxiety in general, helping students understand the root of their test-related feelings.