SOLUTIONS TO MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

Test anxiety can be treated and managed. If you feel you suffer from test anxiety, you can do the following:

• Practice techniques such as visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, meditation, and desensitization.

• Eat balanced meals, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly to alleviate stress.

• Do not compare yourself to others or to prior test experiences.

• Tell yourself positive messages such as “I will pass this test!”

• Prepare for your exams, and work on your organization, study habits and time management.

• See a counselor in the Queensborough Counseling Center. They will work with you on all the above suggestions, provide referrals if needed, and offer more solutions to help manage your anxiety successfully!

COUNSELING CENTER
Library Bldg., Room 422
Office: (718) 631-6370
www.qcc.cuny.edu/counseling

Hours:
Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays 8:45am-5pm
Tuesdays & Wednesdays 8:45am-7pm

Note: Office hours may change during winter and summer sessions.
What is Test Anxiety?

Anxiety is a nervous, fearful feeling that is internalized. It is a feeling of uncertainty that can spiral out of control, causing psychological and physical symptoms.

Test anxiety can be marked by a fear of not succeeding, and can be combined with fears of being embarrassed, observed, or evaluated. Before or even during an exam, these fears can become overwhelming, causing anxious feelings.

Test anxiety begins with the messages you tell yourself such as “I am going to fail,” “I don’t know why I should bother,” “I am stupid,” or “I have to get an A!” Feelings of failure and the pressures you place on yourself to perform will become too great. You have convinced yourself that you MUST get an “A” or, no matter what you do, you are going to fail. Past negative test grades may impact the feeling that you will “continue” to do poorly. The belief that you have no control over the outcome of the exam consumes your thoughts, actions, and feelings. This is when the anxiety sets in.

**PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS**
The physical symptoms of anxiety can be:

- shortness of breath
- heart palpitations
- dizziness
- sweating, shaking and/or trembling
- hot and cold flashes
- nausea or abdominal problems

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS**
You also may experience psychological symptoms:

- feelings of going crazy or losing control
- fear of dying
- difficulty organizing your thoughts
- sense of “going blank”
- inability to stay focused or concentrate

**CAUSES OF TEST ANXIETY**
Heredity, childhood circumstances and cumulative stressors over time can all cause anxiety. However, specific to testing, there are some concrete contributors than can elicit anxiety:

- Being unprepared for the exam. Not attending classes, doing work or studying will realistically compound the fear of failing.
- Negative/irrational messages you tell yourself.
- Personal or family pressures to succeed, over-achieve or “be perfect.”
- Poor time management, study habits, and procrastination.
- Prior failures or poor grades.
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem.
- Avoiding classes or exams entirely. Know that avoidance feeds anxiety. The more you avoid the situation, the more the anxiety will grow!