INSIGHTS INTO TEST ANXIETY

Signs of test anxiety

General symptoms:

- Memory lapse
- “Going blank”
- Mental confusion

Physiological symptoms:

- Rapid heart rate
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Cold hands
- Sweaty hands
- Stomach discomfort
- Headaches or muscle tension

Emotional symptoms:

- Fear of fainting or vomiting
- Irritability
- Tears
- Jitteriness

Prevention is the answer!

- Prepare…study ahead of time using best practices to boost recall, such as distributed practice (multiple review sessions over many weeks) and self-quizzing (mix up the content to test yourself and identify what you have not yet mastered).
- Attend review sessions.
- Check out study guides and websites.
- Work with a tutor.
- Study with others as long as they stay on task.
- Ask the professor for tips.
- Use outlines, lists, color-coding, mnemonics.
- Study in a room similar to the test location. Pretend you are taking the real test and practice calming yourself down.
- Take practice tests.
- Practice good stress management in general. Get enough sleep. Exercise regularly. Choose healthy foods. Take a moment every day to practice taking in ten deep breaths, breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth.
- Arrive at the testing site early. Avoid a last minute rush.
- Use positive self-statements instead of criticisms.
- Take slow, deep breaths during the test. Relax your shoulders often.
- Eat something (banana, baked potato, sandwich) an hour or so before the test. Avoid too much caffeine.