April 2024

THE COUNSELORS' CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the
Elementary Counseling Department

What's in this month's issue:

HELPING YOUR CHILD TACKLE TEST ANXIETY

As we navigate the educational journey with our children, it's crucial to address the various challenges they encounter, including test anxiety. Recent studies have shed light on the prevalence and impact of test anxiety on students across different ages and backgrounds. Here's a breakdown of insights and strategies to help you support your child through their test anxiety:

Recognizing the Signs of Test Anxiety:
Test anxiety isn't just about nerves; it can significantly impact a child's academic performance and overall well-being. Signs of test anxiety may manifest physically (ie, stomach aches or racing heart), mentally (ie, negative self-talk or irrational thinking), and behaviorally (ie, procrastination or irritability). Understanding these signs is the first step in providing effective support to your child.

Tips Before, During, and After the Exam:
Preparing your child to manage test anxiety involves proactive measures. Encourage them to set realistic expectations and visualize success rather than dwelling on worst-case scenarios. During the exam, guide them to create a clear plan, start with familiar questions, and utilize relaxation techniques to combat physical anxiety symptoms. After the test, engage in constructive conversations to reflect on what went well, what didn't, and how to improve for next time.

Parental Role in Supporting Children with Test Anxiety:
Parents play a crucial role in helping children manage test anxiety. By fostering open communication, focusing on effort rather than grades, and collaborating with educators to implement helpful accommodations, you can create a supportive environment conducive to your child's success.

Knowing When to Seek Further Assistance:
While occasional test anxiety is normal, persistent and severe symptoms may warrant professional intervention. If your child's test anxiety significantly impacts their academic performance and well-being, seeking guidance from a therapist trained in cognitive behavioral therapy can be beneficial.

Conclusion:
Test anxiety is a common challenge that many students face, but with proactive support from parents and educators, children can learn effective strategies to manage it. By recognizing the signs, providing guidance before, during, and after exams, and knowing when to seek further assistance, you can empower your child to navigate test anxiety and thrive academically.

Kademani, M. (2023, August 3). *What a child's test anxiety looks like*. UCLA Health. https://www.uclahealth.org/news/signs-test-anxiety-child-teens

Warner, A. (2023, February 17). *How to support a child with test anxiety | K-8 advice | U.S. news*. US News and World Report. https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/how-to-support-a-child-with-test-anxiety

Click here for Test Anxiety Tips for Parents from the UCLA Center for Child Anxiety Resilience Education and Research

TIPS FOR BEATING TEST ANXIETY

It is very common for students to get stressed out by taking tests. This is especially true for students who have anxiety, ADHD, or who overall may feel less confident about school. Additionally, worrying that they will not do well on the test makes it harder to focus in the moment, but there are strategies students can learn to manage this test anxiety during the test itself.

Break Things Up*:* When beginning to feel panicked, students can find a way to change their focus. Encourage your child to break up their routine in order to calmly complete the test. For example, skipping the first page and going back to it, or starting the test from the back and working towards the front.

Practice Calming Techniques: Practicing coping skills prior to a test is important in beating out test anxiety. For instance, deep breathing, mindfulness, positive self-talk, and holding any sort of stress ball or fidget are common strategies.

Accept When You Don't Know Something: Sometimes the best way to manage test anxiety is accept that we may not know the answer to every question – and that's okay! If that happens, encourage your child to move onto the next question and give that question another go at the end.

Positive Self-Talk: Having the right attitude is the key in ensuring success on a test. Make sure to encourage your child and promote any positive thinking to boost their confidence prior to a test. To your child, remind them that it's just one test, they know the material, and one test does not define them. Remember, it's all about doing their best!

Click Here to read the full article.

DID YOU KNOW?

Throughout our SEL curriculum, students will learn to identify and manage feelings of stress and anxiety by using coping skills across diverse situations.

TRY IT AT HOME!

Make Worry Stones!

Worry stones are a fun and creative way to help kids self-regulate. Children can rub the stone which will help soothe and calm them, along with helping them focus.

Materials needed: Polymer clay, foil for pan

Click here for a tutorial on how to make Worry Stones.

SEL BOOKS OF THE MONTH