

Helping students manage: **Test Anxiety**

Melanie OKeefe
School Psychologist
Suffern Central School District

What is Test Anxiety?

Test anxiety is a psychological condition where individuals experience extreme stress or fear **before** and/or **during** a test.

Test Anxiety is:

- Not uncommon
- Not a formal diagnosis or disability
- Not a standalone criteria for 504/IEP

Why does it matter?

- Can affect academic performance and mental well-being
- Can impact long-term self-esteem and confidence

Common Symptoms of Test Anxiety include:

Emotional- overwhelmed, sad, irritable

Behavioral - procrastination, avoidance of studying/tests/school

Physical - headache, stomach ache, sweating, difficulty sleeping

Cognitive - trouble concentrating, blanking out, negative thinking and self talk

Causes of Test Anxiety

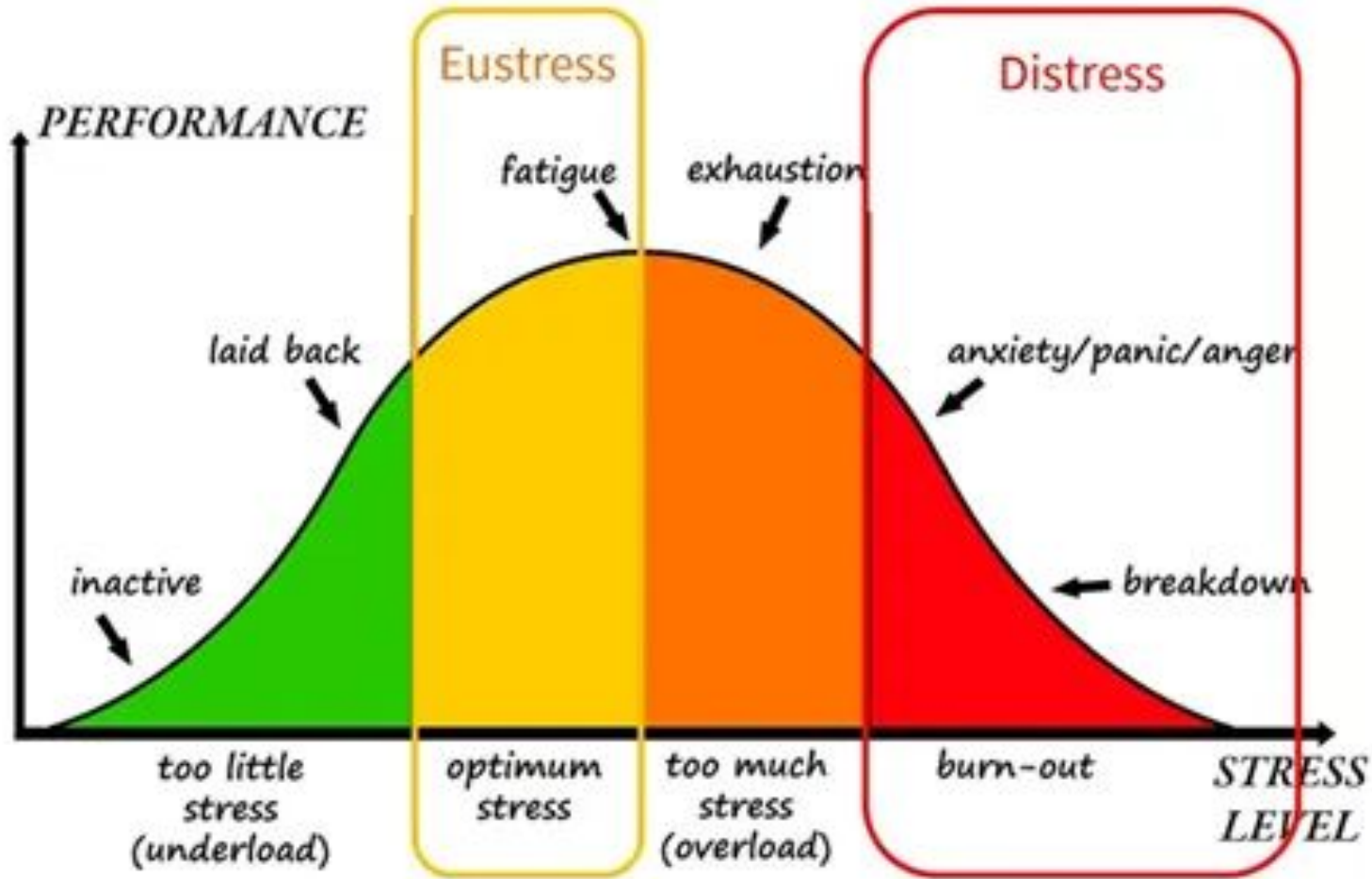


Realistic Fears

Unfounded Fears

Perfectionism

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF STRESS – EUSTRESS AND DISTRESS



Source: the Yerkes-Dodson Law & Amishi Jha

How can we help?

- Normalize feelings-
focus on how to manage
- Encourage preparation
and healthy routines
- Relaxation techniques
- Promote positive or
neutral thinking
- Effort over outcome



Research Says...

Write your anxieties away



Reappraising anxiety as excitement



Don't worry, Plan!

- inspired by School Counseling Essentials (TPT)



TEST NAME: → TEST DATE:

Before Test

Positive Mantra: ← Ways I will Prepare for Test:

During Test:

Accommodations to Use:

If I get Stuck: → Calming Techniques to Use:

Test Anxiety is common and can be managed!

QUESTIONS?

Melanie OKeefe
mokeefe@sufferncentral.org