The “Test Anxiety” Checkup!

Take the “Test Anxiety Quiz” to find out if you have test anxiety!

1) Does your mind go “blank” during tests? YES or NO
2) Do you have difficulty thinking clearly during tests? YES or NO
3) Do you have a hard time understanding and remembering directions when taking a test? YES or NO
4) During an exam do you feel as though you studied all the wrong information? YES or NO
5) When taking a test, do you think about past failures? YES or NO
6) Do you worry that you are doing poorly on a test and that everyone else is doing well? YES or NO
7) Do you experience headaches, stomachaches, or body pain prior or during an exam? YES or NO
8) Do you feel panic and jittery before/during an exam? YES or NO

Minimal amounts of test anxiety are typical, but severe anxiety can negatively affect your academic performance. If you answered YES to most of the questions listed above you may benefit from talking with a professional counselor to better understand the root causes of test anxiety and recognize ways to overcome test anxiety throughout your college years. IUN Counseling Services offers free and confidential services to all IUN students who are enrolled on at least a part-time basis. The IUN Counseling Office has licensed professional social workers and counselors who are trained to meet the specific needs of college students!
WHAT CAUSES YOUR TEST ANXIETY?

If you are like most test-anxious students, your anxiety results from several common causes:

1. Being afraid that you won't live up to the expectations of important people in your life; worrying that you will lose the affection of people you care about if you don’t succeed;
2. Believing grades are an estimation of your personal worth;
3. Placing too much emphasis on a single test;
4. Giving in to guilt feelings or anxiety as a result of inadequate preparation for tests;
5. Feeling helpless, believing that you have no control over your performance or grades.

Expectations. Many students’ perceptions of what their parents or important others expect are inaccurate. If you worry that you will alienate people you care about unless you do well in college, you may become fearful and anxious that you will disappoint them or make them angry. If you believe that you can’t live up to the expectations of others, tests may make you especially anxious.

Grades and Self-Esteem. A grade of D, F, or even C for some students translates into —I'm stupid“ or —I’m not college material.” These feelings may lead to a loss of self-esteem and more anxiety. Students who equate test grades with self-worth are assigning more importance to grades than they deserve. One real value of testing is that it gives you an opportunity to find out what information you understand well enough to associate with material that you will learn later. Before your next exam, you can give this material a quick review. Mistakes on a test pinpoint areas that you need to study more thoroughly for the next exam.

Feelings of Helplessness. If you have an external locus of control, you may not see the connection between study and grades. You may become anxious because you cannot predict the outcome of a test. Even if your locus of control is internal, you may feel temporarily helpless in a testing situation when you know you have not studied enough. Feeling guilty for not meeting your responsibilities may cause you to experience test anxiety.

Once you have identified the cause(s) of your test anxiety, there are steps you can take to eliminate it. Call the IUN Counseling Office @ 219-980-6741 to develop proactive strategies for decreasing test anxiety!