We gain strength and courage and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... We must do that which we think we cannot.

Eleanor Roosevelt
Marcia S. Seeberg, MS, LMHC

20 years experience as a Mental Health Counselor
TEST TAKING ANXIETY

and

What You Can Do About It
What we will cover today

I. Test Anxiety Quiz
II. Components of anxiety
III. Anxiety Disorders
IV. Basic things you can do to reduce anxiety
V. 2 Experiences in reducing anxiety
I. Test Anxiety Quiz

True or False

1. I have a hard time getting started studying for the test.
2. I have trouble sleeping & lay awake worrying about the exam or even dream about the exam.
3. I expect to do poorly no matter how much I study.
4. While studying I often feel a sense of hopelessness & dread.
5. The day of the exam I either don’t eat or overeat.
6. I often yawn while studying or taking the exam.
7. During the exam I feel confused or panic.
8. I experience sweaty palms
9. Mental blocks (brain lock, short circuit.)
10. During exams I have headaches, vomiting or faintness.
11. After the exam I pretend it meant nothing, it was meaningless.
12. After an exam I sometimes feel depressed or angry.
13. As a rule I view test taking a stressful situation and dread it.
14. I do great on assignments & papers, but poorly on tests.
II. Components of anxiety

A. Emotional component
B. Cognitive
C. Physical
D. Source – Basal Ganglia Problems
II. Components of Anxiety

D. Basal Ganglia – SPECT scans - Daniel Amen MD

1. Location – Set of large structures toward center of brain surrounding the deep limbic system

2. Problems with Basal Ganglia - over or under active
   Source – Genetic and Environment

3. One function - Set body’s “idle speed” of anxiety level
II. Components of Anxiety

B. Cognitive

1. Worry – Hallmark of anxiety – “What if?”
2. Mental Blank out
3. Racing thoughts – no focus
4. ANTS – Automatic negative thoughts
   - Negative cognitions
   - Beliefs and Attitude
   a. Examples
   b. Source
      (1) Past
      (2) Present
      (3) Future
II. Physical

C. Physical

1. Symptoms
   - Dry mouth
   - Cold clammy hands
   - Tense muscles
   - Trembling/shaking
   - Palpitations
   - Hyperventilation
   - Faintness/Dizziness
   - Sweating
   - Nausea/Cramps
   - Diarrhea
   - Frequent urination

2. Triggers
   - Too hot
   - Too cold
   - Tired
   - Hormone changes
     - Cycles
     - Menopause
III. Anxiety Disorders

- A. GAD – Generalized anxiety disorder
- B. Panic Disorder
- C. OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- D. Phobias
- E. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
IV. What you can do

A. Basics
   ◦ 1. Get enough sleep
   ◦ 2. Nutrition
   ◦ 3. Exercise – Exercise – Exercise!
   ◦ 4. Lifestyle and relationship issues
   ◦ 5. Develop good study and test taking skills
IV. What you can do

B. Pay attention to your thinking
   Beliefs/Attitudes/ANTS – self talk

   ◦ 1. Be aware of it
   ◦ 2. Challenge it
   ◦ 3. Change it
IV. What you can do

C. Relaxation – The Foundation
   ◦ 1. Abdominal breathing
   ◦ 2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
   ◦ 3. Visualization
   ◦ 4. Meditation
   ◦ 5. Guided Imagery
   ◦ 6. Biofeedback
   ◦ 7. Yoga
   ◦ 8. Calming Music
IV. What you can do

D. Dr. Amen’s Basal Ganglia Prescription

1. Kill the fortune telling ants
   a. Write down the event or thought causing anxiety
   b. Write down the automatic negative thought (ANT)
   c. Label the thought as a “fortune telling ANT”
   d. Kill the ant by writing down a thought to defuse the negative one

   • *Remember – thoughts are just thoughts – You don’t have to believe every one that comes into your mind*
D. Dr. Amen’s Basal Ganglia Prescription

2. Use Guided Imagery
3. Diaphragmatic Breathing
   ◦ Practice 5 to 10 minutes a day to settle down BG
4. Meditation or Self Hypnosis
5. 18/40/60 Rule

When you’re 18, you worry about what everybody is thinking of you
When you’re 40, you don’t give a damn about what anybody thinks of you.
When you’re 60, you realize nobody’s been thinking about you at all.
E. 2 Powerful Tools to Reduce Anxiety

- **1. Safe Place**
  - Visualization

- **2. Freeze Frame**
  - Attention
  - Breathing
  - Emotion
Steps of Freeze Frame Exercise

- Think of a stressful event (exam)
  1. Acknowledge the feeling and FF – Stop
  2. Take 2 deep belly breaths
  3. Shift your focus to heart
  4. Imagine you are breathing into and out of your heart
  5. Recall a positive feeling.
  6. Tap into your sense of reality, common sense or intuition
I. Symptoms of Test Anxiety

II. Components of anxiety

III. Anxiety Disorders

IV. Basic behaviors to reduce anxiety

V. 2 Anxiety reduction tools