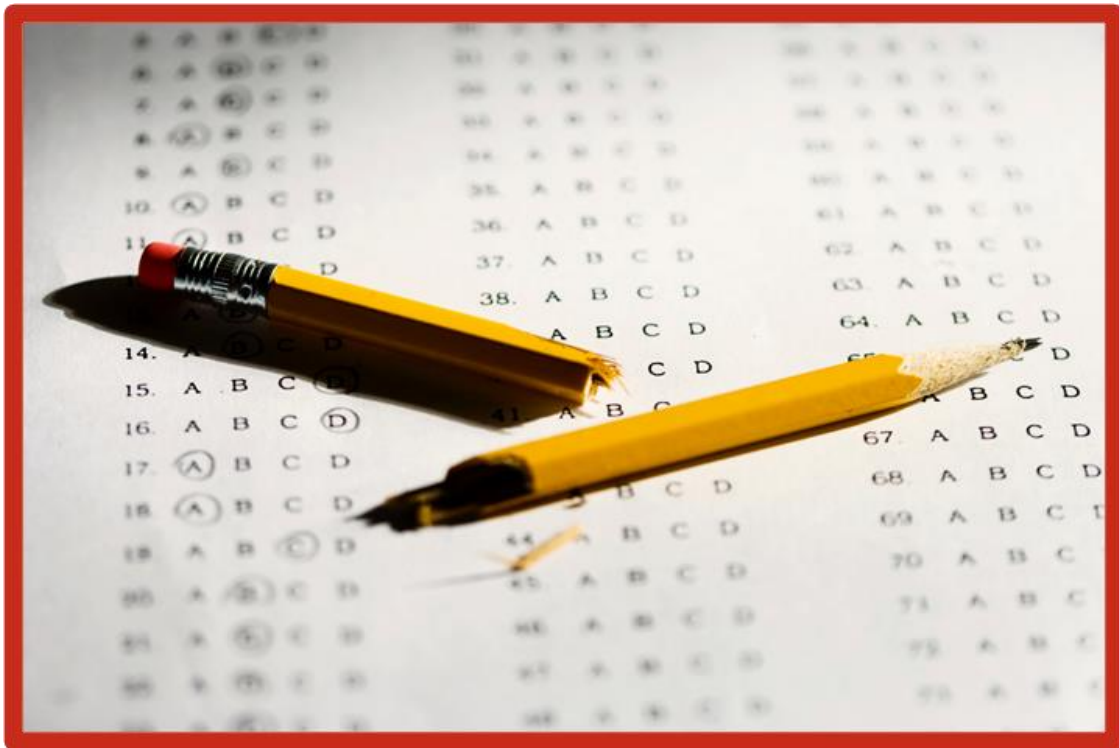


NEW MEXICO 4-H

Aggie Next Step

Managing Stress Test Anxiety



Post Secondary Pathways



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Managing Stress: Test Anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Almost everyone feels nervous before a test or exam, but when anxiety becomes intense, it's called test anxiety. This type of anxiety can affect students physically, emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively. In this lesson, participants will explore the causes and effects of test anxiety, learn strategies to manage it, and create a personal action plan to perform at their best.

SET UP

Review lesson materials and determine which worksheets and handouts you will use for the lesson. Print enough pre/post assessments, worksheets, and handouts for each participant.

ACTIVITY

1. Have participants complete the **Pre-assessment**.
2. Begin with a "Quick Write" activity. Hand out 3 sticky notes to each participant. Say: *Write down 2-3 words or short phrases that describe how you usually feel right before or during a test (1 per sticky note). Don't overthink it – just the first words that come to mind.*
3. Students then place their sticky notes on the board. As they post, encourage them to read what others have written, identify patterns, and organize sticky notes together.
4. Reflect as a whole group by pointing out patterns: *I see a lot of words like nervous, blank, sweaty, stress – these are all signs of test anxiety. Some of you even wrote "confident" – and that's great too. Everyone experiences tests differently. Now, let's look at what test anxiety really is, what causes it, and how it affects the body and brain.*
5. Distribute **Stress & Test Anxiety: Causes and Effects**. Review the causes and effects as a group. Provide examples or ask students to share participants to share situations they've experienced that match the causes or effects. Ask students to circle any causes or effects they personally notice/experience.

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils
- Sticky notes

OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- **Recognize** the causes and effects of test anxiety.
- **Identify** physical, emotional, and mental signs of test-related stress.
- **Identify** strategies to manage test anxiety.
- **Create** an action plan they can use before, during, and/or after a test.



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6. Distribute *Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety* and *Managing Test Anxiety* handouts. Ask participants to read through quietly first and highlight or circle tips/strategies that feel most useful or familiar.
7. Each student should write a short action plan for managing test anxiety (located at the bottom of the *Managing Test Anxiety* handout).
8. If time allows, have participants pair up to share their action plans and commit to checking in with each other before the next test. This encourages ownership rather than passively receiving information.
9. *Exit Ticket* – depending on time, this can be done as a class discussion, or students can complete the worksheet in class, as homework, or in the following class.
- 10. Have participants complete *Post-assessment*.**

WRAP UP

By recognizing your anxiety and using practical strategies, you can reduce stress and improve test performance. Applying these techniques consistently helps not just with exams, but with managing challenges in everyday life.



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RESOURCES

NM Standards:

NM PED Standards: Career and Technical Education (CTE):

CTE 2.1.1: Select and employ appropriate reading strategies

CTE 2.1.9: Listen to and speak with diverse individuals to enhance communication skills

CTE 3.1.1: Employ critical thinking skills to solve problems

CTE 6.2.1: Understand health and safety standards and concepts

Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) Standards: Career Ready Practices (CRP):

CRP-3: Attend to personal health and financial well-being

Optional ELA Alignment (Grades 6-12):

SL1: Participate in a range of conversations

Video Resources:

Note: Please preview all videos before showing them to students to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant, and aligned with your classroom needs.

Exam Anxiety: The Science of Learning and Fear

<https://youtu.be/D64TZ-wcLCY?si=bTz1jFnrkX6j2NDH>

Test Anxiety

<https://youtu.be/4FsgwLWdSS8?si=uQvURoEvb6BEBDrM>

5 Tips for Coping with Test Anxiety (for kids!)

https://youtu.be/sDYx9qM_ygg?si=5LxvEX_QV6PJxTER

Conquering Exam Stress: Lessons from our Bodies

<https://youtu.be/-RZ86OB9hw4?si=YRFohUwVYAIK94Ra>



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