

February 2010

Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- ▲ Difficulty getting into study mode
- ▲ Things become routine...school finally becomes home
- ▲ Missing family and friends at home, and friends who did not return to school
- ▲ Cliques become stronger within residence hall communities, student organizations and in classes
- ▲ Cabin fever and burnout
- ▲ Pressures to figure out living plans for next year as the room assignment process draws near
- ▲ Valentine's Day depression if not dating
- ▲ Vocational choice/internship search causes anxiety
- ▲ Spring break planning underway
- ▲ Worries begin about summer jobs and internship experience

Test Anxiety: Is Your Student Performing at His Best?

Imagine: You've studied hard and you feel prepared for the exam you are about to take. You sit down in class and your professor begins passing out the exam. Suddenly, you blank out—completely. You are frozen and feel so nervous that you can't get it together. You can't remember any of the answers you knew without hesitation last night.

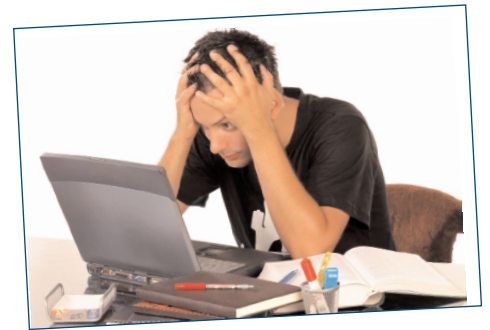
This is what it's like to have test anxiety—and some college students experience test anxiety so strongly that it interferes with their concentration or performance.

What is Test Anxiety?

Test anxiety is actually a type of performance anxiety, which occurs in a situation where someone might have to do really well. Just like when someone feels pressure on the opening night of a play or during a big competition, test anxiety can cause a stomachache, a tension headache, a racing heartbeat and more. Someone with a severe case of test anxiety might actually feel like he could pass out or be sick.

Who Gets Test Anxiety?

Anyone can experience test anxiety, but those most likely to have trouble with test taking are those who worry a lot or who are perfectionists. Additionally, when a student doesn't



prepare for a test but really wants to do well, he might experience test anxiety.

How Can Students Combat Test Anxiety?

You can help your student prepare to take—and do well—on exams by sharing the following tips:

- **Handle stress in a positive way.** Stress is the body's warning mechanism, and in this case, it can remind you to do what needs to be prepared. Instead of complaining or worrying, let stress serve as a guide for planning out a study strategy.
- **Get help when needed.** If you are getting so stressed about a test that you are forgetting everything you know, you might want

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to talk with a counselor or your academic advisor. They can offer some additional coping strategies.

- **Develop a study schedule.** The more students study, the more prepared they feel. Developing a study plan—and sticking to it—can reduce your test anxiety because you’ll feel more confident and expect to do well.
- **Think positively.** Acting and thinking positively generally ends in positive results. Sending negative messages to yourself can contribute to anxiety.
- **Be accepting of mistakes.** Nobody is perfect—and nobody expects that you are. Doing your best is the best you can do.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat well and get a good night’s sleep leading up to the test. This will keep your mind working at its best.

Learning to manage the stress that comes along with performing will help your student in so many ways, beyond just taking tests.

Take Care of Your Heart This Valentine’s Day

Yes, Valentine’s Day is about hearts. But it doesn’t have to just be about the “lovey-dovey” kind. Valentine’s Day can also be about taking care of your own heart. After all, if you love your heart, it will be ready to love others, right?



Here are four ways you can encourage your student to focus on loving her heart this Valentine’s Day:

- **Maintain a Healthy Diet and Watch Your Weight.** One of the biggest things you can do to love your heart is to eat foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and salt. High fiber foods are also great for your heart, as are plenty of fruits and veggies. If you eat a healthy diet, it will be easier to watch your weight.
- **Exercise, and Exercise Some More.** When you exercise, your heart rate increases, which builds up your strength and endurance. Try to get daily exercise if you can, but at least work up a sweat three times a week. This is how your heart gets the workout it needs.
- **Take Care of Your Blood Pressure.** High blood pressure is very bad for your heart. One way you can take care of your blood pressure is to try reducing stress and anxiety, as both can take a real toll on your body.
- **Keep Your Heart Clean.** If you smoke, take drugs or drink alcohol excessively, you make your heart work extra hard. And your heart can only do this for so long.

You and your student can also take advantage of the Heart Health Toolbox by heading to www.americanheart.org and typing “Heart Health Toolbox” in the search box. This website is a great starting point on the journey to a healthy, well-loved heart.

Celebrating Valentine’s Day Creatively

Who says Valentine’s Day is just for those who are dating or married? Valentine’s Day is about love! Show your love for your student this month by...

- ✍ Sending a gift basket with your student’s favorite treats from home
- ✍ Making a CD mix or mp3 compilation with songs your student loves or songs from her childhood
- ✍ Calling or writing to share some of your favorite stories from her childhood
- ✍ Putting together a family newsletter dedicated to your student—have siblings and extended family members write “articles,” submit pictures and more!
- ✍ Sending a creative e-card or mail message (visit www.careerbuilder.com/monk-e-mail/ for information on Monk-e-mail)
- ✍ Mailing a fun “romantic” movie and some microwave popcorn, a pair of cute heart pajamas or undies, or cool room decor

Tick, Tock!

12 Ways Your Student Can Beat the Clock

February is Time Management Month. Here are 12 time management tips you can share with your student:

1. **Write Things Down.** You have far too much going on to remember everything you have to do. Use a planner or notebook to keep track of assignments, engagements and other goings on.
2. **Set Realistic “To Do” Lists.** Maintain realistic goals and you won’t be disappointed when you don’t finish everything.
3. **Control Your Surroundings.** You can’t control the noise throughout your house, but you can control where you set yourself up to concentrate on a task. Don’t waste time getting frustrated. Instead, do whatever you can do to stay on task.
4. **Get the Tough Stuff Done First.** You’ll get more done in the long run if you do the stuff that requires more of your mental energy first. Plus, you’ll spend your day less stressed.
5. **Do One Thing at a Time.** Multitasking isn’t all it’s cracked up to be—in fact, multitasking can actually make things take longer.
6. **Break Big Tasks Up into Smaller Tasks.** Don’t let yourself get overwhelmed with big projects. Break them up into smaller tasks and tackle a piece each day. You’ll feel productive and confident.
7. **Don’t Wait Until the Last Minute.** You never know what might crop up. Nothing is more stressful than cramming.
8. **Motivate Yourself with Rewards.** Halfway through a project? Head out to grab a quick cup of coffee or go for a 20-minute workout. Using things you like as rewards

will keep you motivated during the long hours—and will likely help you speed up your work.

9. **Remember That All of Your Time is Equally Important.** Go, go, go. That’s what life is all about, right? It doesn’t have to be. Hanging out and relaxing are just as important as completing a task. Balance is where it’s at.
10. **Use Your Time Wisely.** Procrastinating isn’t a good idea. Get the tasks you need to do—without wasting time—and then

you’ll have more time to do the things you enjoy!

11. **Give Yourself Some Leeway.** Someone will always need your help just when you have something else to do. Make sure you maintain some flexibility in your schedule to accommodate these interruptions.
12. **Don’t Forget about Sleep.** It can’t be said enough: sleep is incredibly important. If you don’t get enough, everything will suffer.

Focusing on Relationship Wellness

Strong, healthy relationships take nurturing and tending to. Encourage your student to spend time with someone he loves with these fun, free “date” ideas:

- Grab food “to go” from the dining hall and have a picnic on a quiet grassy knoll on campus.
- Visit a local nature center or park and take a stroll.
- Go to a bookstore and peruse books of places you would like to travel.
- Make up fun scavenger hunts for one another and see who can gather all of the items the fastest.
- Volunteer together at a local soup kitchen or animal shelter.
- Go to a campus event, such as an athletic contest or educational speaker.
- Have a game night.
- Make some hot chocolate, bundle up and sit under the stars.
- Go to the Alumni Office and learn about the history of the campus.
- Give each other hand and foot massages.
- Study together for an upcoming exam.
- Borrow a movie from a friend or sign one out of the library and watch it together.
- Build a snowman (or snow village) together.
- Go to the recreation center and play basketball or swim and dive in the pool.
- Make picture collages to post in each of your rooms.



February is Relationship Wellness Month. Encourage your student to make the time she spends with others this month about loving others in thoughtful, simple ways.

Teach Students How to Market Themselves

In today's tight job market, you can assure your student that the skills and experience he has gained are in high demand. However, he can't just let people guess what he has to offer...he needs to share it.

Remind your student that his name is a brand, telling people what they're going to get when they hire him. Is he trustworthy? Responsible? A hard worker? Smart? Innovative? Someone with a good attitude? Encourage your student to explore these questions for himself.

Students also need to understand that

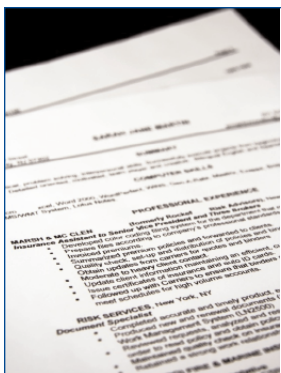
branding is about emphasizing what makes them stand out.

What would your student say about him-

self? What would others say? Suggest that your student ask a few trusted friends and mentors this question. Then invite him to think about how his special features benefit others and how he can communicate those benefits.

As your student "brands" himself for the job search, he needs to think about a few things:

- How do I add value to the things I'm involved with?
- What are some characteristics that I'm proud of?
- What are my interests and passions?
- How do I make myself visible to others?
- What makes me stand out?



Examples You Can Offer...

Student Experience

- Served as a tutor
- Planned events with a group
- Designed theater sets
- Coordinated an intramurals team
- Presented research in class
- Created organization's social network
- Organizational fundraising
- Promoted programs on campus
- Managed peer staff

Transferable Skills

- Teaching, working with diverse people
- Teamwork, event planning, multi-tasking
- Building, planning, facilitating
- Coaching, organizing, teamwork, motivation
- Public speaking, teaching
- Using new media, technological skills
- Sales, organization, outreach, cooperation
- Marketing, PR, writing
- Supervising, delegating, evaluating

Translation and Transferability

You can also educate your student about the importance of translating transferable skills. Part of branding himself effectively is focusing on transferable skills rather than just what he knows or has learned.

What is a transferable skill? It is a core skill that most employers value and that students can take with them to apply to professional roles. Encourage your student to consider how he has demonstrated the following:

- **Leadership**—campus positions, job roles, committees and group projects
- **Trainability**—able to take direction and open to learning
- **Reliability**—punctual, meets deadlines, time management
- **Management**—administration, supervision, training
- **Trustworthiness**—handling confidential information
- **Teamwork**—collaboration, common vision, mutual goals
- **Diversity**—travels, immersion into diverse cultures, a second language

And ask him how he can translate these skill sets in a way that makes sense within the jobs for which he applies.

In today's job market, employers are looking not just at what responsibilities an applicant had, but what they ACCOMPLISHED! Employers are more results-oriented than ever before. Hands-on experiences, with supportive supervisors and mentors, can provide students with the opportunity to "sell" the results they have achieved.

Ultimately, your student needs to let potential employers know who he is, what he stands for and what makes him a potential asset to their organization in order to even be considered for hire.

