

REVIEWING FOR EXAMS

a helpful guide from the Academic Support Center

HOW TO MANAGE TEST ANXIETY

Moderate test anxiety is a normal part of taking a quiz or exam. In fact, a little bit of anxiety can heighten your senses and increase your focus and attention to detail. Unfortunately, it can be easy to become overwhelmed when faced with difficult material or a particularly long exam.

“True” test anxiety is more than just a feeling of nervousness. Some of the symptoms include an inability to focus during the exam, excessive negative thoughts (self-talk), and ‘blanking’ on exam but recalling the material afterward. Physical symptoms can include pounding heartbeat, rapid pulse, muscle tension, sweating, nausea.

Although everyone handles anxiety differently, there are some strategies to manage test anxiety or avoid the more serious symptoms:

- Set up a study plan and prepare over a five to seven day period

- Get sufficient rest for at least two nights before the exam

- Focus on your knowledge and preparation using positive self-talk

- Use recitation strategies to engage multiple learning modalities and connect key facts and concepts

Using the In-Class Review

Most university students realize that instructors use part or all of the class session before an exam to review material and answer students’ questions. Here are some ways to get the most out of an instructor-led review:

- Arrive on time and be ready to take notes

- Bring notes from readings and previous lectures, including any lecture slides or instructor-created diagrams

- Bring your textbook to mark key paragraphs and examples

- Ask how assigned homework will reflect the possible questions on the exam

- Ask how to use any graded quizzes to study for the exam

- Have questions to ask during the review, especially if you have attempted any study guide examples or practice test questions

- Make sure that you know one other person in class who is there for the review so you can compare your notes and check for missing information