**Understanding Test Anxiety**

**WHAT IS TEST ANXIETY AND WHY CAN IT OCCUR?**
- “Test anxiety is a feeling of agitation and distress associated with test taking, which impacts your ability to study or perform on the test” (SHCS UC Davis, 2019).
- Can occur due to pressure of *perfectionism* which is a set of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors aimed at excessively high and unattainable goals.

**HOW DO STRESS AND TEST ANXIETY RELATE TO EACH OTHER?**
- **Eustress 😊** – A form of stress having a beneficial effect on health, motivation, performance, and well-being.
- **Distress 😞** – A form of stress with negative implications and causes poor performance.

**WHAT SYMPTOMS CAN OCCUR DUE TO TEST ANXIETY?**
- Can experience physical, emotional, or behavioral symptoms.
  - **Physical** – nausea, headache, rapid heartbeat, excessive sweating
  - **Emotional** – fear of failure, stress, disappointment, helplessness
  - **Behavioral** – comparing yourself to others, thinking negatively, difficulty concentrating, procrastination

**SO, WHAT CAN BE DONE TO OVERCOME TEST ANXIETY?**
- Achieve resilience through **academic buoyancy!**
  - Academic buoyancy is defined as “a students’ ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life” (Martin and Marsh, 2008).
  - Utilize the 5c’s of academic buoyancy to set yourself up for success and overcome test anxiety!
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❖ WHAT ARE THE 5 C’S OF ACADEMIC BUOYANCY: (IN MARTIN & MARSH, 2008)

**Composure**
(low anxiety)
The ability to remain calm in an anxiety provoking situation and replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

**Confidence**
(self efficacy)
The ability to accept and face your fears and obtain belief in your ability to complete a given task.

**Commitment**
(persistence)
The ability to set your own goals, stay on task, resist distractions, and recover from setbacks.

**Control**
(low uncertain control)
The ability to feel/know that you are in control of your own learning and the way you attribute the causes of success and failure.

**Coordination**
(planning)
The ability to plan, monitor, manage, and complete tasks within a specific timeframe.

❖ TIPS TO REDUCE TEST ANXIETY AND ACHIEVE ACADEMIC BUOYANCY:

**BEFORE EXAM:**
- Ask professor or TA about the format of the exam.
- Create and follow a study schedule.
- Replicate the testing environment.
- Practice and self-test.
- Do not cram!!!
- Take proper care of yourself – eat and sleep well!

**DURING EXAM:**
- Arrive early and dress comfortably.
- Calm your body, thoughts, and emotions, and engage in positive self-talk.
- Read the exam one-time through before answering questions.
- Do all problems you are sure of first – go with your first instinct!
- Focus only on yourself and work at a reasonable pace.

**AFTER EXAM:**
- Relax and reward yourself – you’re done with it!
- Write down how you can improve your test taking approach, and what worked/what didn’t work in preparing and taking the exam.
- Note the kinds of questions you missed and keep those available when it comes to future exams.