

Slide
1

Test Taking and
Student Anxiety

Colleen Daly Martinez, PhD, LCSW, RPT-S

Slide
2

Format of today's webinar

History/background
Impact
Identification
Prevention
Intervention/Treatment
Q&A
coping skills

Slide
3

Test anxiety

- Behavior
 - > Procrastination, avoidance
- Cognition
 - > Worry, irrelevant thinking
- Physiology
 - > Tension, arousal

Lowe, et al, 2008; Zeidner, 2009

Slide

4

Background

- “We live in a test-conscious, test-giving culture in which the lives of people are in part determined by their test performance.”
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
 - > Annual standardized testing starting at grade 3
 - > Publicly reported
 - > Rewards and sanctions
 - > HIGH STAKES

Sarason, 1959, p.26

Slide

5

COPING SKILL #1

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOPYIA

Slide

6

- Individual characteristics?
- Dynamic process?

```
graph LR; A[Evaluative context] --> B[Individual characteristics]; B --> A;
```

Zeidner, 1998

Slide

7

Measuring test anxiety

- Self report
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Children's Test Anxiety Scale (Wren and Benson, 2004) dgwren@aol.com

Slide

8

other signs of test anxiety

- Tearfulness
- Attention seeking behaviors
- Constant search for reassurance

(McDonald, 2001)

Slide

9

COPING SKILL # 2

Challenging cognitive distortions

```
graph TD; thought[thought] <--> behavior[behavior]; thought <--> feeling[feeling]; behavior <--> feeling;
```

http://www.apsu.edu/sites/apsu.edu/files/counseling/COGNITIVE_0.pdf

Slide
10

Prevalence

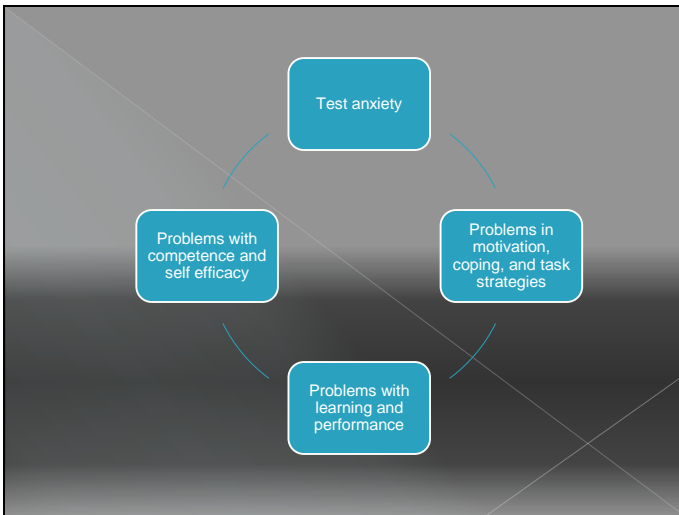
- Estimates of between 10% (King & Ollendick, 1989) and 41% (Turner, et al., 1993) of school aged children
- Higher in students with disabilities, non whites and females (von der Embse, 2013)
- Documented in children as young as 7.
- Generalized anxiety disorder?

Slide
11

Impact of test anxiety

- Impaired test performance
- Impaired learning, attention, working memory, failure to organize semantic information effectively, problem solving
Zeidner, 1998
- Negative impact on GPA
- High levels, more likely to drop out
- Reduces motivation, heightens stress
Cizek & Burg, 2006

Slide
12



Slide
13

COPING SKILL #3

- Guided imagery
- http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu/units/health_ed/stress_audio/beach_txt.html
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XB68u20sYa4>

Slide
14

Test Anxiety and High Stakes Tests

- 335 students, Grades 3-5, classroom tests and high stakes tests.
- Anxiety higher on high stakes tests
- Girls: higher anxiety than boys on both classroom and high stakes tests
- Teachers: perceived higher student anxiety before high stakes tests, but the same during
- Teachers experience more anxiety about high stakes tests

Segool, et al., 2013

Slide
15

- When teachers are anxious about tests, they change their methods and do more test prep (Abrams, et al., 2003)
- Teacher anxiety may increase student anxiety (Doyal & Forsyth, 1973)

Slide
16

COPING SKILL #4

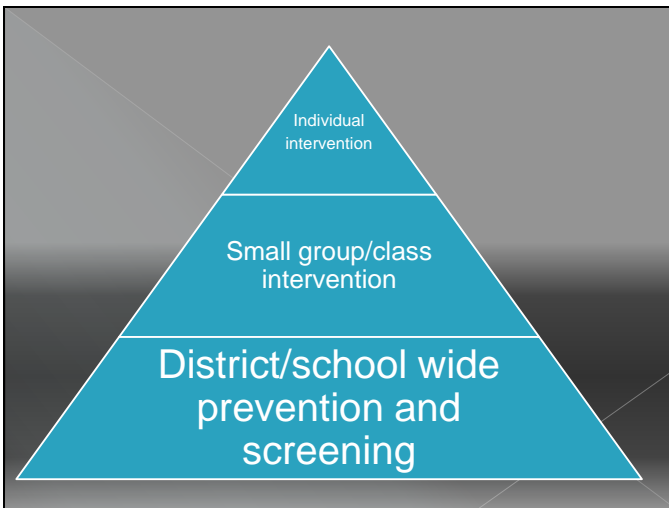
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- <http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/relaxation-for-children.html>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaTDNYjK-Gw>

Slide
17

Schools and test anxiety

- District and School wide
 - > Prevention and intervention
 - > Staff consultation; Train teachers on relaxation techniques
 - > Screening for all
- Small group
 - > Relaxation
 - > Cognitive behavioral (Larson et al., 2010)
 - > Psychoeducation
 - > Academic skill building / study skills (Zeidner, 2009)
 - > Test taking skills (Carter, 2005)
- Individual
 - > Biofeedback (Bradley, et al., 2010)

Slide
18



Slide
19

Test Anxiety & What You Can Do About It (Casbarro, 2005)

- Be careful how you communicate the importance of the test (admin and teachers)
- Guided relaxation techniques before testing
- Teach coping skills to students

Slide
20

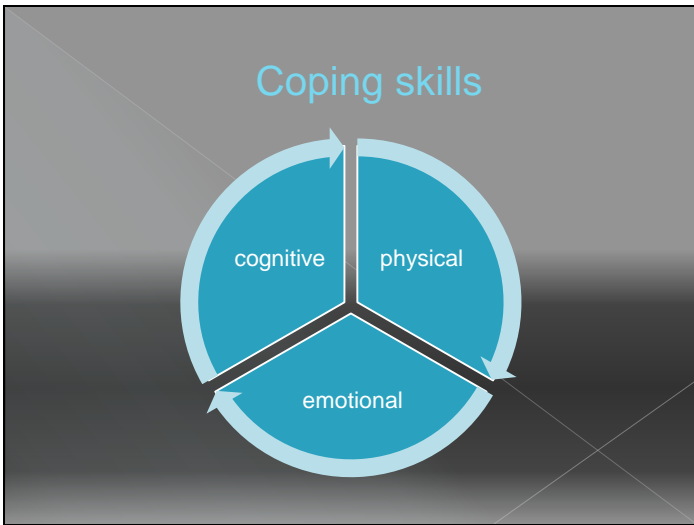
COPING SKILL #5

- “The Power Pose” - Amy Cuddy
- <http://www.exed.hbs.edu/assets/Documents/psyche-automatic.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-Mh1QhMc>

Slide
21



Slide
22



Slide
23

- more ideas
- Generalized anxiety/ Test anxiety
 - Be careful how you communicate priorities
 - Sleep
 - Exercise (yoga/meditation/martial arts/dance)
 - Nutrition
 - Teach and MODEL coping skills
 - Undiagnosed learning disabilities/challenges?
 - You are your child's best advocate!

Slide
24

Thank you for your participation.

Questions and discussion.

Find me on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Colleen-Daly-Martinez-Consultation-and-Supervision/111989215493736>
and Google Blogger
<http://colleendalymartinez.blogspot.com/>
