Transcript

NSCC. (2020, September 15). *Test anxiety: What can I do* [Video]? YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Trt-kcmeGjw&t=2s>

Hi everyone, my name is Bert Thompson. I work as one of the counselors at the Nova Scotia

community college here at the Truro campus. Test anxiety is a very common experience

for students including here at nscc. It's very frustrating and aggravating when we know that

anxiety is getting in the way of us doing our best work and performing in the way that we know

we can. I will be sharing some strategies with you around thoughts and feelings and how to

respond differently to those. My colleague Rose will be sharing some strategies specific to our

physical responses to anxiety. Anxiety is absolutely changeable and we have the ability to do

that if we commit and practice. Some of the things that we'll speak to you about today so take

heart. Know that anxiety is normal and there are ways absolutely where we can have anxiety

work for us rather than against us. Also know that the strategies we're talking about today are

specific to test anxiety but they can serve you well in many areas of your life. Let's talk about

anxiety in general for just a moment. Anxiety is not anyone's favorite emotion. It does not feel

good but it does serve a purpose with human beings and that's a bit of an alarm system it alerts

us to a possible threat and actually enables us to take action and lets us know that something's

coming up that we need to be ready for and as we talked about in the introduction it actually

leads to changes in our thinking and feeling and in the way that our body feels. So I will talk

about the first one which is our feelings part and what we can do to intervene with that

so the feelings that we have clearly are anxiety nervousness worry

apprehension maybe dread. All of those kinds of emotional experiences that tend

not to feel very good to us at all and it can be very easy to struggle with these emotions and just

kind of wish they weren't there or try and push them aside which doesn't really help us very

much. So i'm going to say for your first strategy if you can name it you can tame it and all that

really means is if you can slow yourself down notice how you're feeling as you're

feeling it and saying it sort of to yourself in your head saying something like oh there's anxiety

that's okay. So just naming it calling it what it is trying not to struggle with it can actually help

reduce the level of anxiety that you have. The second point that I'd like to make concerns are

cognitive functioning and what I'll refer to as self-talk. Self-talk is the thinking patterns that

happen in our brain that are happening all the time. Oftentimes we're not noticing that it's

happening and when it comes to anxiety and test anxiety it might sound something like I'm

going to fail, what's wrong with me why does everyone else seem like they're okay if I fail this

test I'm going to fail the term I'll fail this program and I won't have the career that I want or the

life that I want. You can see that if those kinds of thoughts are on steady loop inside our brains

that they actually serve a bit like throwing gasoline on a fire and really keep our anxiety at a high

level. What we want to do is try and replace those catastrophizing thoughts with more

reasonable realistic and calming thoughts. Things like I have studied for this test, I know how to

calm myself down, this is one test, I can see that I'm feeling anxious and that's okay. Those

kinds of thoughts actually help ground us and keep our anxiety from growing and will also of

course let us perform better on the test.

Hello my name is Rose McNeil and I work for the nscc Truro campus Sport and Wellness

Center. I'm a certified personal trainer and a yoga teacher. When you experience test anxiety

your mind can get overwhelmed with worry and this worry can trigger a nervous system

response in your body and this might show up with excessive sweating a pounding heart

an upset stomach muscle tension a headache and maybe even a panic attack. You might also

feel as though you cannot remember anything that you've studied or maybe that your mind has

gone blank. This can add to your anxiety. In this state stress hormones are released in your

body and this can interfere with your ability to stay calm and focused and although this response

is involuntary you can control or manipulate this influence and these physical states and even

your mental and emotional state with controlled breathing. We like to call this breath work

when you slow down and control your breathing and practice the breathing exercise that I will be

sharing with you today your blood pressure and your heart rate will naturally lower and your

body will also shift in to a more calm and focused nervous system response and this response

is a much better state for you to be writing your test. The breath work exercise that I would

like to share with you today involves an inhale through the nose for four counts a one count

pause an exhale through the mouth for six counts and another one count pause. Before we start

I'd like you to find a comfortable place whether that is seated or lying down and just allow your

body to relax and feel heavy in your chair or on the floor. I'd also like you to just take a few

moments to notice your breath. Notice your breath entering your body and notice it leaving your

body. I'll be doing the counting for you let's get started.

inhale pause exhale

pause inhale

pause exhale

pause inhale

pause exhale pause

There are many breathing exercises and free apps that you may want to experiment with for

relaxation breathing. Just like anything that you may have tried to master in your life the more

you practice the easier it gets you.