

Session 6 – Test-taking Skills

Activity 2 – Help!

Read the situations below. Look for causes and solutions in each situation. Write down what you feel the cause of each situation might be. Then write down a solution you feel might make the situation better. Use Worksheet 1 to help you complete this form.

I'm Juanita, and I'm close to failing two subjects. I want to pass so badly and I try harder and harder. I check with my teacher constantly about when the next test will be, then I study hard and worry about it each night. As the test gets closer, I get more and more nervous. I worry, "Can I pass this test? What if I mess up like I did the last time? Have I studied enough?" By the time I go take the test, I am almost shaking and have already decided there is no way that I will pass.

What is Juanita doing wrong?

How can Juanita improve her test scores?

Hi, kids! My name is Carolyn. Science is fun. I talk to the boy behind me, write notes to my friend Renee, or look out the window to see who is passing by. When the teacher calls on me for an answer to a question, I usually just say, "Huh?" and everyone laughs. A big test is coming up and one of my friends asked me if I was going to pass it. I just shrugged my shoulders and said, "I don't know. Who cares?" But I'm really a little scared.

What is Carolyn doing wrong?

How can Carolyn improve her test scores?

Session 6 – Test Tenses
Continued...

I'm Jamal and I am going to be a baseball star. I am on a city league team. After school, I practice every afternoon until 5:30 p.m. When I get home, I eat, and then watch some TV. I usually start my homework about 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. I have a big test coming up in English, but I haven't found much time to study. Besides, I would rather play baseball than anything, especially studying. But, I am a little worried about this test.

What is Jamal doing wrong?

How can Jamal improve his test scores?

I had a big test in social studies today. Oh, I'm Jessica. Last night, I came home, did my other homework, ate supper, then watched a little television. Then, I went to my room and listened to the radio while I looked over my social studies notes for the test. When I took the test, I didn't know the answers to most of the questions. I told my best friend later, "I'm so mad. I studied for an hour for that social studies test and I know I still failed."

What is Jessica doing wrong?

How can Jessica improve her test scores?

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Activity 3 – Relaxation Scripts

Script #1

Settle back in your seat (or on the floor) and get comfortable in your space. Squint your eyes and tense your face as if you were on a sandy beach looking into the bright sun. Now feel the cool breeze blowing and relax every muscle in your face. Close your eyelids and relax your mouth.

Pull your shoulders up toward your ears. Imagine a heavy brick on each shoulder and how much exertion it takes to lift your shoulders. Now imagine the bricks falling away and your shoulders are free, loose and very relaxed.

Now make a fist as tight as you can. Flex every muscle in your arm. Command all your strength and power to go into those arm muscles. Now relax your arms, wrists and hands. Allow your arms to go limp, to droop at your side or rest in your lap.

Pull your stomach in as tight as you can. Imagine you are trying to squeeze through a very narrow crack in a rock wall. Tighten those stomach muscles. You made it through. Now you can relax all those muscles in your stomach and take a deep breath, filling your diaphragm and stomach with air.

Try to press your ankles together as tightly as you can. Hold that position, pressing them closer and closer together. Now let your legs fall apart loosely. Let them hang heavy from your chair (or sink heavily into the floor). Press your feet against the floor as hard as you can (bend knees to do this if lying on the floor). Try to push a hole right through the floor. Now the floor has dropped out from under your feet. Let them dangle loosely.

Now we will take three slow, deep breaths, counting to 10 with each one, inhaling on 1-5 and exhaling on 6-10. Fill your stomach, diaphragm and lungs with oxygen completely filling them up until there is no space left – and then exhale all the stale air out slowly.

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Activity 3 – Relaxation Scripts, continued...

Script #2

Close your eyes. Tense your whole body for a moment as you take a deep breath. Hold the tension and hold your breath for a moment. Now let go and exhale, letting your whole body relax. Let go and relax even more. Your whole body can let go and feel really peaceful and comfortable.

Picture all of the tension in your head and face coming together into a big knot in your forehead. Study the knot for a moment. Concentrate on it. Now let it dissolve and melt, letting all the tension go from your head and face.

Now imagine all the tension in your throat coming together in a knot. In this knot are the unspoken needs and feelings you have held back, all of the feelings you've swallowed. Put all of those tensions in the knot, then let it untie. The knot melts and dissolves, taking all of the tension with it.

Now imagine all the tension in your stomach in a big knot down there. Feel it, see it, and understand it. Now let the knot untie. Let all your tension melt and dissolve.

Imagine that a big knot holds all of the rest of the tension in your body. Study the knot for a moment, feel it, understand it. Now let it untie. Let it melt and dissolve. All of the tension drains from your body.

Now imagine that all the tensions between you and other people around you are a bunch of knots. Tensions build up around us, making knots between us and others. Feel and understand the knots. Now let them untie, dissolving and melting all of the tension from between you. Then feel and enjoy the relaxation... no knots between you.

And when you are ready, slowly open your eyes, stretch, and get up feeling refreshed and alert.

Session 6 – Test-taking Tips

Worksheet 1 – Before the Test, During the Test, After the Test

Before the Test

1. Get plenty of sleep the night before the test.
2. Don't take a test when you are hungry.
3. Eat your breakfast or lunch.
4. Be on time.
5. Have all materials ready for testing.
6. Review all notes.

During the Test

1. Read all directions thoroughly.
2. Ask questions if you do not understand any directions.
3. Work steadily and accurately. It is not necessary to rush.
4. Work on the questions you can answer easily, go back to the hard ones.
5. Have a positive attitude.
6. Do not be distracted by others.

After the Test

1. Check all answers for mistakes.
2. Do not make a lot of changes; most of the time your first choice is the correct answer.
3. Keep working until the instructor tells you to stop.

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Worksheet 2 – Test-taking Strategies

True/False Questions

1. Look for absolute words like never, always, all and every. Answers to these questions are usually false.
2. Look for doubting words like sometimes, many and usually. Think carefully on questions with these types of words.
3. If you are unsure how to answer the question, it is usually best to go with your first thought.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Cross out the answers you know are incorrect.
2. Select the best answer from the ones that are left.

Fill-In the Blank Questions

1. Careful studying and memorizing is needed for this type of question.

Essay Questions

1. There are three types of essay questions
 - a. Comparing: Comparing of two or more things
 - b. Explaining: Telling about something
 - c. Listing: Making a list
2. Make a brief outline of what you want to include in your answer.
3. Be sure each sentence contains a different idea.

Matching Questions

1. First, match the answers you are sure you know.
2. Mark off the answers you use to prevent using them twice.
3. Use your best guesses on the remaining questions.

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Worksheet 3 – Test-taking Strategies

READ THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY. Know what is expected of you.

LOOK AT THE TEST. Spot areas that will require more time. Leave time to work on these parts of the test.

ANSWER THE EASIEST QUESTIONS FIRST. Put a mark beside the harder ones to come back to.

ANSWER EVERY QUESTION, GUESSING IF YOU MUST. If you find yourself getting nervous, stop a moment. Breathe deeply. Know that you can do it.

BE AS NEAT AS YOU CAN, BUT DO NOT SACRIFICE IDEAS FOR NEATNESS.

If it's an essay question and you don't have time to finish, WRITE YOUR FACTS DOWN IN OUTLINE FORM. You will be given some points for knowing what you're doing.

NEVER GIVE UP. Others may be finding it hard also. You can't tell how it will count.

REMEMBER YOU HAVE LEARNED HOW TO LEARN. It will pay off!

Session 6 – Test-taking Tips

Activity 1 – Follow Directions

How good are you at following directions? Find out by doing this simple exercise.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. First read everything before you do anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this page.
3. Circle the word “Name” in step #2.
4. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
5. Write an “X” in each of the squares you drew in the upper left-hand corner.
6. Sign your name under the heading, “Activity 21,” at the top of this page.
7. Then write, “It’s Important to Follow Directions.”
8. Draw a circle around step #7.
9. Write an “X” in the lower left-hand corner of this page and draw a circle around it.
10. Multiply 70 by 30 and write the answer here: _____.
11. Draw a circle around the word “page” in step #6.
12. Call out your first name so everyone can hear it.
13. Add 107 and 234 and write your answer here: _____ Now circle your answer.
14. If you have followed each direction so far, call out, “I have followed all the directions.”
15. Underline all the even numbers in this set of directions.
16. Count backwards, out loud from 10 to 1.
17. Do only what is asked of you in step 2. Then sit quietly and wait for everyone else to show you how good they are at following directions.

What did you just learn about following directions? How will this help you the next time you have to take a test?