

And just a brief intro. My name is Dave Welter. I'm one of the counseling interns at the UCA counseling center. So I'm a master's student in the mental health counseling program. I was going to have a co-host today, but she got held up with client. So we're just gonna roll with it. I appreciate some folks turning cameras on. Much appreciated. All right. So we're just going to kind of jump right into it. And let me get this started. Is Okay. Can I get some thumbs up if you can see the Powerpoint ready to roll? Anybody? Thank you. Appreciate that. Ok, let's get this going. So today of course, our theme is going to be on decreasing your test anxiety. As I said, my name's Dave Welter. Stephanie couldn't be with us today, but she's here with us in spirit. And this is being sponsored through, of course, the office of student success. And we appreciate getting the chance to talk to you guys today. So quick preview, we're gonna go over like what is test anxiety? Why does it happen? What we shouldn't do what we should do. And kind of a little bit of addendum for tests in the era of Covid because some things changed, of course, a quick resource list for students, and then a quick Q and A session. So if you have any questions, if you want, you can save them for the end or you put them in the chat and we'll address them when we get there. Whatever you're comfortable with. So let's get rolling. So we're going to be talking about test anxiety. So if you find it's hitting home, feel free to give us a call, come make an appointment. We're all comfortable talking about it. And that's what we're here for to help out with whatever you need. I'm going to kinda discuss it as if the world is normal. Because positive thinking, hoping it'll be there eventually. And so still talking about some in-person tests, some testing centers without all of the zoom and online test, other than a couple of things at the end, I'll be kind of talking about some professional advice, what the evidence shows, and then also giving some personal examples. I am someone who has had a lot of test anxiety over the years. So some funny stories, feel free, laugh, no judgment. Then of course, Q&A submissions, like I said, if you want to put them in the chat or save them at the end, we can do that. And I appreciate the cameras because in it is really weird presenting this way. If any of you have done zoom yet. So test anxiety. It's really related to performance anxiety. And performance anxiety can be anything where you're getting up and you're being evaluated your being judged, you're being graded. Whether it's like a band performance, a dance, or even singing karaoke in front of friends, a speech. Anything that puts out evaluation and gives that power to others. And of course we're talking about it related to tests. But a lot of these same strategies to deal with it can help with other areas too. So kinda talking about anxiety, you have to look at the difference between the stress and anxiety. Stress is kind of our response to a stimulus, something that happens in our environment. And anxiety is kind of the worry about those feelings. Whether we're dwelling on them, anticipating them, or just struggling to kind of get through them. And a lot of that relates to that fight flight freeze response. So we talk about the fight and flight pretty often. It's our body's natural way of seeing a threat and getting ready to respond, whether it's, you know, to stand up to it or to bail. But there's also the freeze response where we're so worried that doing fight or flight would cause us harm, that we freeze. It's kinda like a rabbit when it sees a predator, well, humans can do that too. So that is our bodies like defense system to fight flight or freeze whenever we feel stress. The problem is with test anxiety, our body doesn't know that the test is not a situation that we necessarily need to fight flight or freeze at. And that can kind of interfere with taking a nice calm test. Some of the kind of common symptoms, common presentations of test anxiety, kinda go into three realms. So we've got cognitive, what we're thinking about, racing thoughts, comparing ourselves to others, difficulty concentrating, blanking out negative thoughts of past performances. I didn't do well. I'm going to fail at this. Well then you don't do well, you fail at it and it kind of repeats. And then of course, catastrophic thinking, if it can go wrong, that's what we're thinking will happen. Then we've got the emotional responses, whether it's fear, anger, helplessness, hopelessness, guilt, shame,

disappointment, feeling inferior. Those, those emotions that we feel. And then the physical symptoms where our bodies actually reacting to that stress and anxiety. We feel nauseous, racing heart, excessive sweating, shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, dry mouth, muscle tension, feeling that tenseness, jaw clenching, things like that, and it can even lead to vomiting and diarrhea. Obviously, those are pretty extreme. Each person's presentation and kind of combination of those factors will be different. It will be unique to them. But people tend to have the same set. So if you're kind of a racing thoughts heartbeating person, that will tend to be your form of testing anxiety. But all of these and in any combination can be affecting people. So this is kind of my catastrophic descent. I like to call it, via word art. And it's kind of funny when you think of a test leading to just, you know, the worst possible outcome. And I tell it to clients when we're talking about test anxiety to kind of give a rating scale to see where they are, and it kind of goes something like this. The test isn't going well. You're thinking I'm going to fail this test. Well, if I fail this test, I'm going to fail the class. If I can't get my test grade up, well I'm going to lose my scholarship and then I'm going to have dropout and I'm never going to get a job. And then the ellipsis here because everything that can go wrong will go wrong whether it's shaming family. No one loves you. Career over and homeless in a cardboard box under a bridge. So obviously that's very extreme and it's not meant to be realistic. But when I tell people this, I ask them kind of where they are. And a lot of times it's that fail the class, lose scholarship, kind of test anxiety. So it's like a rating scale. If you're just worried about failing test and fail in class, probably kinda low test anxiety, if you start hitting those, fail class, lose scholarship, drop out well the test anxiety is increasing this one test is somehow now leading to your entire future. So we've got some serious anxiety to talk about. My personal example was a time when I was little kid, was eight years old. It was a school music class, no sticks. I think the people who did the best got a piece of candy. But I was convinced that because my parents were music majors and I was doing poorly on the test, I was going to lose their affection, I'd get disowned and like have nowhere to go. Like eight year old going down the spiral, right? So don't be that that little kid. Why does it happen? So one study said that the biggest reason that people have test anxiety is they get to a test and like, oh no, this is not what I studied for and it's that shock, that surprise. Also like when you get a pop quiz and you just haven't prepared for it. I think that's more of the kind of general when people feel test anxiety, not necessarily the people with chronic test anxiety. And I think those folks, it's usually more of the pressure, whether it's pressure put on family for high expectations, or you come in with a bad grade and they really go after you, you gotta do better, you've gotta perform, whether you compare yourself to friends and expect you know, well they do well so do I. Teachers now with all of their standardized tests and having their salaries and everything else determined by your test grades can put pressure on students. Obviously, there's the self, I've gotta do better. Those catastrophic thinking. If I don't do well on this then downward spiral. And then there's the self-concept. And I like to say that is different from self because this is where you're like, I am a straight A student, therefore, if I don't get this, then who am I? And it's this, you've tied in grades with yourself. And then anything that threatens that of course is really threatening that, that core being, which can be really hard. And others reasons it might happen is kind of like what I talked about earlier with the ambivalent threat response. So our bodies don't know that what we're freaking out about is not a life or death situation. It's kind of reading the signals you're sending as like same as a bear in the woods. And I'll get into that example later. And then of course, learned experiences. So we're highly adept at learning, even not just memorizing facts, but when we get in situations, we take in a lot of extra information we don't even think about. So when we're in that situation in the future, if it has caused us stress and physical reactions in the past and it's negative experience. We, our bodies will immediately start kind of keying

up for that when we enter that situation. Then we've got the metacognition. So that's our fancy word of saying how you think about your thinking, that, that sense of knowing. So if you're thinking about a test and you know that you don't know what's on it. You're going to, the anxieties going to spike. And then of course, underlying anxiety, anxiety conditions. People with kind of the worst test anxiety, chronic test anxiety tend to also have kind of generalized anxiety issues. Which again, if this has hit home on anything, give us a call. We're here to help. So let's start with what not to do. And of course the first is don't panic. Now jokes aside. Don't assume that just saying "oh, you need to relax. Just relax." All that kind of needs to be done. If we could just say just relax and that solved everything. We'd station a bunch of people around campus at entrances on finals week they'd walk in and you'd be like, hey, you, relax. And test anxiety solved. That doesn't work. So assume you need to actually put some effort into managing that test anxiety. Avoid the all night cram session. So the way our memories work, we encode things better when we're not stressed. So if you've ever done that all night cram session and you managed to make it to the test on time, and you managed to get through it. And you walk out the door and you have like forgotten everything you just studied. That's because that stress level is high and the memory isn't encoding efficiently. So okay, you made it through this test. But what about the comprehensive final? What about the class next year? That assumes that you learned this. You've got to learn it all over again. Obviously you don't wanna do that. So if you learn it more efficiently the first time, you have to learn it fewer times overall. If you're someone who caffeinates, I am definitely a morning and afternoon coffee drinker. Take it, take it back a notch because anxiety can build that physical energy and send you too far and get you into that jittery state where you can't focus. So maybe cut back by a third or a half or see what your limit is. Don't study to the very last minute. If you have a test at 8:00 o'clock and it's 7:30 and you're like, I can study for 20 more minutes and then run across campus. You're kind of setting yourself up for that rolling in, already anxious, already not on your A game. Relying too much on teacher study guide. Now unless a teacher specifically says if it's not on study guide, it's not on the test. You use it. It's a tool. You appreciate it. You say thank you. But also, if there's a bold term in your chapter and it's not on the study guide, Still give it a review some of these tests have been used for years. The teachers change their curriculum a little bit. And it might be a question that they forgot is on their forgot to include or if it's one of those classes with really big sections, lots of teachers, they might have a standardized test where the teacher didn't actually write all the questions and it's given by the book publisher or another organization. And so you want to kind of hedge your bets and have a broad study pad. And then don't set unrealistic expectations. If you go in and it's a 100 or nothing, like there is no fail, there is only 100%. That is just leading to anxiety. Go in, try and do your best. Know how you've prepared for it, but don't, don't set those unrealistic bars. Couple more things. If you're getting a late start and it's like a testing center, in another town, again, setting yourself up for failure. You don't wanna be speeding and hoping that you don't get an wreck just to get there on time, rolling in all anxious. Don't skip breakfast. Nutrition is important. The brain is a machine that uses electricity, kind of fuel. Don't rely on others to have, always have your extra pencils, have whatever you need and don't arrive without, you know, if they say you need a scantron, have a couple, have some extras. This one is kind of weird, but don't arrive too early. If you've ever been in a classroom with a bunch of other worriers and they're sitting there stressing, and you're already a little stressed, it's just going to cycle. So if you're in a classroom with folks like that, go study in the hall until last like five minutes, take a walk,. And then only prepares coping strategies that require additional items. So if your coping strategies require like essential oils for cent therapy or music or anything like that. It's you want to have that as the backup. You want something that doesn't require items that you have to remember

and that you can do anytime, anywhere. And then this this is a true story. It's from a client and I don't think they'd mind if I shared. Just we kind of were talking about their test experience and all of the things leading up to not getting a good result. And I jokingly said if there was a checklist of things not to do, you would've checked them all. And so here's the checklist of what not to do. They'd studied till last-minute, didn't get good night sleep. Testing it's center was in a new town, so they drove there for the first time, checked into the hotel, rolled right to the testing center. They're a morning person. Their test was at night. They didn't dress for the whole layers and temperature changes they were cold, hadn't really thought about Covid so masked the whole several hours of the test, you know, that kind of distracted them. They were running late, they'd skipped dinner right before going to this super late-night test. And this one test was going to determine their future. So they put all this pressure on if I fail this, I'm never going to get the career I want, I'm never gonna get the job I want. All that pressure going in. And then because of that and feeling the time constraints, they didn't practice those relaxation techniques. Those, take a moment and reframe. Is this a threat? Is this not. And they just kind of tried to power through it. And then there were a little surprised when the result was a little lower than expected. And I'm like, again, if there's a checklist, you kind of went down the list. So what should I do? This is the good part, you know, why you're here, how to reduce it. Understand what you're experiencing. I think that's step one. So if you're experiencing testing anxiety, you want to put a name to it. You want to know why it's happening. You want to know how to address it. And you don't want it to just be this vague thing. So step one, get some info on it, which is why we're here. Step two, of course, is study,. I mean, that, it's kind of obvious, but if you're not prepared for the test, it doesn't really matter what you do unless you are just super, super lucky. That's not a strategy. Like don't have that be your plan. Study, and study the right things. So that is, get those materials from the teacher. Those study guides look into if a past student, you know, has had the course. Ask them what kind of subjects it was on. If the teacher gave you quizzes and you get to see their question style, look at those. Don't feel embarrassed to ask about the format of a test is in multiple choice, is it short answer, Is it essay? Maybe it annoys a teacher who cares. You want to know what it looks like ahead of time, so you're more prepared. Priming. Priming, as mentioned earlier, we take in all that info when we get into situations. So priming is you setting up that info to send those cues of, now it's test mode. I need to be ready. So try and simulate the test environment as much as possible. If you know it's in a classroom, going to it and kind of being familiar with the setting can help. If you know, something's going to be on the computer and you won't be able to have music. Well, when you do your practice test or you do your quizzes, turn off all those distractions, all those things you normally can't have during the test and make sure that it is as close to your environment as possible so that you're, you're primed and ready to go, know your resources. So you being here at school have a lot of resources with through disability services the testing center, the counseling center, and the student success center. And they're here to help. So know what you have and know how to use them. And there's some links and references at the end that can help with that. Of course, planning ahead. That involves setting up some coping strategies, hopefully the ones that you can take anywhere and don't rely on items. Make sure you keep your nutrition. You gotta look at those, those carbohydrates, that constant sugar and energy during not just, you know, some fruit in the morning. If it's morning tests, you gotta look at, you know, a little bit of proteins and carbs, some of those simple sugars that balanced breakfast, or that lunch before a test. Hydration is important, our brain is made up of a lot of water and fat. It's gotta have some, some fluid or you are not thinking clearly. And then of course, sleep. Again. Don't study the whole night before. Take some time, let your brain rest. It's a machine and sometimes it needs to, to flip off and reset. Get that reboot. Materials,

have your go bag. You have your two or three sets of pencils, some extra lead your eraser. Me, I keep, I like to call it a dumb watch because it's just one of those time with the digital display, easy to read, not a smartwatch. So I don't have to worry about a teacher thinking I'm connecting my phone to my watch and trying to cheat or anything. So always keep that handy. When you go on test so you can just grab it and go. And then the logistics that of course is knowing when the test is, where it's at, how soon you need to leave to get there on time and kind of planning ahead for those travel and, you know, sometimes weather conditions, specific coping strategies. So this is a list and then I'll go into kind of what each one of them is afterwards. The reason we give a list rather than just saying use these two things, is that everyone is different. So your combination of what works may be different from mine, the way you do 1 may differ. And kind of having that broad reach and finding what works for you is what you need to do to get that individualized plan. So relaxation breathing. Which breathing, you know, we do that but doing it the right way serves a purpose and we'll get there in just second, mindfulness, both cognitive and tactile, positive imagery, self-affirming phrases, re-framing things, confronting those unrealistic or the catastrophic thinking that huge downward spiral. Journaling or writing ahead of time, priming for your coping skills. And then there also are some pharmaceutical interventions that can help if need be. So rolling right into it, I'd mentioned the bear in the woods and we're gonna get to that in a second. For breathing. There is literally an app for that. There are probably multiple ones, but the breathe to relax app was made by someone who worked for the VA, was working a lot with their PTSD and soldiers who were really struggling and getting worked up over situations. So it was developed for a need and now it's, it's available on Apple and Google and, and it's, it's free. And what it does is it provides a physiological response for a physiological problem. So we talked about the fight, flight, fright. Fight flight, freeze, response. And that is your body's natural instinct to activate a whole system in response to a threat. Blood flow changes, it goes to the limbs, stomach shuts down. Functions change because of the threat. So my favorite example is you see a bear in the woods, not the UCA bear, on our cute logo, but an actual kind of angry looking grizzly bear. When we see him, our natural instinct isn't to see him and be like, here's a bear. Do I do I run? Do I hide, do I make myself... No we don't do that. We don't take these deep breaths and consider, we go, "BEAR", and run or Bear, look big and whatever our first response is, we tend to go with it. That's how the fight flight or freeze response works. It's that immediate reaction. That's a physiological response. So these deep breathing techniques send that calm down kind of message to that physiological problem. And it's like the, no this test is not a bear, it's not going to eat me. I, it's maybe unpleasant, but I'll get through it. It's not life or death. And so that, that deep breathing that goes through the diaphragm, and slowly comes out can be helpful for that. You can look at apps that help you with counts. You can blow bubbles, which makes you kind of concentrate your breathing. If you've ever played an instrument band and you have to blow for a consistent period of time on each breath. All of those things help with that relaxation, breathing. So mindfulness, what we mean is being mindful of specific thoughts or a thing in your environment. And at its most basic, it's focusing on minor details or nuances to make you be present in the moment. So there are lots, and I mean lots of apps and self-help books and YouTube videos that can do meditation and guided mindfulness where walks you through this process. But one that I like to do is just a quick example is the describe it like it's a new method. So you can look at any, any item, anything you're familiar with. And you try and think of it as if you've never seen this interesting thing before. So if I use, say, this pen as an example, my brain knows what a pen is. I see a pen, I think pen. There's really no more thought to it. May maybe what color it is and if it has ink but yeah, pen is pen. But with mindfulness, you look at this item like you've never seen it. You try and describe its shape. Try and describe what it feels like. Is it

hard, is it resistant? Is it slick, does it have a texture? What part of it does? There's some prickly things, there's pointy edge and you start going through details. Does it have a smell, is it hot is it cold? If, would it bounce if I threw it? What color is it? And you go through all of these lists of things. And why this helps is your brain can only process so much at once. So if it's already doing this spiral, this like if I fail the test, I'm gonna fail at this and fail fail fail fail. And you focus on something else. You pull that energy away and it kind of deactivates that, that spiral because there's just not enough processing power. So you pull it to the present, whether it's a pen or something, tactile like tactile feedback stick for that. Whether it's, you know, pressure points on the hand or even tapping or feeling something. It brings you to the moment. Outside of tests, a lot of people like the fidget spin things or spinner rings, bracelets, jewelry to play with sometimes, and test centers make you take those off. So maybe not your first choice, but anything that brings you into the moment and into the present and out of that spiral is a good mindfulness technique. Positive imagery, not like unicorns and rainbows imagery but self imagery. So what you're doing is you're mentally imagining yourself doing well. You're doing well on the test. You're taking the test you're relaxed. You're confident, you feel rested, you feel refreshed, and you imagine yourself with as many of those kinda good vibes as possible. And again, while yours, using all of that brain power to imagine yourself being this way in a test. There's not enough left for that nagging thought, that's like none of this is right. You, or none of these things. You, you pull the power away from it and focus it on something more helpful, more positive. Self-affirming praises, whether it's like a personal mantra or saying. Self-help books have ton of these. So I'm not going to like go down a list, but you kind of find the one that works best for you. I had a client who it was very straightforward. There's was self love. That was all they would say. And that reminded them to get out of that negative spiral. Focus on the good aspects, what they did well and all of this, the good vibes. Some people need more phrases. Religious phrases are helpful for a lot of people of faith. And anything that helps kind of, is positive and has meaning to you. Just make sure that its kind to yourself and it's not adding to that negative self talk and be confident, help empower you. Basically think of it as if you were your own life coach, what would you say to do? It's very positive oriented. And why it helps is it's self soothing. And we can't think about all of those negative and those feelings of negativity while being positive kind of cancels some out. So that helps lower that stress response. Re-framing. So this is rewriting the script. You're kind of looking at the positive spin or the silver lining on things, making a negative into at least a neutral, positive if possible. And you do this a lot on focusing what you can change, you can control instead of worrying about the things outside of your realm. Some examples might be, I'm feeling really stressed right now. Alright? My body's getting excited and preparing me to perform that stress response is my body saying, all right, we're getting ready for this we're prepped. I wish I had studied more for this. We've all been there and a test where we're like, I should have prepared one. But the point is I am as prepared as I can be right now, can't go back, can't change the past. The positive or at least the neutral images. Well, I'm as prepared as I'm going to be. I'm going to do my best not gonna make it through this. You know, the panicking this for those kind of the combo, the cognitive and the physiological. Like I don't know if I'll physically make it through this like, it's unpleasant, but you can get through it. It will be done on an hour or two hours or whatever the test length is. Looking at that honestly and not in the, the full negative view. Confronting problematic thinking. One is keep it realistic. Don't always expect a 100%. Everybody has bad days. I even a new lady, who was the Dean of Honors College in Fayetteville. I don't know if she is now or not. But at the time when I was there, she was. And I was facing looking at a withdrawal from a class or a grade forgiveness and facing that choice, and she revealed that she had had a W. So here was this lady who was incredibly intelligent and like top of her field. So many letters after her name that you

can make alphabet soup. And she had had a W in her history. So that kind of helped me be like, well, if she can do it and do all that then maybe it's not as bad as I thought. Avoid the catastrophic thinking. Failing the test does not make you a failure at life. Failing a test sucks. You don't like it, but that doesn't mean that you as a human being have failed at everything. One test does not determine the future. It is not that straight downward decent where you will never accomplish anything. You're more than grades. You know, you are a person who is taking a class. We want you to do well. We hope you do well. But it's also important that you not just equate that sense of self with the grade. And when we're catastrophic thinking, there'll be a like a whole wide range of outcomes that are possible. And we always look at those bottom couple on the list. The worst possible ones, and we're like that's the one, that's going to happen. So remembering that no there, there's some neutral ones, there's some good ones, but at least some neutral ones that are probably more likely overall to happen than just to complete utter failure at life because I failed one test. Journaling and writing. This is kind of preparing for tests ahead of time. Putting those concerns, those worries about a test and bringing it from your head into the material plane can help you process them. We don't think about it too much like if it's a spiraling thought and we just put it on paper, you don't think it goes through a lot of processing from head to paper, but it actually does. And that processing can help you kind of form, help you work on priorities, help you examine things that are realistic expectations. And you can get some kind of catharsis if you crumple up that paper and throw it away or, or burn it. In safety. Obviously safety. And it can give you some future insight. If you're a, a consistent journaler and you thought you were going to do poorly on a test and it turned out okay. Well, the next time that you're taking tests, you can look back like, well, I did okay, that time. Maybe this proves that it's not always the worst outcome and you can kind of work at it that way. And then kind of priming. So we talked about how you naturally get primed to things just by stressful situations. Kind of teach me that. But you can also, into your programs and your own computer, you can purposefully set up a response if you put some effort in ahead of time. So I'd like to look at it as getting psyched up instead of getting psyched out. Whether that's specific music that you like, using the affirmation, that mindfulness of breathing, whatever those coping strategies are that help you get in that, that test mode. You set up a routine. Some quick shout-outs to people who were using the priming, maybe not in testing, but like the pre game chants that you see in a lot of athletics where they do the same thing, same way, same, every time before a game. The get hyped huddle, or I've seen theatrical performances where before the show everyone does like a Hokey Pokey and, but it's the same thing before every performance. That routine primes everyone to be ready for what's coming. And it's important to find what works for you and kind of establish it. Again, like personal examples. I like to take the last ten minutes for test. I will not do any last minute looking at notes or anything, I'm done. I'm not going to remember anything else that I'm going to pick up on those ten minutes and it is pure kinda get in the zone. Just because it's hard sometimes, to take music with you. If it requires headphones or setup. I don't tend to do that in the testing center, but a quick mindfulness activities, couple of deep breaths, some some tactile things. I'm the tattooed person so I trace the swirls on them. And that helps to kind of focus the fingers folks, the arms. That's what works for me. Also, a quick cute video of like dogs or cats or otters or some cute animal that you just can't be stressed out with watching, that never hurts. And then, kind of a a beat here, in my opinion, as far as coping skills because it requires you to have an item with you and not forget it and be ready for it. But something that can help with those physiological symptoms are pharmaceutical interventions. Now we've got the over-the-counter ones, whether it's Pepto Bismol tablets, Imodium, Tums or Roloids to deal with the nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, those physical symptoms. If you find that you're someone who gets that racing heart and you just

cannot stop and it's almost at the level of panic attacks for tests, talk to your primary care provider. PCP's are sometimes willing to look at small trials or prescriptions for as needed beta blockers. Now again, this is like a extreme test anxiety. You don't want this to be your go-to, well, I'm a little stressed about a test. But what it does, it's a blood pressure medication and it lowers, it physically lowers that heart rate and that heartbeat. But do not this is this is not just like suggestion. Do not take those the first time during a test. They can make you super drowsy. So you want to have tried those before to see if you need to talk about like half dosage, or breaking the pill, or something because you don't want to get to a test that you're stressed out and is super important, you take that pill and then you're just zonked. But that's not a good outcome. And again, this requires additional items. So maybe not that first go to on coping. So this I wanted to kind of try and throw it out and see if I can get some volunteers. The next couple of slides are looking at emotional, cognitive, and physiological kind of reactions. And I just wanted to see if anyone has some suggestions for like one thing these people could do. So in the first, we have someone who's obviously probably hitting that kind of fear and anger response, like they're not happy that a test just got announced. And the second one we've got the, everyone else has left. It's looking like some shame, disappointments, some inferiority, like he's bummed out. So anyone who would like to share like one or two things our emotional friends might try. For.. Sorry, go ahead. For the guy that looks bummed out, he could just try to breathe and be like, I did the best I could. So we got that realistic thinking, that counter that catastrophic thinking and be like, hey, it is what is I did the best I could. That's great. What if, what if, angry or frightful monkey. Anybody? For that one, she could like, you know take the time and study for his finals in the order that, in the order that he needs to like take it, you know, one test at a time and I try to steady everything at once. Yeah, that's great. So prioritize it so that you're not stressed about that one that's next week when you also have today's plus those two others kinda in-between. That is a great way to do it. And I think this is about midterms time, right. So this is very topical for, for the day and age we're in. Great. So yeah, using some of those coping strategies to deal with emotions and kind of refocus on what you can control or what you can't change, which of course is the past. Here we have our physiological symptoms. They're obviously stressed out, they're sweating, they're anxious, they're probably jittery. What is a solution for our jittery folks here? They could breathe and like, alright, they had like bracelets, or necklaces, they could fidget with the bracelets and necklaces or like trace the lines on the paper or something like that. Okay, so we've got our relaxation, breathing, we've got some mindfulness, some tactile mindfulness, kind of responses to pull them to the moment. That's great, yeah, to draw out that energy and put it somewhere. Also, the tactile stuff is really good when you have physiological symptoms because you've got this buildup of energy and settling yourself. No, don't do anything with it is harder than doing something with that energy. Whether it's fidgeting, tracing the paper, or anything that is an outlet for that, is a great way to deal with that. Okay, and then here we have our cognitive thinker. This is a person who cannot stand tests, terrible every single time. And they're going through that loop of, I always fail. I'm going to do bad. Well I did bad. Therefore I'm going to do bad the next time, they're in that loop. So what do we do to break that loop? I'll totally pick a name. I'm not not afraid. Alright. Let's hear from Cassidy what what can we do to deal with some cognitive issues? Okay. Well, think of a time when you've had that spiral that like where the boss just won't stop. Is there something that's helped you? Definitely just kind of taking a break from everything helps, and maybe like just doing something else, like coming back to it later helps too. Yeah, that's great. We usually call those just mental breaks. Not not the bad kind of mental breaks, but giving yourself a break when you focus on something so long and you're not making any progress, it's like, alright, take that step back. Yeah, go focus, try something else. Come back to it



when you've you're not spiraling on it. That's good. Okay. So just a kind of quick thing, a note about Covid, I know it's added a lot of concerns in addition to health concerns, but also testing concerns. Now in testing centers, a lot of them are requiring masks to be worn. So kind of in that priming and prep stage, you know, put your mask on for the, the quiz or the practice tests so that it's not as uncomfortable as it gets warm. You guys having, if you've had face-to-face classes, you've kind of already been exposed to that. But if you've been on the online courses, then you might, and you know, you have a face to face or a testing center test coming out, then you might want to go ahead kind of do some prep work. The location and environmental changes. So now we know a lot of tests are being given either in rooms that are like super far apart, different rooms than when you have the class, where you have the class or at home where you have to have your computer and worry about your connection and all of those kind of added technical difficulties as mentioned with online tests. And so addressing as many of those to again resemble what your test location will look like and kind of prime and simulate that as best as you can. A lot of these things, maybe you can't get it perfectly. But the more that you can get closer, the less likely you are to have anxiety over that. At least, you know, one fewer concern. Online testing difficulties. So we've got those technical difficulties of like the connection dropping or you're trying to submit the test and something happens and it just fails to submit all of these kind of concerns that we didn't have to worry about when you could just and in a paper. And including like lockdown browser I know a lot of clients are really frustrated with lockdown because of having to like turn off their music if they're used to having music while studying, having to kind of prove that they're alone in their room or they're testing area. And then the video recording and the flagging for looking away or looking down has caused a lot of anxiety with folks that also have overlapping social anxiety. They have a fear of being watched and they are literally being watched. So that is not good for their test environment. So a lot of these concerns can be addressed by talking to your teacher. Let them know what's going on. And it's pretty easy in Blackboard to make a copy of a test, set up a couple of exceptions for students. I worked as a GA for a couple of years and helped make some of those. So they can as long as they've got a little know-how with Blackboard or can watch some YouTube tutorials. They can easily make a copy of the test and set up a couple of exceptions for the students who are having difficulty. Or if it's just flagging you for looking down and you're someone who likes to keep like scratch paper and make the like A-B-C-D and mark them off and get that kind of organization going. Talk to the teacher and see if they're okay for you. Just holding up your paper at the end to show what you do, it looks like, to kind of finalize the, hey, I'm not writing down the answers, it's just me working through my process. And then again, if the teachers can't help, then we look at our resources. So last week I reached out to a couple different departments to, kind of get their take on what has changed with Covid, any statements they wanted to make for students. And both of the Disability Resource Center and testing services got back to me like next day were super polite, super helpful. So, you know, don't feel afraid to reach out to them. And the disability resource center is your first go to if you need testing accommodations. They like to look at each student as an individual. Though they said some of the common accommodations are extended test time, distraction, reduced, restricted area where it's like outside, it's a quiet zone. Use of a reader or Scribe or allowed to wear headphones. Then the Disability Services get with testing services say, here's what the accommodations need to be. And you set up an appointment with testing services to go take that test. They they will work with teachers on like last minute basis if they need to. But the normal route is through testing service area, through disability resources then testing services. Some of the changes for Covid, they still have those distraction rooms as distraction free rooms. Now some of the reading and scirbe is done either through plexiglass or zoom

options. And they said the zoom options tend to be pretty popular. And then office of student success. Obviously they have workshops, which is what we're doing right now. They also have the peer success coaches. And because sometimes those peer success coaches end up looking at students who are already meeting, somehow open, already kinda falling behind. We're starting a new kind of counseling service through the Success Office where you can go ahead of time if you have those concerns. And this is our first semester doing it. So currently our set up is if you want to schedule an appointment with a counselor call the actual main counseling center, 450-3138 and ask for Alaina. We can set up the schedule and she can help you with that.