

# Testing Season Toolkit

## Helping Students Navigate Testing with Confidence

### School Counselor Resource Series

## Purpose

Testing season can bring increased stress for students, families, and educators. While some nervousness is normal, excessive anxiety can interfere with concentration, confidence, and performance.

This toolkit provides practical strategies to help students approach testing with a healthy mindset while reducing unnecessary stress.

## Student Pre-Test Checklist

Before test day, I will:

- ☐ Get a good night's sleep.
- ☐ Eat a healthy breakfast.
- ☐ Arrive at school on time.
- ☐ Bring any required materials.
- ☐ Wear comfortable clothing.
- ☐ Take slow, deep breaths if I feel nervous.
- ☐ Remember that one test does not define me.

## Signs of Test Anxiety

Students may experience:

- ☐ Racing thoughts
- ☐ Stomachaches or headaches

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- ☐ Difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Trouble concentrating
- ☐ Fear of failure
- ☐ Avoiding school
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed

These reactions are common and often improve with preparation and healthy coping strategies.

## Healthy Coping Strategies

Encourage students to:

- Focus on one question at a time.
- Take slow, steady breaths.
- Replace negative thoughts with realistic ones.
- Stretch or relax their muscles before testing.
- Stay hydrated.
- Avoid comparing themselves to others.
- Remember that effort matters more than perfection.

## Positive Self-Talk

Instead of...

"I know I'm going to fail."

Try...

"I've prepared, and I'll do my best."

Instead of...

"I'm not smart enough."

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Try...

"I don't have to know every answer to do well."

Instead of...

"I'll never finish."

Try...

"I'll focus on one question at a time."

## Quick Check-In Questions

- How are you feeling about the upcoming test?
- What are you most confident about?
- What worries you the most?
- What has helped you stay calm before?
- Who can encourage you during testing week?

## Tips for Families

Parents can help by:

- Keeping routines as consistent as possible.
- Encouraging adequate sleep.
- Providing a nutritious breakfast.
- Speaking calmly about testing.
- Praising effort rather than scores.
- Avoiding unnecessary pressure.

A calm home environment can make a meaningful difference.

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# Reminder for Students

Remember:

- ✓ One test measures only a small part of what you know.
- ✓ Your value is not determined by a score.
- ✓ Mistakes are part of learning.
- ✓ Doing your best is enough.

## Counselor Planning Checklist

- ☐ Check in with students who have a history of test anxiety.
- ☐ Provide classroom lessons on stress management.
- ☐ Share parent resources before testing begins.
- ☐ Encourage teachers to reinforce healthy coping strategies.
- ☐ Celebrate effort and perseverance throughout testing season.

## Encouragement

Testing is one moment in a student's educational journey, not the measure of their worth or potential. Every student benefits from adults who encourage them to prepare well, stay calm, and remember that they are more than a number on a report.

Thank you for helping students face testing season with confidence, resilience, and hope.

*Part of the Freedom Path Counseling School Counselor Resource Series*

These resources are provided free of charge to support school counselors as they invest in the emotional well-being of students and families. Learn more and access additional downloadable tools at **[freedompathcounseling.org/school-counselor-resource-center](https://freedompathcounseling.org/school-counselor-resource-center)**

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