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Holiday & Winter Newsletter

December 2011



Tool Kits for Kids Wishes You and Your Family Happy Holidays

After the Holidays: Kids Can Have a Better January, February

and Beyond

After a much-needed December break, kids reluctantly acknowledge that it's time to gear up and go back to school. For some children and teens, this is a tough transition back to reality. They are well aware that the school workload often intensifies in January. High school students may be taking SAT's, ACT's, AP tests and final exams in the spring. Younger kids recognize that they are working harder on more complex material. It's very common for kids of all grade levels to show increased signs of test anxiety in the second half of the school year. This is the focus of our Newsletter; helping young people manage test anxiety, one of the biggest worries affecting many students.



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Test Anxiety

Test anxiety or TA, is intense worry about performance on exams. Despite studying and being prepared, many students experience extreme anxiety, which takes up a big chunk of psychological energy. In fact, TA has a negative impact on test performance. It has been well documented that worry contributes to lower test scores.

Three Stages of Test Anxiety

There are three main phases of test anxiety:

Anticipatory Anxiety or Pre-Test Anxiety Anxiety before a test usually takes the form of *What If* worry, with thoughts such as:

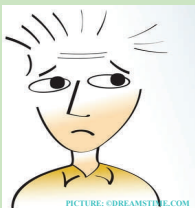
What if I fail?

What if there are different questions than the ones I studied?

What if I do badly on the SAT's or ACT's and I can't get into a good college?

Anxiety During The Test There are often physical symptoms during

this stage, including pounding heartbeat, difficulty breathing and sweating. Processing problems are also common, such as difficulty in concentrating, retrieval of information and problem-solving. Here are examples of anxious thoughts that keep TA high during the test taking phase:



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This is way too hard.
I can't remember anything.
My mind is going blank.

Post-Test Anxiety In this phase, the worried thoughts continue:
I know I failed.
I looked up the answers. Mine were all wrong.
What if this ruins my grade?
What if I get left back?



PICTURE: CDREAMSTIME.COM

Kids Live in A Skill-Based World Young people learn computer skills, math skills, writing skills and sports skills, to name just a few. They can learn worry-fighting skills too, so they can manage their test anxiety. At Tool Kits for Kids, we have a name for worry-fighting skills. It's called **Outsmart Your Worry™**. Our goal is for kids to be in charge of their worry and fear, so test anxiety bothers them less and less.

Conquering Test Anxiety Children and teens are at a ripe age to learn strong thinking and behavior skills to stop test anxiety from dominating their lives. They first need to know that Thoughts Make Feelings. The *Thought Feeling Connection* is one of the first tools in **The Outsmart Your Worry**



PICTURE: CDREAMSTIME.COM

Tool Kit for Kids®. Scared terrified thoughts about tests create frightened feelings that can get out of control. In contrast, accurate strong thoughts can calm negative worried thoughts. In the 19 other tools in the Tool Kit, kids learn precisely how to train their brain to feel more confident, use accurate thinking to conquer fear, use their body and mind to stay calm and steady, block *What If* worries from spreading and learn clever ways to make rules to control worry. The entire package of 20 cognitive and behavioral tools is powerful enough to chip away at those stubborn test anxiety thoughts.

Tool Kits For Kids® News Tool Kits for Kids LLC provides emotional first-aid solutions for anxiety, self-esteem, and resilience. We have presented Tool Kit workshops to both parent and professional groups, with the goal of helping young people acquire emotional life skills in a way that's effective, easy to learn and lasting.

Our **Charge Up Your Confidence®**, **Build Up Your Resilience™** and **Outsmart Your Worry Tool Kit for Kids®** continue to be used worldwide. Of course, all of our products are available for purchase at www.toolkitsforkids.com and at amazon.com. We are also featured at the Creative Therapy Store, an important resource for professionals. Each of our Tool Kits have been honored with award recognition from one or more of these major parenting organizations



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