

THE COGNITIVE MODEL OF TEST ANXIETY

QUESTION: WHY FOCUS ON BELIEFS?

ANSWER: BECAUSE WHAT YOU BELIEVE DETERMINES HOW YOU FEEL (and behave)!

BELIEFS -> FEELINGS (like anxiety) -> BEHAVIORS (like "blanking out," avoiding studying, sweating...)

Example:

- Situation : Hiking along a trail. You hear a noise, a rustling sound nearby.
- Person A: Inexperienced hiker. What might she or he think about the noise?
Notice how these thoughts would lead to feeling anxious (& certain behaviors).
- Person B: Experienced hiker. What might she or he think about the noise?
Notice how these thought would lead likely to minimal anxiety (& behavior).
- Lesson: What you think will determine what you feel (& how you behave).
- Other examples?

HOW THIS RELATES TO REDUCING TEST ANXIETY

Test "anxiety" is a feeling with associated behaviors. It comes from anxious thoughts.

Solution: Have different thoughts. How do you do that???

- 1) Identify what thoughts you have right before you feel anxious.
- 2) Evaluate how accurate (or helpful) these thoughts are.
- 3) Respond back to these thoughts with
 - a) Reasons why the first thought is inaccurate, and
 - b) A different and better way to think about the situation.
- 4) Relax your body to further reduce any leftover tension.