

Test Stress: Recognize Your Triggers

1. EXTERNAL TRIGGERS: Visual

Select any visual triggers that affect you:

- ☐ Students getting up and turning in their tests
- ☐ A room becoming more and more empty
- ☐ The clock ticking away
- ☐ The camera light being on for a recorded online exam
- ☐ Other coursework piled up nearby (online exams)
- ☐ Other:

Strategies to handle visual triggers:

- Choose your seat wisely: What seat might be exposed to the least amount of distractions?
- Avoid the temptation to look up often. Stay focused on the exam in front of you.
- Clear your workspace before beginning your exam so you can focus on the test.

What strategy could you use (either from above or your own) to handle your visual triggers?

2. EXTERNAL TRIGGERS: Auditory

Select any auditory triggers that affects you:

- ☐ Backpacks being zipped up
- ☐ It being overly quiet
- ☐ Computer notification noises (online exams)
- ☐ The door opening and closing as people leave
- ☐ Sounds outside the exam space (people in the hallway, barking dogs, traffic noise, family watching tv in the next room).
- ☐ Other:

Strategies to handle auditory triggers:

- Drown out sound by sitting near a noisy fan or vent.
- Use ear plugs.
- Turn off all sounds on your computer before beginning.

What strategy could you use (either from above or your own) to handle your auditory triggers?

3. INTERNAL TRIGGERS: Thoughts/emotions

Select any you find yourself feeling/thinking:

- ☐ How much smarter the other students are than me
- ☐ Of the consequences of failing
- ☐ No matter how I show my work, the professor will mark off points
- ☐ The teacher should offer more papers than tests
- ☐ Wondering how you appear on the recording (online exams)
- ☐ Panic
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Other:

Strategies to handle thoughts/feelings:

- Is your thought a true statement? If not, remind yourself of your positive work you've done to prepare for the exam and the work you're putting into combating your anxiety.
- Repeat some normalizing statements to yourself: This feeling is normal and can be overcome; I'm going to focus on my strengths.

What strategy could you use (either from above or your own) to handle your thoughts/emotions?

4. INTERNAL TRIGGERS: Physical Feelings

Select any you physically feel:

- ☐ Racing/pounding heart
- ☐ Rapid breathing
- ☐ Numbness/tingling
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Feeling too hot or too cold
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Other:

Strategies to handle physical feelings:

- Get physical! Do some sort of physical activity before the exam to relieve test stress.
- During the test, do a quick stretch. Outstretch your legs, roll your shoulders, etc.

What strategy could you use (either from above or your own) to handle your physical feelings?