How to cope with exam anxiety

STUDENT HEALTH CENTRE, LUND UNIVERSITY
WHAT IS EXAM ANXIETY?
Exam anxiety is a type of severe stress reaction, which for some becomes so intense that they are not able to make their way to the exam, or they have a blackout during the exam. Others experience symptoms such as severe nausea, stomach ache or having trouble sleeping for several weeks before the exam. The symptoms can be very different from one person to another, but they all involve suffering for the person in question. Studies show that one in five students experiences major apprehension or anxiety before an exam.

WHAT CAUSES EXAM ANXIETY?
The underlying cause of exam anxiety is not easy to pinpoint, but we know that some things increase the risk for anxiety, such as high personal demands, lack of confidence in your own study ability, weak motivation, and insufficient study technique and/or discipline. Anxiety can also be linked to other problems in everyday life that weigh heavy and make it difficult to concentrate. A lack of feedback on your study performance can also cause insecurity and thereby stress.

ADVICE ON HOW TO COPE WITH EXAM ANXIETY
• Create structure and review your study habits.
• Don’t put off your reading.
• Don’t neglect your spare time, seeing friends, exercise, etc.
• Enlist the help of your friends and study together.
• Have reasonable goals and intermediate goals that will boost your confidence.
• Do not discuss grades and exams with your fellow students, this usually causes more stress. Instead dare to talk about exam anxiety and discover that you are not the only one experiencing this problem.
• Clarify to yourself where, when, how and with whom you study best.
• It is often good to establish a workplace outside the home, such as a library or a reading room.
• Specify what you will be doing that day, and when to take breaks.
• Establish an end time for when your workday is over and your spare time can begin. Having something specific planned in your spare time can make it easier for you to let go of your studies. Different types of relaxation exercises, mindfulness and yoga are helpful tools for coping with anxiety and other debilitating thoughts and emotions.

HELP AND SUPPORT

If you do not have sufficient tools on your own, ask for help at one of the support functions listed below:

• The Student Health Centre can help you if you experience a lot of apprehension and anxiety.
• The Academic Support Centre can help you with your study technique and different types of writing.
• The study advisor at your department can help you with issues concerning contact with teaching staff, course syllabi, learning outcomes, and different types of exams.
Contact information:

Address:
Lund University
Student Health Centre
Box 117, 221 00 Lund

Visiting address:
Studenthälsan
Sandgatan 3, Lund

Telephone: +46 (0)46 222 43 77

www.lunduniversity.lu.se/student-health