



WAYNE STATE  
School of Social Work

# HIGH STAKES EXAM AND TEST ANXIETY

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# *SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT*

## *My Purpose*

To help people improve their quality of life through better mental health.

To educate and empower the next generation of social work practitioners.

## *Professional Titles*

Therapist.

Adjunct Faculty.

Social Innovator.



# TODAY'S AGENDA

- Test anxiety and myths.
- Physical, behavioral and cognitive elements of test anxiety.
- ASWB advanced generalist & clinical exams.
- Managing test anxiety.
- Alternatives or additions for managing test anxiety.
- Psychiatric interventions and accommodations.



Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety marked by extreme distress and debilitating feelings of worry, which negatively impacts performance.

# CAUSES OF TEST ANXIETY

- **FEAR OF FAILURE** – The fear of failure can affect people in a variety of ways and if connect your sense of self-worth to your test scores, the pressure you put on yourself can cause severe test anxiety.
- **LACK OF READINESS** – inadequate preparation leads to test anxiety. If you didn't prepare at all or didn't prepare well enough, this can add to your feeling of anxiety.
- **POOR TESTING HISTORY** – Suppose there is a history of not doing well in tests either because it was due to the lack of preparation or because you were overcome with anxiety.
- **UNDERLYING ANXIETY PROBLEM** – Pre-existing mental health condition can intensify test anxiety and result in poor performance

# Myths of Test Anxiety

## WE ARE BORN WITH TEST ANXIETY.

It is a learned behavior that is reinforced by negative experiences with test taking.

## IGNORING TEST ANXIETY WILL MAKE IT GO AWAY.

Trying to pretend it is not there will cause more stress and a wide range of physical, emotional, and mental stress symptoms that result in poor performance in test taking.

## ONLY PEOPLE WHO ARE UNPREPARED HAVE TEST ANXIETY.

Even people who are prepared can have test anxiety.

# PHYSICAL, BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE ELEMENTS OF TEST ANXIETY.

*How Test Anxiety Shows Up*



## *PHYSICAL ELEMENTS*

Headaches.

Stomach pain.

Rapid heartbeat.

Excessive sweating.

Shortness of breath.



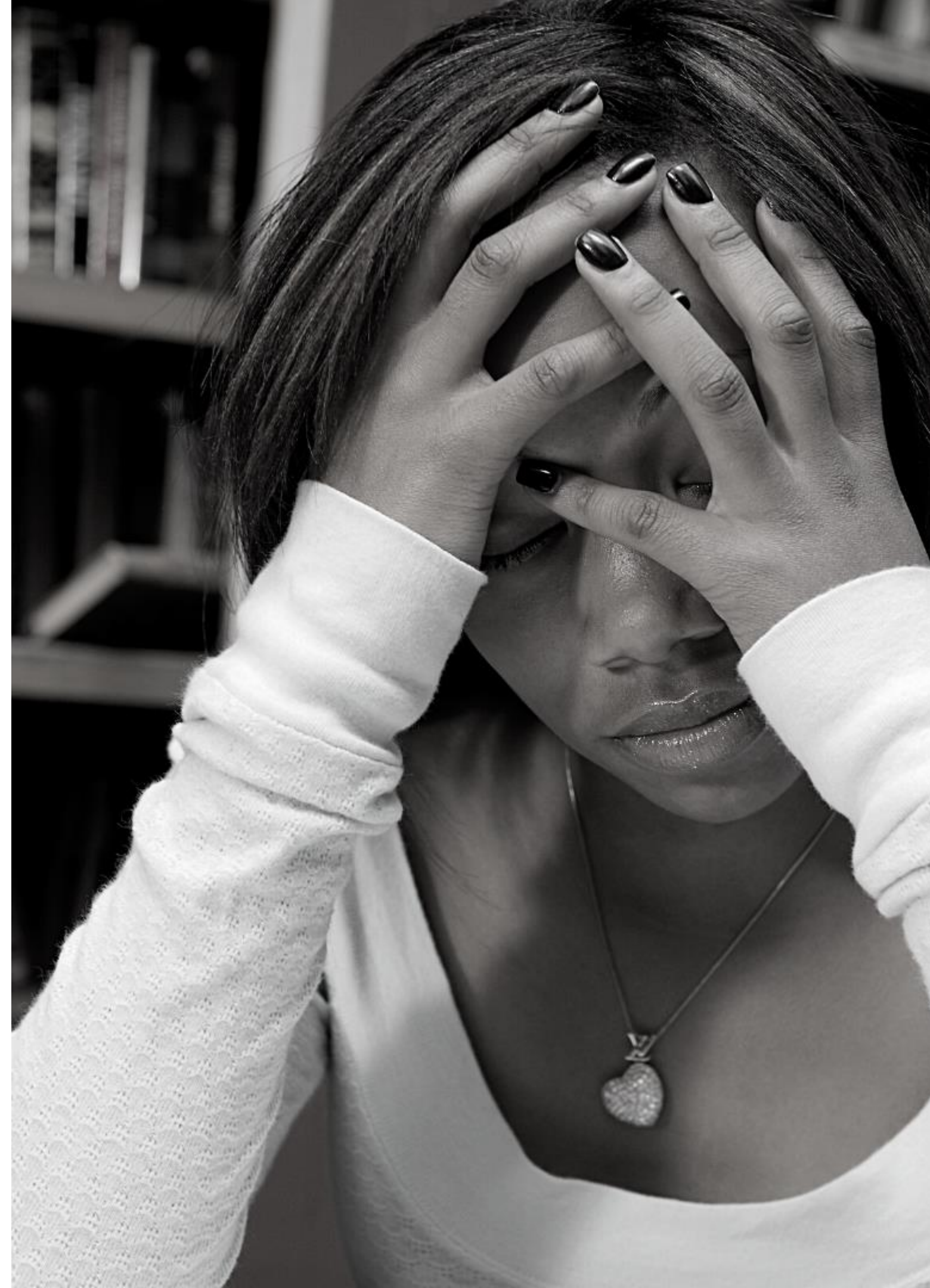


## *BEHAVIORAL ELEMENTS*

Restlessness

Feeling nervous.

Angry outbursts.



## *COGNITIVE ELEMENTS*

Overthinking.

Trouble concentrating.

Negative automatic thoughts.

Comparing self to other people.





# ASWB EXAM

*Association of Social Work Boards*



# EXAM CATEGORIES

- **Associate:** candidates who do not hold a baccalaureate degree in social work.
- **Bachelors:** candidates who have completed a baccalaureate degree in social work, typically a BSW.
- **Masters:** candidates who hold a master's degree in social work, typically an MSW, with no post-degree experience.
- **Advanced generalist:** candidates who hold a master's degree in social work, typically an MSW, with two years of experience in a nonclinical setting.
- **Clinical:** candidates who hold a master's degree in social work, typically an MSW, with two years of experience in a clinical setting.

# The ASWB Advanced Generalist And Clinical Exams.

*Content Areas, Competencies, And Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities Statements (KSAs).*

# EXAM CONTENT ONLINE

**CONTENT AREAS** are the broad areas of knowledge measured by each exam. The content areas organize the content for exam construction and score reporting. When receiving exam scores, test-takers who do not pass get feedback on their performance on each content area of the exam.

**COMPETENCIES** describe meaningful sets of knowledge, skills, and abilities within each content area that are important to social work practice.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES STATEMENTS** structure the content of the exam for item development. The KSAs provide further details about the nature and range of exam content that is included in the competencies. Each KSA describes a single knowledge component that is the basis for individual exam questions used to measure competency



23%

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18%

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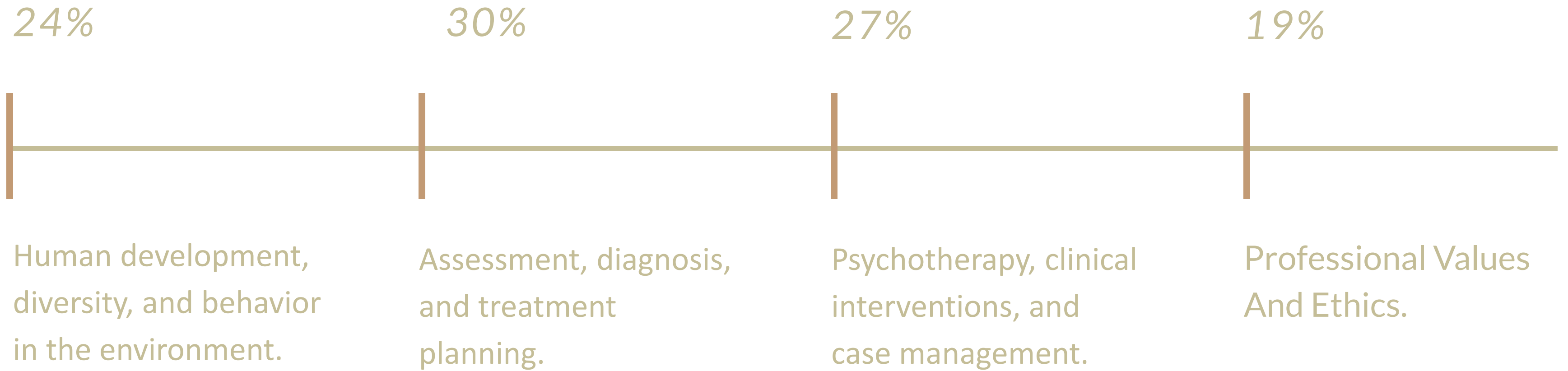
Human development,  
diversity, and behavior  
in the environment.

Intervention processes  
and techniques for use  
across systems.

Intervention processes  
and techniques for use  
with larger systems.

Professional  
relationships,  
values, and ethics.

# Advanced Generalist Exam KSAs



# CLINICAL EXAM KSAs

## CONTENT OUTLINES AND KSAs

### *Clinical Social Work Licensing Exam*

<https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2018-Clinical.pdf>

### *Advanced Generalist Licensing Exam*

<https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2018-AG.pdf>



# MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

BASIC NEEDS, PREPARATION,  
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL  
SUGGESTIONS





## MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

### BASIC NEEDS

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Relaxation techniques.
- Exercise.



## MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

### COGNITIVE & BEHAVIORAL SUGGESTIONS

- Study early.
- Remove distractions.
- Consistent studying routine.
- Avoid negative self-talk.



# THE DAY OF THE EXAM

## Pre And Post Test



*Arrive early.*

*Take the test one question at a time.*

*Relax and trust that you have done your best work.*

# ALTERNATIVES OR ADDITIONS FOR MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

*Psychiatric interventions and accommodations*



## ADDRESSING POSSIBLE LEARNING DIABILITY

Addressing underlying learning conditions that interfere with learning, focus or concentration may be the key to decreasing test anxiety.



## MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

If you find that you need extra support, make an appointment with your school counselor or primary care physician.



## SUMMARY

*Test anxiety can be persistent, unpleasant, and stressful; however, with the right tools, you can learn how to manage it, so it doesn't interfere with your ability to perform well.*

*Take some time to review this slide presentation, utilize some of the self-help strategies we have discussed.*

*If you need additional support, please don't hesitate to speak to your primary care provider to learn about treatment options.*





THANK YOU!

# REFERENCES

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