



# WKU®

# Counseling & Testing Center

November 2014

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## United Way Campaign

The Counseling & Testing Center achieved 100 percent participation in this year's United Way Campaign.

## Finals week advice

# Relieve the stress of the test

Take this advice, just not literally! This is a somewhat humorous attempt at sharing helpful ideas for your upcoming finals week. Yes, **FINAL**S are coming!!! Did I just ruin your Thanksgiving Break?

**Give up now!!** Give up the idea that finals are horrible exams that must be tolerated. Some students actually find finals week to be exciting. Kind of like an athlete that looks forward to getting into the game; students can be excited about getting into an exam and showing off their skills

**Drink heavily!!** Drink a lot of water and juice to stay hydrated and to get your vitamins, anti-oxidants, etc. Watch out for too much caffeine. Too much caffeine interferes with memory, comprehension, sleep quality and can also lead to irritability and lack of concentration.

**Goof off!!** As much as you are studying you also need to be playing. Recreation and exercise improve your capacity to concentrate, they help you manage tension and anxiety, they are good outlets for social support and they improve your stress tolerance.

**Knock yourself out!!** Good sleep is vital to finals week. Start getting good sleep before finals week and keep it up during finals week. Pulling all-nighters may seem like a normal thing to do, but most successful students in college figured out a long time ago that it is better to study ahead of time and get your sleep.

**Cheat!!** Don't wait until finals week to study. Start now. Lay out all the material that you have that

will be on the test. Spend 15 minutes a day going back over it and reminding yourself what is was about. A little studying each day now will be a whole lot better than doing it all in the last week.

**Throw away your highlighters!!** Highlighting your textbooks does nothing but make the pages look shiny. To learn something you have to use it; coloring it yellow doesn't count. Put a checkmark next to the words, sentences, charts, etc., that are important and then go back and quiz yourself. Don't repeat it back to yourself....tell yourself a story about what you marked. Rote memory might have worked in high school... in college you have to know the stuff!

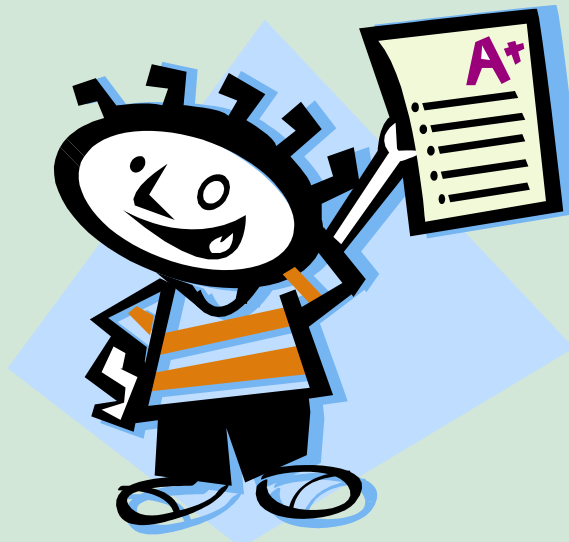
**Get a big head!!** Now is not the time to doubt yourself. You made the cut when you were admitted.

College can be challenging but thousands of people graduate every semester. Calm down, think about how far you have come so far... and imagine being one of the thousands that graduate. All you have to do is study, know the stuff, and show off on the test. Imagine you are the instructor when you are taking the test, let your answers be like your lecture. Imagine you are explaining your answers to a class of students. Tell your story about the material.

**Do:** laugh, share, talk, eat

chocolate, work out, study each day and eat good foods

**Don't:** freak, withdraw, rely on stimulants, count on luck or think that you work better under pressure!



## **Domestic Violence Proclamation Ceremony**

*Dr. Gary Ransdell signs the annual Domestic Violence Proclamation during a ceremony at the Kentucky Museum Oct. 14. Faculty, staff, students and community leaders, joined the Counseling and Testing Center to honor those who have been touched by domestic violence.*



## **Home for the Holidays**

**By Debra Crisp, Ph.D.**

This time of year brings to mind the movie *Home for the Holidays* starring Holly Hunter, Robert Downey Jr., and the late Anne Bancroft and Charles Durning. It is the story of a woman who has formed her own life several hundred miles away from her family, and her dreaded trek home for Thanksgiving. Once there, she contends with the family dynamics that probably caused her to move away years before.

The movie highlights what happens for many of our students as they head home for Thanksgiving and the Winter Break after a semester of setting their own rules without curfews and other limits that parents often set.

For their parents, especially those with first year students, their college students are often frozen in their minds as the young people that they left on campus in August or as someone who was less autonomous than the person they see before them now. It's a time of great stress for both. The following are

suggestions for both so that the stress may be lessened.

For both have a conversation before the holiday about what you would like to see as a parent and as a young adult returning home. Try to agree on the rules before there's a disagreement or misunderstanding.

For both, remember that time has passed and there have been changes. While you may speak on a daily basis or even visit on the weekend, it is not the same as living together for an extended period of time. Be patient with each other.

For students, while this is still your family home, you are in some ways a guest. Try to use your guest manners—pick up after yourself, ask if there's anything you can do to help, etc.

For parents, remember that your college student has gotten out of the habit of doing chores for the home so you may have to remind them (gently).

For students, your parents are really excited to have you home and they want to show you off to their friends, family, and co-

workers. That means they may have made plans for you without consulting you. Be prepared to divide time between your friends and your family.

For parents, your student may not have seen his/her best friend(s) for three months or more and is really excited to spend time with them. Remember, just because they want to spend time with their friends does not mean they love you any less. Time is finite so they have to make a choice.

For both parties, be realistic about your expectations. One of the biggest mistakes people make around the holidays is to expect their families to behave like the Waltons, Bradys, or Huxtables, when in reality their families are more like the Bundys or the Simpsons. If great-aunt Gertrude gets on your nerves 364 other days of the year, she will get on your nerves on a holiday—that's just who she is and who you are.

At the end of the day, remember to relax, breathe and think before you speak. And realize too that the holiday season will pass.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE  
WKU COUNSELING & TESTING CENTER**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.WKU.EDU/HERETOHELP/](http://WWW.WKU.EDU/HERETOHELP/)**

## **Taking medication for anxiety, depression**

**N**ot everyone with anxiety or depression needs medication. If the anxiety or depression is “mild,” meaning you have some symptoms but they generally do not interfere with your daily life and you can keep yourself going while having the symptoms, then medication might not be needed. Instead you might find that the “old school” remedies, like exercise, recreation, eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep, making a point to spend time with friends and/or doing volunteer work, will get you through the rough times.

But when anxiety or depression does interfere with your daily life; when it is getting in the way of your job, your schoolwork, your friends and family, when you are spending a lot of time feeling afraid, nervous, sad, empty, flat, then medication is probably a good idea. If you are finding it harder to believe that life is going to be good, or if you find yourself thinking that maybe being dead wouldn't be so bad—that is the beginning of becoming suicidal—then please get professional help and please consider medication.

Here is the deal; your mind and body are connected, one and the same. Thinking sad thoughts can lead you to feeling bad, and feeling bad can lead you to having sad thoughts. No matter why the anxiety or depression started, they can reach a point where they are very real in your mind and in your body. That is when you need to consider medication. A depressed person has a brain that has at least temporarily lost its ability to produce enough of a particular substance that activates the parts of the brain that produce a positive mood. One particular substance—Serotonin—is thought to be involved in anxiety and depression. There are other substances—neurotransmitters—that are implicated or involved in anxiety and depression. Medication helps increase the amount of serotonin in the brain.

If you need medication, if your anxiety or depression is severe enough to need medication, it is NOT your fault. It is just where your brain is at and we don't want it to get worse. Think of it this way; if you broke your arm you would go to an

emergency room and you would have a cast put on your arm. It wasn't your fault the bone broke, you didn't choose for the bone to break, even if you were doing something kind of risky, you still didn't plan on breaking a bone. The cast won't heal the bone; right? The bone heals itself; the bone “knows” how to grow back together. The cast just keeps the bone still and in alignment so that the natural healing can occur more effectively.

Medication for anxiety or depression is like a cast for your brain. It doesn't heal or “cure” the anxiety or depression. It just keeps your brain still, aligned and functioning so that the natural healing can occur. Through counseling, friends and family, faith, recreation and good nutrition you can “teach” yourself how to not be anxious or depressed. The medication just helps speed things up. Even if you have to stay on medication the rest of your life; isn't it worth it? Sure, it isn't fair; you didn't ask for anxiety or depression, but if you have one or the other, don't you deserve to have your life back?

**T**oday's medications are affordable, have fewer side effects, and offer more options. It is important that you keep in touch with your physician and share side effects, changes in mood or behavior, anything and everything that will help the physician find the right dose. Be patient!!! The best anxiety and depression medications take time to work; they have to build up slowly in your body. Give them time to work; rely on therapists, friends, and family while the medications are kicking in. Seriously, most of these medications take four weeks to build up; we know that sounds like a long time, but once they kick in, you will have so much relief.

So if someone is suggesting you look into medication or if you have been wondering yourself if they are worth it, think about that cast on a broken arm. It can be a pretty good idea.

## **Safe Zone: Training available**

On Oct. 10, the WKU Counseling & Testing Center (CTC) offered a Safe Zone training opportunity for interested campus community members. Safe Zone is a voluntary network of individuals who believe that every member of the community should have an equal opportunity to grow and learn in safe and open environments. Twenty-two campus members completed the training and signed an agreement pledging to be a Safe Zone ally.

The purpose of Safe Zone trainings is to reduce homophobia and heterosex-

ism by training community members to serve as resources for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual/Ally (LGBTQIA) community.

The overall mission of this project is to raise awareness of LGBTQIA issues and pledge a commitment to fostering an environment that is devoid of discrimination based on sexual orientation, sexual identity, or gender identity.

Participants display a Safe Zone symbol to demonstrate their nurturance and commitment to celebrating the in-

valuable contributions of LGBTQIA individuals and communities. If you are interested in learning more about Safe Zone, please contact the WKU CTC at (270) 745-3159.



# SPOTLIGHT

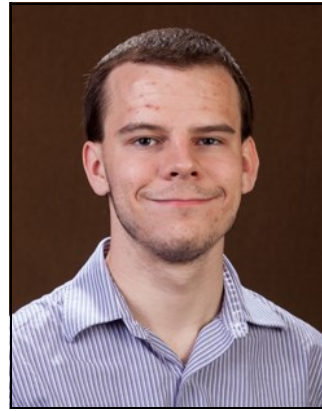
## SIERA BRAMSCHREIBER



I received my Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Kentucky Wesleyan College in 2013. I am a second-year graduate student in the Clinical Psychology Program. Eventually, I hope to obtain a doctoral degree in Neuropsychology.

Until then, I will continue to learn and develop as a student and therapist. I am excited to give back to the WKU community as an intern in the Counseling and Testing Center. For leisure, I enjoy spending time with my family, reading, and participating in outdoor activities.

## CODY HAYNES



I received my Bachelor of Science degree with majors in Psychology and Communication Arts from the University of the Cumberland in 2013. During my four years there, I spent time tutoring other students in the university's Academic Resource Center. I am currently earning my Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology at Western Kentucky University.

I am very excited to be doing my internship at the Counseling and Testing Center through the 2014-2015 academic year. My research interests include psychological assessment, psychotherapy and suicide prevention. For fun, I like to spend time with family and friends, play guitar, and try new things.

## Counseling Services

*College should be challenging, not overwhelming*

That's why we're here to help, offering our services Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. There is a ONE-TIME \$20.00 fee for paperwork and documentation. After the one-time fee, students have access to unlimited visits for their entire college career here at WKU. Our services are confidential and NO information is released without the student's written permission, unless in an emergency situation. So if your mom, grandma, or next door neighbor calls to learn about your counseling appointment, "mums" the word.

We offer individual and group counsel-

ing services to help with coping strategies, conflict resolution, and crisis situations related to:

**College Adjustment**    **Eating Disorder**  
**Decision Making**      **Bipolar Disorder**  
**Problem Behaviors**    **Stress Management**  
**Grief/Loss**              **Depression/Anxiety**  
**Relationship Issues**    **Suicide Prevention**  
**Sexual Assault/Abuse**    **....and more!**

**Don't Forget! We also offer counseling for couples of all kinds: friends, relationships and roommates.**

## Testing Services Available

The Counseling and Testing Center offers most national tests such as CLEP, MAT, LSAT, DSST, ACT, NBCC, PCAT, HESI and COMPASS. Residual ACT and Chemistry Placement tests are also available. For more information on testing dates, see

[www.registerblast.com/wku](http://www.registerblast.com/wku)

PRAXIS testing dates are at [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis).

Questions may be e-mailed to: [testingcenter@wku.edu](mailto:testingcenter@wku.edu).

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