



reCAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services
University of California, Santa Cruz

CAPS' New Peer Educator Program

CAPS is proud to introduce our inaugural Peer Education Program (PEP) team. The team's mission is to increase awareness and reduce stigma around mental health issues and services. Our six Peer Educators are helping to promote CAPS programs, assisting with tabling and social media and creating their own outreach programs to be launched in the spring quarter. We warmly welcome our outstanding Peer Educators:

- Jared Ferrell, Oakes senior
- Katherine Chadbourne, College Nine sophomore



Back row: Jared, Camara and Natalie. Front row: Alina, Gisselle and Katherine.

- Camara Chea, Cowell frosh
- Gisselle Stayerman, College Ten senior
- Alina Crom, College Ten junior
- Natalie Joseph, College Ten senior

We asked the Peer Educators for their

favorite and/or most effective stress management tips, and here's what they had to say:

"If I'm stressed out, the most effective thing for me to do is to consult my planner and make a list of what I need to do or what I'm

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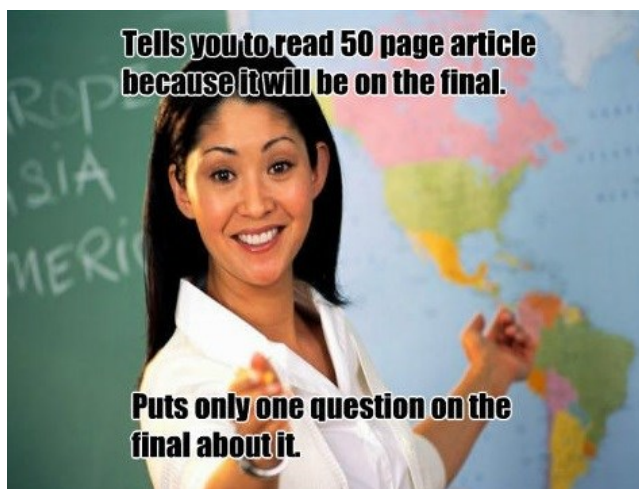
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All About CAPS

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers FREE, confidential mental health services to registered UCSC students:

- Brief individual, couples' and group counseling
- Awesome workshops and trainings around campus
- Referrals to on- and off-campus resources
- Crisis services (in person Mon-Fri 8 am-5 pm; by phone 24/7 at 831-459-2628)

To make an appointment, call us at 831-459-2628 or stop by (Student Health Center, East Wing, 2nd floor) weekdays between 8 am and 5 pm. Check out the [CAPS blog](#), visit our [website](#) and like us on [Facebook](#)!



stressed out about; that way I confront my stress head on. It also helps to listen to music and vent to someone! :)” —Camara

“What I find most effective when I feel overwhelmed or stressed is to take time to do something completely not related to what I’m working on, whether it’s watching 30 minutes of TV, reading a book, baking cookies or talking to a friend or family member. I find that taking my mind off of school or work and doing something I enjoy for a bit allows me to go back with

a clear and calm head, and I’m more likely to be able to focus and get things done more efficiently.” —Katherine

“My favorite and most effective tip for managing stress is listening to music. It puts me in a great place to reflect and think a bit more critically and deeper.” —Jared

“My favorite tip to manage stress is finding time to work out and maybe go for a run, especially where there is beautiful scenery. If there’s not enough time to go for a run, I suggest a



Three of our awesome Peer Educators, Jared, Gisselle and Camara, at the Oakes Wellness Fair, March 7th.

breathing exercise that would relax the muscles in the body and relax the mind.”

—Natalie Joseph

Dear CAPS,

I’ve considered joining a CAPS group, but I’m nervous about it.

—Shy Guy

Many students get a lot out of a therapy or support group through CAPS. However, some who could benefit from a group feel too anxious to give it a shot.

Sometimes knowing more about what to expect can help you feel less nervous about a group. Most groups have between 4 and 9 members, plus a facilitator, who is a CAPS counselor. Groups usually meet once a week for 60 to 90 minutes. Several CAPS groups are considered “drop in.” This means anyone can show up week to week—you don’t have to commit to coming every time.

Most CAPS groups are non-drop in. They require that potential members briefly meet with the facilitator before joining the group to make sure it’s a good fit for them and to

learn more about the group’s content, format and purpose.

When members have joined a non-drop-in group, they are committing to come each week or let the facilitator know if they have to miss a meeting. This helps group members get to know each other and feel safer sharing as members become more familiar with the others over time.

In a typical group meeting, members say things about themselves and their concerns, listen to others, give feedback and get feedback from other group members and the facilitator. Some groups are more structured, in that there is a set topic or activity each week. In such meetings, the facilitator may teach a lesson or skill, like how to manage negative thoughts or do a relaxation exercise.

Other groups are less structured, where the topic is set by what the group members feel like discussing that week. For example, say in a group on understanding relationships, two members had fights with

their roommates—that might set the topic for that week’s meeting.

Some groups start with a check-in at the beginning to give everyone a chance to say something; others let members speak up when they feel like it, depending on what everyone has to say that week. Members are encouraged but not pressured to participate and share.

A major benefit of groups is that you get input from both a counselor and from peers. This can make you feel less isolated and help you realize that others have similar struggles to you.

New groups are forming for spring quarter. See “Upcoming Events” on p. 3 for more info!



Wellness Tip: Spring Break

For some students, Spring Break is a time to go home and chill out after a busy quarter. It can also be a time to travel or hang with friends. For some, it may be a time to stay in Santa Cruz and work for a few extra bucks.

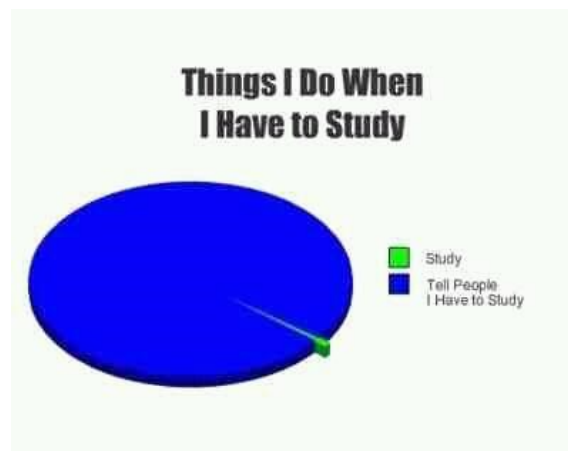
No matter what you end up doing for Spring Break, it can be a great time to find ways to de-stress after a hectic finals week. Exercise is one great way to release stress hormones from your body, loosen tight muscles and stimulate feel-good endorphins. Consider a hike, bike ride or exercise class over break or do some dancing.

Additional ways to recover from a stressful quarter are laughing with friends, getting outdoors, spending time with a pet, doing yoga or meditation or getting a massage. If you can't afford a massage, trade

back rubs with a friend or give your own neck and shoulders some concentrated kneading.

Spring Break means partying to some, but having a good time doesn't have to involve alcohol or other substances. If you're under 21, it's best to stay sober. If you do drink, be safe and set limits so things don't get out of hand—you don't want a fun time to become a disaster because you or a friend overdid it or did something regrettable because of alcohol or another drug.

Make Spring Break a time to recharge. Be safe and have fun, Slugs!



My Ode to Finals

By Araceli Aviles

Finals have arrived, and with them undeniable stress
At this point I'll consider passing success
You would think I would learn by now not to procrastinate
After three cups of coffee I must remember to hydrate

In order to focus I go to McHenry
And all I find is other students like me
Passed out from lack of energy

When my mom calls and asks, "How was your test?"
My only response is, "When can I come home and rest?"

Afterwards, off I go to my home and my family
To sleep ... to sleep and try to regain a calm mentality
All knowledge I've consumed in the past 10 weeks fades
Until that moment I remember I have to check my grades

Araceli Aviles is a senior with a background in nonviolent communication. She is a member of the CAPS Student Advisory Board.

Upcoming Events

CAPS GROUPS: Many of the continuing CAPS groups are welcoming new members for spring quarter, and we are offering two new groups (Overcoming Test Anxiety and Stress Busters) as well. Check out the CAPS groups website (<http://caps.ucsc.edu/groups/index.html>) to learn about the groups being offered. You can also call CAPS for up-to-date info about groups at 831-459-2628.

PUBLIC SAFETY & RESOURCE FAIR: Join the UCSC Police Dept., Fire Dept., Environmental Health & Safety, Risk Services, Campus Sustainability, TAPS, Student Health and SHOP for a great afternoon in the plaza! Get lots of useful info, and play Cash Cab in the NorCal RADD Car to win prizes. Monday, April 7th, Baytree Bookstore Plaza, 10:30 am to 1:30 pm.

The Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic

By Deborah Berardo, Senior Pharmacist

March 2014 is the first ever Prescription Drug Abuse Month in California. It's an acknowledgment by the Obama administration that prescription drug abuse is the nation's fastest growing drug problem. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health show that nearly one third of people 12 years and older who used drugs for the first time in 2009 began by using a prescription drug non-medically.

Despite the increasing rate of abuse and high potential for addiction and death with prescription opiates (in 2007, the CDC reported that there were more than five times more deaths involving prescription opioids than those involving heroin), these medications haven't gotten as much press as heroin and other "hard" drugs. Yet, according to UCSC Police Chief, Nader Oweis, prescription opiates are often the gate-

way drug to heroin use: "With an increased focus by the DEA on physician and pharmacy dispensing, it's tougher for individuals to get prescription medications and necessary to find other ways to feed an addiction. Heroin is cheaper, and abundant in Santa Cruz county." Local Sheriff Nick Baldridge recently said, "I've interviewed 400 to 500 heroin addicts in their 20s, and they all said they used [prescription] pills in high school."

According to the National College Health Assessment, 7% of undergrads reported using a painkiller not prescribed to them in the past year. Usage among high school students is even higher. Unfortunately, those numbers will probably increase.

As a health care provider, I'm most concerned about two things: First, students can get hooked accidentally if they get long-term opioid prescriptions. At

UCSC, we try to prevent that by limiting the number of pills prescribed. However, for those predisposed to substance addiction, even a small number of pills is like putting kerosene on a fire. My second concern is students mixing opioids with alcohol, not realizing the danger. Sadly, a close friend's 20-year-old son died for this reason.

Another prescription drug problem is abuse of stimulants, especially ADHD medications. About 7% of undergrads nationwide reported using a prescription stimulant not prescribed to them in the past year. Since 2008, the Student Health Center has seen a 78% increase in prescriptions dispensed for ADHD meds among students. Stimulants are commonly used as "study aids," and many students—and parents—see them as safe. They underestimate the risks. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Contact CAPS:

Student Health Center
East Wing, 2nd Floor
Phone: 831-459-2628
(24/7 crisis help)
<http://caps.ucsc.edu>

Services Administration reported that Emergency Department visits involving non-medical use of stimulants among young adults increased from 5,605 in 2005 to 22,949 in 2011. Serious side effects are heart problems and convulsions. Stimulants also can hide the effects of being drunk and thus increase the risk of alcohol poisoning or alcohol-related injuries.

What can we do about this epidemic? Perhaps now is the time for health professionals, students and the general population to have that conversation. Chief Oweis also encourages students to visit the Public Safety & Resource Fair at Baytree Plaza on April 7th. (See "Upcoming Events" on p. 3 for more info.)

Meet Your CAPS Staff and Student Advisory Board Members!

Periodically, the CAPS blog features a bio of a staff person or one of our fabulous Student Advisory Board members. Visit <http://ucsccaps.wordpress.com> to get to know us better, and check back regularly for new bios and other articles.



Some of the CAPS Student Advisory Board members (clockwise from left): Wilson Lam, Araceli Aviles, Jennifer Amador, Gerardo Jaime, Avery Nguyen and Marleen Chow.