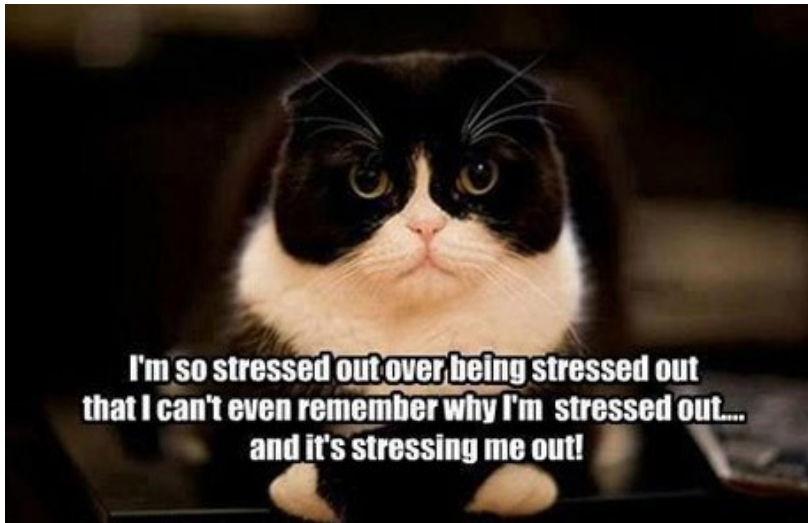




reCAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services
University of California, Santa Cruz



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How to Address Stress

Because April is National Stress Awareness Month and stress/anxiety is one of the top three reasons students come to CAPS for help, we wanted to share some tips for addressing stress. Everyone experiences stress, but how can you tell if you have "normal" stress versus a more serious issue?

Reflect on how much feeling anxious and stressed out affects your life: Are you so anxious you can't leave the house or do other things you need to do to function, such as attend class or drive? Do you have frequent headaches,

stomach aches, insomnia and other physical symptoms that are probably related to stress? Do you feel very anxious most of the time, even when there isn't a clear reason for it? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have anxiety issues that go beyond everyday stress. If so, it's a good idea to check in with CAPS and/or a medical doctor.

Regardless of whether you have "everyday" stress or a more serious anxiety problem, there are ways to reduce the effects of stress on the body, mind and emo-

tions. Following are some tips to try:

1. Talk to a friend or relative to get support. Stress can feel worse if you try to handle it alone. Talking through problems and knowing you're not alone can help a lot.
2. Get stuff done. Break up school-work and other tasks into manageable chunks, and take breaks in between. Use a planner or calendar to organize your time and prioritize your tasks.

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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](#)!

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- Ask for help if you need it—and don't wait until you hit a crisis point.
3. Take your mind off stress temporarily with socializing or hobbies. Just be sure not to *ignore* problems you need to address, or stress could get worse in the long run.
4. Exercise. Getting your heart pumping can do wonders for stress. Exercising a few times a week is best, so make it something fun you'll want to stick with, and consider exercising with a friend to help each other stay motivated.
5. Try relaxation exercises like meditation, yoga, visualization or progressive muscle relaxation. If you don't know how, join a group, take a class or look on line for instructions. You'll benefit most if you practice regularly.
6. Learn to stop beating yourself up, focusing on the negative and allowing worries to spiral out of control. Try reframing your thoughts into something realistic and positive. Recognize a lesson you can learn from a stressful situation. Encourage rather than berate yourself when you fall short of a goal. Learn from your mistakes without using them as an excuse to beat yourself up.
7. Avoid using alcohol, drugs, caffeine or junk food to cope, as they can create other problems.
8. Join a CAPS group. Two that address stress are Stop Stressin' Me and Stress Busters. Call 831-459-2628 or visit <http://caps.ucsc.edu/groups/index.html> for more information.



Dear CAPS,

I'm a senior and am freaking out about what will happen after I graduate this year. Help!

—Looking to the Future



We at CAPS often work with students about to graduate who have fears about their future. So, the first thing you can do is to take a deep breath and realize you're not alone.

Something that we recommend for practical help is talking to your advisor and the helpful folks at the UCSC Career Center (<http://careers.ucsc.edu/>). The Career Center staff can give advice on resumes, interviewing, grad school and more. Your advisor can help you explore career and grad school options in your field.

It's also important to have perspective. Remember that your first job will probably not be the only one you ever have. Don't worry if you can't live your "dream life" right away. It takes time, as well as trial and error, to build the life you want.

It may help to contact CAPS. Come to Let's Talk, our drop-in program, for a brief, informal one-time chat with a counselor (Wed, 1–3 pm, Bay Tree Bldg, 3rd floor; Thurs, 2:30–4:30 pm, Baskin 153B).

You can also stop by CAPS or call us (831-459-2628) Monday through Friday between 8 am and 5 pm to set up a phone appointment. The counselor will help you figure out what might help. If brief therapy at CAPS seems like the best option, you would be scheduled to meet with one of us in person for a few sessions to talk about your concerns. Exploring your feelings and getting support and another perspective can be really helpful in figuring out your next steps after graduation and feeling less freaked out about the future!

Wellness Tip: e-Cigarettes

Many believe that “electronic cigarettes,” e-cigarettes, are safer than other tobacco products. Some consider e-cigarettes an effective substitute for regular cigarettes as they try to quit smoking. Are e-cigs really safer? Unfortunately, it’s difficult to answer that question, because it depends on what you’re looking at.

E-cigarettes, also known as electronic nicotine delivery systems, are cigarette-like devices that heat up and vaporize a liquid solution containing nicotine and other ingredients. Studies do suggest that they may be less dangerous than regular cigarettes in terms of lung cancer and other health risks. However, one problem scien-

tists are finding is that many people who use e-cigarettes also use other tobacco products, cancelling out the possible harm reduction effects of e-cigs.

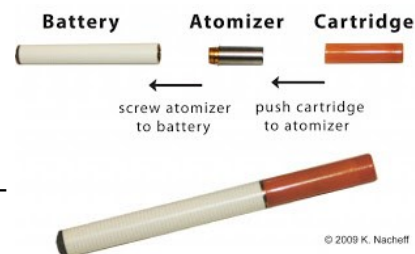
Another concern is that e-cigarettes are not regulated by the FDA. Thus, some could contain harmful ingredients or contaminants.

Perhaps more alarming is the growing problem of accidental poisoning from drinking the liquid used in e-cigs or spilling it on the skin—concentrated nicotine is poisonous if ingested or absorbed through the skin. Children have gotten sick after drinking e-cig refills, attracted by the bright packaging and the flavors they some-

times contain. Read more on The Consumerist website at <http://consumerist.com/2014/03/25/e-cigarettes-a-reliable-smoking-alternative-or-vials-of-toxic-poison/>.

Regardless of whether e-cigarettes are safe, they are not allowed on campus. The smoking ban that was instituted on all UC campuses in January of 2014 includes e-cigs. To read more about e-cigarettes in relation to the smoking ban, visit UCSC’s Smoke & Tobacco Free website at <http://tobaccofree.ucsc.edu/index.html> and check out “Quick Facts.”

For help quitting smoking, contact SHOP at 831-459-3772.



Upcoming Events

PUBLIC SAFETY & RESOURCE FAIR: Join the UCSC Police Dept., Fire Dept., Environmental Health & Safety, Risk Services, Campus Sustainability, TAPS, Student Health, CAPS 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–1:30 pm.

CULTURE & RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOP: This interactive, discussion-based workshop explores personal values and influences that contribute to how one views an intimate relationship. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the different aspects of their culture that influence their personal relationships

and discuss with peers how to navigate the different familial, cultural and personal influences. Cosponsored by CAPS and SAFE at SHOP. Wednesday, April 9th, 4:30–6 pm, SHOP conference room (SHS 1st floor, East Wing, next to the Pharmacy).

YOGA AS HEALING GROUP: SAFE at SHOP is offering a weekly yoga group for survivors of sexual assault and abuse. The program is designed to help survivors become reacquainted with their bodies, become more grounded and explore the benefits of mindfulness. Thursdays 6:30–8 pm, April 17th–May 22nd. Contact Caitlin at cstinnef@ucsc.edu or 831-459-2721 for more information.

The Psychology of “Selfies”

They’re pretty much everywhere on social media—“selfies,” photos we take of ourselves, usually with a smartphone. The phenomenon has generated speculation about whether selfie posting is unhealthy. Like most things in life, selfies are neither “good” nor “bad,” but they may signal or cause problems when taken to the extreme.

One study from the U of Indiana found that controlling how we present ourselves on social media can raise our self-esteem. This implies that posting that perfect selfie can make us feel good about ourselves. Others have pointed out the benefits of selfies in capturing and sharing a moment in time. And, they can just be fun!

Another study found

that a downside of selfies is that they can make the poster look narcissistic or like he or she has low self-esteem. What’s more, some mental health providers have seen a link between certain psychological problems and frequent selfie taking. There is also research suggesting that some aspects of social media use can cause depression, anxiety and other issues.

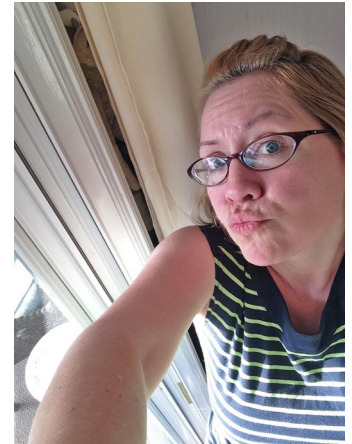
Psychology experts encourage selfie takers to do a little self-reflection: Are you missing out on actually *experiencing* your life because you’re so busy taking photos of yourself “living” it? Do you find yourself so preoccupied with how many “likes” your pix are getting that it’s affecting your mood? Do you spend so much time preparing for or taking selfies that you’re ignor-

ing other important activities or responsibilities? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, it could be that selfies are causing you some harm or signaling other issues.

To get to a healthier place with your selfie habit, try limiting the time you spend getting ready for and taking photos. Force yourself to take just a few shots, not 50. Try to delay posting a selfie for a few hours to see if you still feel like it, or just share a favorite pic with one or two friends rather than posting it publicly. Limit your checking of social media for views or likes. Focus on other activities that you enjoy, especially those that involve socializing with others. If none of these tips help, consider giving CAPS a call at 831-459-2628.

Contact CAPS:

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



Selfie by CAPS psychologist and reCAPS editor, Blair Davis.

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.



Who's in charge at CAPS? Meet the management team (clockwise from left): Director Gary Dunn, Associate Director MaryJan Murphy, Clinical Director Dorje Jennette and Lead Psychiatrist Mark Kutcher.