



# reCAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services  
University of California, Santa Cruz



## In This Issue

Better Body Image	1
Dear CAPS: Relationship Red Flags	2
Wellness Tip: Healthy Eating on the Go	3
Upcoming Events	3
Meet CAPS Staff	4

## Building Better Body Image

CAPS meets with lots of students of all genders who feel overly critical of their bodies and have a hard time accepting themselves as they are. Our culture can make it tough to feel good about our bodies.

While some people believe they have to slim down or bulk up to have a positive body image, CAPS wants to say that anyone can work on building better body image *now*—regardless of shape or size. Body image

comes from the mind, not the physique.

Building a more accepting attitude toward yourself is a vital component of healthy body image. One way to do this is being kinder and more compassionate to yourself in general. Motivate yourself with encouragement rather than criticism or punishment. Learn to notice when you're being harsh toward yourself, and practice changing your inner voice to a gentler one. Therapy or self-help

books can provide guidance in this process.

Another element of healthy body image is focusing on how using your body in healthy ways *feels*, rather than focusing on how your body *looks*. Find fun ways to be active that you enjoy doing. Exercise is a good way to relieve stress and balance your moods while improving your health. It's healthiest when done regularly and in moderation, not obsessively or with

Continued on p. 2

## 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](#)!

Continued from p. 1

the sole aim of losing weight or bulking up.

Eat a healthy, balanced diet and allow yourself treats in moderation. Avoid labeling foods as “good” or “bad.” Not all foods are nutritionally equal, but there’s room for all kinds of things in a healthy diet. Getting away from being too rigid with food and diet is a component of healthy body image.

Avoid “fat chat”—talking about things you don’t like about your body, calling yourself (or others)

“fat,” telling people you were “bad” for eating something. Notice urges to criticize or make fun of other people’s bodies. If you catch yourself thinking or saying these things, try to replace them with something more positive. Fat chat makes your body image worse and can affect the body image and self-esteem of others around you.

Research has shown that exposure to fashion magazines and other unrealistically “perfect” images of bodies can damage self-esteem. Consider avoiding magazines and other

media that feed insecurity and body image problems. When you do see images of seemingly perfect people, remember that most images are altered and enhanced—even those “perfect” models are not perfect. Remind yourself that being thin or fit or beautiful does not automatically bring happiness. Looking a certain way doesn’t guarantee feeling a certain way.

Changing the way you see yourself can take some time. Be patient, and consider asking for help from friends, mentors or CAPS!



## Dear CAPS,

*My romantic partner always tells me what to do. I don’t like it, but he’s just looking out for me, right?*

—*Bothered and Bewildered*

It’s natural for couples to have expectations of each other, but being controlling of a partner is unhealthy for both people and can be a form of abuse. It’s also a warning sign that other forms of verbal, emotional and even physical abuse could occur.

One important question to ask is whether one partner is sacrificing important aspects of his or her personality, needs and well-being for the other. Both partners should be giving and taking in a relationship, and both should be able to accept the other for who he or she is.

Some compromise is normal in a relationship, but compromise is different than *control*.

Red flags of unhealthy controlling behavior include the following:

1. Telling a partner how he or she must dress or look.
2. Forbidding a partner from having certain friends. (Expressing concern about friends who seem unhealthy is different than telling a partner what to do.)
3. Isolating a partner from friends or family. Even if partners like to spend a lot of time together, it’s healthy to spend time with other people also.
4. Belittling or being critical of a partner. Occasional and kind constructive criticism or letting

a partner know when something he or she does is not OK with the other partner is different than cutting down a person for his or her personality, looks or values.

5. Threatening a partner to get him or her to do what the other partner wants. Making threats is never OK.

If you see any of these red flags in your relationship, consider talking to CAPS or a trusted mentor.



Duangkamon Khattiya/Getty Images

## Wellness Tip: Healthy Eating on the Run

A healthy diet is important for keeping your focus, having energy and warding off anxiety, depression and other problems. However, with their busy schedules, students often feel like they don't have time to eat healthy. With a little planning, healthy eating can be totally do-able.

Keep healthy snacks in your room and your school bag for times you're hungry between meals or when you're on the go. Eating small snacks throughout the day can keep your energy levels stable (avoiding the crashes

that can come from skipping meals or eating junk food) and improve your metabolism. Try fruits with nuts or nut butters (as this combo can make you feel more full and satisfied than with fruit alone), wheat crackers with nut butters, yogurt and hummus with veggies.

Carry a bottle of water with you. Not only can this remind you to stay hydrated, but you'll save money and time by not having to buy bottled water or other drinks. Plus, water has no calories, chemicals or sodium.

If you cook for your-

self, buy whole grains and beans in bulk. Save time by cooking up a big batch with some fresh or frozen veggies and eating it over a few days. This means healthy meals and less time spent cooking.

When shopping, make a list of things you need, and add to it when you're running low on something. A list makes it easier to remember important stuff at the store and often means you can shop less often, as you won't be running to the store every couple days because you forgot something the last time.



## Upcoming Event

## VIOLENCE PREVENTION CONFERENCE:

**SAFE at SHOP** is hosting its first Violence Prevention Convention! This day-long conference will focus on giving students and community members tangible tools for preventing violence. Keynote talk by sexologist Jill McDevitt; workshops hosted by students, staff and community members; raffle prizes; and free lunch. Co-sponsored by Merrill College, The Cantu Queer Center, The Dean of Students, Core Council, The Vagina Organization, Crown College, College 8, College 9, College 10, Stevenson College, Cowell College and The Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women. Saturday, May 10th, 10:30 am–4:30 pm at Merrill College.



## 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 a variety of posts on other topics.



Our newest staff members: Counselor Brent Alsaker, LCSW; Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Paul Schwartz, RN, NP; and Clinical Director Dorje Jennette, PsyD, all joined CAPS during the 2013–2014 academic year.

### Contact CAPS:

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

