

November 2013

reCAPS

Counseling and Psychological Services
University of California, Santa Cruz

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Upcoming CAPS Events

- "Twisted Thinking" workshop on how negative thoughts get in your way, Wed., 11/20, 4-5 pm, Cowell Fireside Lounge, led by Susie Martinez and Quade French, cosponsored by CAPS & Cowell College
- Managing family pressures for Asian-American students panel discussion, Thurs., 11/21, 7-8:30 pm, Namaste Lounge, Colleges 9/10, led by Audrey Kim, cosponsored by AA/PIRC, CAPS & Colleges 9 & 10
- Adjusting to college workshop, Wed., 12/4, 6 pm, Bay Tree Bld., 3rd floor (Cervantes & Velasquez), led by Belinda Rubalcava

For more info, call CAPS at 831-459-2628.



How Much Do You Know About Sleep? Take This Quiz to Find Out!

by Jodi Mulder, LCSW

True or False?

- ___ 1. During sleep, your brain rests.
- ___ 2. Snoring is not harmful as long as it doesn't disturb others or wake you up.
- ___ 3. You can "cheat" on the amount of sleep you get.
- ___ 4. Insomnia is characterized by difficulty falling asleep.

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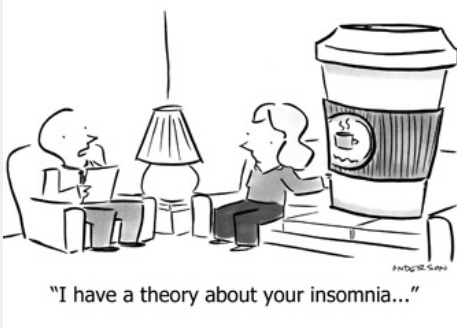
All About CAPS

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

- Brief individual, couples' and group counseling year-round
- 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) 8 am to 5 pm. Check out the [CAPS blog](#), visit our [website](#) and like us on [Facebook](#)!

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Dear CAPS,

I've been having panic attacks. What should I do?

--Stressed Out

First, you should know that panic attacks are common. They can be caused by genetics (they often run in families), stress, past experiences (e.g., trauma, developing the belief that you "should be perfect" all the time), psychological concerns (e.g., general anxiety disorder, depression, OCD, phobias) or, more rarely, a medical condition.

If your panic attacks are severe or very frequent or you know you have a medical issue that may be related to the symptoms (e.g., heart problems), consider getting a medical check-up.

There are techniques you can practice to help yourself calm down when you are starting to panic. One is deep breathing from your abdomen. Sitting or lying down while taking slow, deep breaths so you can see your stomach (not chest) rising and falling can help your body start to physically relax. Be patient--it may take a few minutes. If sitting or lying down is not helping, taking a walk or stretching may help "work out" some of the adrenaline in your system. Drinking some water may also help.

For some people, being alone is best, so if you're around others, try leaving the situation to go outside, to your room or to a restroom to try to

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Sleep, continued from pg. 1

5. The older you get, the fewer hours of sleep you need.

6. If you wake up in the middle of the night, it is best to lie in bed and count sheep as long as it takes until you fall asleep.

7. Health problems such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and depression are related to the amount and quality of a person's sleep.

1. FALSE. Although the body rests during sleep, the brain remains active, gets "recharged" and still controls many body functions including breathing. Sleep actually helps build brain functioning!

2. FALSE. Snoring may be harmless for most people, but it can be a symptom of sleep apnea, especially if you suffer from severe daytime sleepiness. Sleep apnea is characterized by pauses in breathing that prevent air from flowing into or out of your airways during sleep. If you think you may suffer from sleep apnea, consult with a physician.

3. FALSE. Sleep experts say most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep nightly for optimal performance, health and safety. When we do not get enough sleep, we accumulate a sleep debt that can be difficult to "pay back" if it becomes too big over time. Sleep deprivation and sleep debt have been linked to health problems, negative mood and behavior and decreased productivity.

4. FALSE. Difficulty falling asleep is only 1 of 4 symptoms generally linked to insomnia. The others include waking up too early and not being able to fall back asleep, frequent awakenings and waking up feeling unrefreshed.

5. FALSE. Sleep experts say that sleep patterns change as we age, but the amount of sleep we need generally does not (7-9 hrs for adults).

6. FALSE. Research suggests that counting sheep may be too distracting. Instead, try relaxing imagery or thoughts. Whatever the technique, experts agree that if you

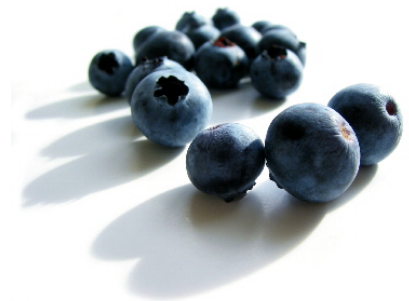
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Meet Your CAPS Staff



Every couple of weeks, CAPS features a staff bio in our blog. Go to <http://ucsccaps.wordpress.com> to read about CAPS Director Gary Dunn, alcohol and drug specialist Blair Davis, former doctoral intern Laura Turner-Essel, staff psychologist Emilie Cate and doctoral intern Quade French. More profiles to come!

Wellness Tip of the Month



When you get busy and stressed out, it's easy to slack off on healthy eating. But eating well can help you have the energy to do all the stuff you do! Eating regular meals and snacks that contain protein, fruits and veggies and whole grains will help you to maintain energy levels throughout the day. But did you know that there are some specific foods that may boost your brainpower? Berries and tomatoes help maintain a sharp memory because of their high antioxidant levels; oily fish (e.g., salmon, sardines), pumpkin seeds and flaxseed oil promote health brain function and general well-being due to their omega-3 oil content; and whole grains release glucose slowly into the bloodstream, keeping you mentally alert throughout the day.

calm down. For others, talking to a friend or loved one or just being near someone they know is helpful. If you can't be physically near a friend, try calling a parent, friend or partner to get support.

What you are thinking during a panic attack is important--if you think, "I'm going crazy!" or "I'm dying!" you'll probably feel worse than if you can tell yourself, "This sucks, but I will be OK" or "I'm having a panic attack, but I can do things to calm myself down, and it will stop soon."

A typical panic attack will last anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour. Because anxiety stimulates the release of the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol in your body, it can take several hours for you to feel "normal" again--exercise, eating a healthy meal or snack, doing something to take your mind off your anxiety or napping may help.

If these techniques aren't working or your panic attacks are getting worse, consider contacting CAPS to find resources to reduce stress and find ways to cope. In some cases, medication can help, and CAPS or your doctor can help you figure out your options.



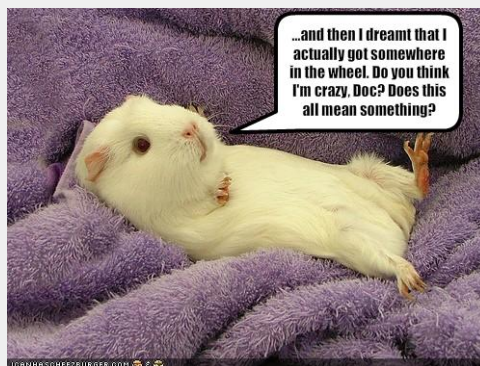
don't fall back asleep within 15-20 minutes, it is best to get out of bed and do something relaxing, like listening to music or doing light reading. Relaxation techniques (such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation) may also help. Return to bed when you feel sleepy, and avoid watching the clock.

7. TRUE. Studies have found a significant relationship between the quantity and quality of sleep and many physical and mental health problems.

Adapted from the National Sleep Foundation.

Mental Health Stigma: CAPS Talks Back

by Susie Martinez, MS



I was sitting at a popular coffee shop located only a few blocks from campus. I thought about the task of addressing mental health stigma, and I wondered what the people around me might say are some reasons that students don't seek counseling on campus. I asked a few of those sitting next to me, and the sentences in bold were the top three answers, followed by how I would respond.

"Counseling is only for people with serious mental illness."

Counseling can be extremely helpful for people who struggle with serious mental illness, but it can also be

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Stop Stressin' Me

by Patrice Monsour, PhD

We generally use the word *stress* when we feel that everything seems to have become too much--we are overloaded and wonder whether we really can cope with the pressures placed on us.

Stress arises when our body-mind has to respond physically, emotionally and mentally to change, regardless of whether the change is welcome or unwelcome. Stress can be useful, adding alertness and motivation for temporary challenges, but when we are unable to return to a relaxed state, stress can be harmful. Studies suggest that stress can affect our immune, cardiovascular, muscle and nervous systems, as well as our mood, academic success, relationships, and well being.

Any of the following sound familiar?

- *#\$\$% 4 am, and no sleep yet!
- "Seriously, I'm worried about how much I worry ..."
- "Wait, I drank/smoked how much this week? "
- "My concentration (or focus) is ____" (fill in blank with negative outburst)
- "I'm too stressed to eat!" or "I can't stop eating!"
- "See you later, I have to drop by urgent care--*again*!!"
- Panicky during exams
- "Stop stressin' me!" (irritable?)

Try the following stress busters:

- Learn to relax --visit <http://caps.ucsc.edu/resources/self-help.html> for three relaxation podcasts and other tips for beating stress.
- Have fun and socialize, but keep these in balance with your responsibilities.
- Recognize that you have limits and learn to set them.
- Keep your expectations realistic. Don't expect perfection.
- "Tackle Twisted Thinking" in a fun workshop! (See page 1 for info.)

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New CAPS Program: Let's Talk

CAPS has launched a new program to bring you an additional option for getting help. It's called Let's Talk, a drop-in space where you can have a brief, confidential conversation with a counselor. It's totally free, and you don't need an appointment--just walk in! Hours and locations: Bay Tree Building, 3rd floor, Wednesdays, 1-3 pm, and Baskin Engineering, room 153B, Thursdays, 2:30-4:30 pm.

Let's Talk Q&A

How is Let's Talk different from CAPS counseling?

Counseling at CAPS is more formal and often ongoing, usually a handful of weekly or biweekly 50-minute appointments. Let's Talk is not formal counseling but is a drop-in meeting that is usually 10-15 minutes or so and may just be a one-time visit.

Who should use Let's Talk?

Any UCSC student who

- Has a question or concern that would benefit from a brief talk with a counselor
- Is hesitant or curious about counseling and wants to learn more
- Is concerned about a friend and wants advice
- Is not interested in therapy but wants a counselor's perspective
- Is not experiencing an immediate crisis, such as thinking about self-harm (when you're in crisis, it's best to go to or call CAPS: 831-459-2628)

For more information, visit

<http://caps.ucsc.edu/pdf/lets-talk-FAQs.pdf>.

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beneficial for those who may be struggling with "everyday" life challenges: making friends, homesickness, anxiety before an exam, suffering loss, breaking up and many others. The truth is that we all struggle at times. Counselors are there to support, listen and problem-solve, regardless of the size of your struggle.



"Some students may be afraid that they will be judged." CAPS is a judgement-free zone. We (the counselors) feel strongly about creating a safe space for those students with whom we have the privilege of working. Counselors come in all shapes, colors and sizes, and we expect that you will, too.

"Some have had bad experiences with counseling in the past." I bet a lot of us have gone to a doctor who only spent 10 minutes talking to us, a bank teller who was cranky, an advisor who didn't give the advice we wanted or a dentist who didn't smile enough. It is unfortunately true that we can have bad experiences with people providing a service. The good news is, CAPS counselors are aware of this and work extra hard to make CAPS a positive experience. Chances are, this time you will find a good fit. We also know that sometimes we don't have what you need; if so, we try to hook you up with other resources.

Stress, continued from pg. 3

- Take a break in nature--walk on the beach or in the forest.
- Accept what you cannot change. Learn to let go.
- Manage your time. Prioritizing and planning can prevent overwhelm.
- Take care of your health. Eat well and exercise regularly, get enough sleep and avoid or moderate use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Become part of a support system. Let friends help you when you are under stress, and help them as well!
- Pay attention to your thinking. Imagining negative outcomes causes tension, regardless of whether the event happens.
- Meet a CAPS counselor for an informal "Let's Talk" chat (See article on this page for info.)
- Discover the power of mindfulness and meditation to relieve stress and improve well being. Check out this article from *UCLA Today*: <http://www.today.ucla.edu/portals/ut/using-mindfulness-to-reduce-stress-96966.aspx>
- Consider joining the Stop Stressin' Me group for winter quarter. Group meets weekly: Thursdays 2-3:30 pm, led by Patrice Monsour, PhD. (For more info, call 831-459-2109.)

Adapted from the American College Health Association.



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