



reCAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services
University of California, Santa Cruz

Managing Academic Stress: Tips from CAPS' Student Advisory Board

The quarter is more than halfway over, and classes are in full swing. At this point in the fall, students can feel pretty stressed out about exams and keeping up with their assignments.

We asked a couple of our Student Advisory Board members, a group of students selected each year to advise and support Counseling & Psychological Services, what they do to manage school stress. Here's what they had to say.

Julia Dunn: "When school gets stressful, I manage anxiety with music and writing. Depending on the severity of the stress, I immerse in music that is meaningful to me and relates to how I am feeling, or I will write about my feelings and try to transform my stress into written art. I will also block off some time to recharge by talking to a close friend. All are effective stress management methods."

Grace Woods: "The most important thing I've learned in managing stress is that it's okay to give yourself a break ... go take a walk, laugh with your friends, watch an episode of a TV show, or just lie in your bed. Keep a schedule and set goals for your day, but don't let studying consume your life. In the midst of all the work and stress, we need to remember to relax and enjoy ourselves."

In This Issue

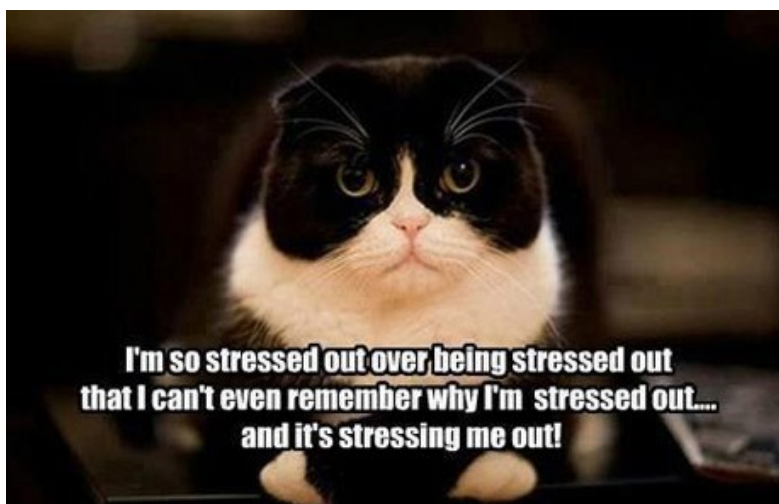
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All About CAPS

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

- 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. To learn more, visit our [website](#), check out the [CAPS blog](#), and like us on [Facebook](#)!



Dear CAPS,

I heard that sometimes there is a long wait to get a counseling appointment at CAPS. Is that true?

—Seeking Services

It is true that things sometimes get backed up at CAPS when the demand for services is high. However, that's not the whole story.

Usually, the first step in the CAPS process is a short phone appointment. You can be scheduled for a phone appointment pretty quickly—sometimes in a couple days and generally within a week. During business hours, you can call CAPS (831-459-2628) or stop by to schedule a phone appointment. From there, how long it takes to start services depends on why

you're calling and which services might be most useful.

We may recommend individual counseling with a CAPS counselor or off campus with a private therapist or agency. What we recommend depends on the issues you're concerned about, whether brief or open-ended therapy is recommended, insurance, and other factors. At CAPS, we provide brief therapy, meaning that most students are seen from one or two sessions up to a handful of sessions in an academic year. For those who want or need open-ended counseling or a specialized service we don't offer (e.g., intensive substance abuse or eating disorder treatment, care for severe depression), off campus is the better option.

Sometimes during a phone appointment, CAPS will recommend ser-

vices other than individual counseling. These may include therapy or support groups, services at the Disability Resource Center or health center, or other resources.

For students who don't want to begin formal services at CAPS and just need a quick consult with a counselor, Let's Talk is a great option. Read more about it on page 3 of this issue of *reCAPS*.

Let's Talk is not for emergencies. When a student is in a crisis situation, it's best to call or walk in to CAPS to be screened by the crisis counselor on duty. In most cases, a student in crisis will be seen for a screening appointment right away. If you're not sure if it's a crisis, call or stop by, and CAPS staff can help determine the best plan for assisting you.

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"I have a theory about your insomnia..."

Stop by Let's Talk!

Sometimes students just want a short, one-time conversation with a counselor rather than more formal counseling services. For example, maybe you want to consult about a roommate issue or ask some questions about CAPS services or whether starting counseling could benefit you.

Let's Talk is a drop-in space where you can have a brief, confidential one-time chat with a CAPS counselor. It's free, and you don't need an appointment—just walk in!

Let's Talk is not set up to handle emergencies, so if you are having a

psychological crisis (e.g., you're severely depressed or suicidal or a traumatic event has just happened to you), please contact CAPS (831-459-2628). You should call 911 if you or someone else is in imminent danger of being harmed.

Let's Talk is offered Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at McHenry Library, Room 2285, and Thursdays from 2:30 to 4:30 pm at Baskin Engineering, Room 153B. You can read more about Let's Talk on the CAPS website at <http://caps.ucsc.edu/pdf/lets-talk-FAQs.pdf>.



Got a problem? Let's talk about it!

Upcoming Events

CAPS GROUPS FOR WINTER QUARTER:

CAPS offers a variety of support and therapy groups every fall, winter, and spring quarter. Groups are a great way to work on issues, get support, learn, and grow. Groups address topics like stress, depression, gender and sexuality, and more. Some are "drop in" (no appointment or commitment needed), and others require a short screening appointment and committing to attending all quarter. It's not too early to express your interest in a group for winter quarter. To learn more about groups, call CAPS at 831-459-2628 during business hours (Mon-Fri, 8 am-5 pm).



Communication Skills for Healthy Relationships

Communication is vital in creating and maintaining good relationships with romantic partners, friends, roommates and coworkers. Bad communication can result in confusion, misunderstandings and conflict. It can also result in your not getting what you want out of your relationships.

What are some of the common barriers to good communication?

1. Bad listening skills (e.g., interrupting, not paying attention, showing disinterest).
2. Emotional barriers, such as being angry or upset.
3. Bad timing—trying to communicate when someone is tired, upset, distracted or in a rush.

One important consideration is to find (or even

schedule) a good time to talk when both parties are not too busy or tired. The setting should be private and comfortable. Trying to have an important conversation in a busy or public place can be too distracting or make it feel unsafe to say certain things.

It's also important to use good listening skills. Focus on what the other person is saying and give signals (such as nodding or saying "Mmm hmm") to let them know you heard what was said. Don't interrupt, and don't tune out the other person because you're thinking of what you want to say next. Ask questions to get a better understanding of the other person's perspective, rather than making assumptions.

It's also important to try to be constructive and

kind when you have a criticism or complaint. Name-calling or making harsh statements is not going to help the conversation go well. Try to lead with something positive when you make a criticism, such as, "I appreciated when you apologized to me—that meant a lot. It does really hurt me when you call me names, so I'd like it if you would stop that."

During conflict, trying to get the other person's help to solve a problem can be a good approach to communication. For instance, if a roommate isn't doing their share of the chores, you could try saying, "Our chore schedule isn't really working out. What do you think we could do to try and fix it? I'd like our place to be cleaner." Usually, it's best to try to resolve conflicts, not "win" them!

Contact CAPS:

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

